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GENDER INCLUSIVE LEADERSHIP: INVESTIGATING THE UNDERREPRESENTATION OF WOMEN LEADERSHIP IN THE PUBLIC ENTERPRISES, SWAZILAND

by

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DECLARATION

I, **Collin Kamalizeni,** do declare that:

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'A dream doesn't become reality through magic, it takes sweat, determination and hard work.'
Colin Powell

No project can be successfully completed without the contribution of many people. While it may not be possible to mention all of them, it is worthwhile to mention the support and encouragement of individuals who made the completion of this mammoth task a reality. This was a daunting undertaking which demanded a lot of effort, skill and time. But with the support, encouragement and guidance of certain individuals, the purpose of this work was realised. Firstly, I would like to sincerely thank the Lord for giving me the health, strength and energy to carry out this work. Furthermore, the constructive criticism of my supervisors, Professor Hoque and Dr Kader provided insights to see what subtle yet essential elements that made this thesis. Of particular note was not only their prompt focus on the development of this project, but the valid arguments together with the level of openness to share experiences pertinent to the project. I salute your patience, encouragement and support!

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DEDICATION

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ABSTRACT

As the gender debate escalates universally directed towards leveraging societal imbalances across different economic sectors, widespread transformation initiatives are emerging to advance women to leadership. Few women are represented at managerial positions at senior, middle and firstline levels in public enterprises resulting in unequal power distribution. The relatively distorted gender distribution of authority presents major calamities for the marginalised female workforce where biases and prejudices are a commonplace in patriarchal perceptions. The study investigated reasons for the under-representation of women leadership in public enterprises within Swaziland. The first study objective explored barriers that hindered women leadership followed by an evaluation on the impact of women leadership. The strategies for enhancing women leadership were identified, further evaluating the impact of the existing gender policy in accelerating female leadership. A qualitative research approach that used semi-structured interviews on twenty-one managers was applied to the exploratory-interpretive study aimed at gaining deeper insight into the under-representation of female leadership. The fundamental study findings revealed the existence of two broad categories; self-inflicted and externally motivated barriers. Women leadership was found to exhibit a more positive impact in improving organizational effectiveness shaped largely by ethical values derived from the concept of 'Ubuntu'. The results further identified major strategies that were constructed around a paradigm shift poised to stimulate women leadership. Gender policy was, however, considered less effective in promoting women leadership in public enterprises. The research therefore established new knowledge emerging from an understanding of the key phenomena in women leadership noting key salient features characterising self-inflicted and externally generated barriers that would help women to confidently compete with men in leadership. The practical implications pointed towards promoting gender inclusive leadership through a paradigm shift that transformed existing traditional cultural-historical and religious stereotypes. The education system needed to be reviewed while the public enterprises were to invest in education and training. The Public Enterprises Unit was to institute ethics-diversity committees by creating a joint task-force to foster women leadership. On the other hand, women group activists were to be lobbied to involve masculinity in public dialogues. In addition, women leadership was to be mainstreamed in all public enterprise activities. The study recommends further enquiry on board members of public enterprises focusing on the impact of incentives for compliance and a redefinition on the role of the human resources in monitoring and evaluating women leadership initiatives. The feasibility

of inclusion committees was to be investigated to help strengthen the role of the human resource department in this regard.

Key words: public enterprises, women under-representation, organizational effectiveness, gender

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CHAPTER 1: OVERVIEW OF THE STUDY

1.1 Introduction

The escalating social disintegration the world-over particularly in Africa, viewed in the widespread migration and terrorism tend to occur due to the collapse of services in public enterprises. These events result from perhaps ineffective leadership marred by social injustices and the general civil strife that further embellish local and international migration. Corruption has not been arrested causing poor service delivery with poverty rising to unparalleled levels accompanied with limited access to electricity, proper housing or clean water (Lannegren and Ito, 2017). Leadership and governance have been at the centre of these deficits where masculinity continues to dominate creating unfair distribution of power structures in the workplace. While laws are available that prohibit discrimination, the workplace continues to manifest gender inequalities more so on grounds of sexual orientation (Helgesen, 2017). The current problems cannot be addresses in isolation but require building alliances, networking and valuing diversity in leadership.

In all circumstances, women form the majority of victims who are vulnerable to irresponsible masculine leadership (World Bank, 2017). Widespread debate continues to dominate the world-wide discourse on the significance and quality of women leadership, with widespread research being conducted to establish the contribution of women leadership to the corporate bottom-line. In spite of all this, there seems to be little consensus as to whether any successful organizations can be attributed to women leaders in Africa. Additionally, questions have been raised as to whether women have potent in effectively leading these organizations in the face of their male counterparts. The rapid pace of growth is ubiquitous in visionary leadership and is seen as a necessary factor in the substantial reduction of poverty. It is nevertheless accepted that to achieve sustainable growth, a broad-based approach across all sectors of society is necessary, where there is inclusion of the large part of a country's labour force (Murray, 2016). It is therefore prudent to provide strategic linkages between leadership inclusion of women and inclusive growth. Several factors are identified that determine women leadership which include education, domestic responsibility, economic power and the type of labour market under consideration (Abraham, Ohemeng and Ohemeng, 2017). While these factors are universally experiences their degree of application determine how their impact affects the under-representation of women leadership in the public enterprises in Eswatini. The absence of pertinent studies to women leadership

specifically in the public enterprises provides intriguing perspectives likely to offer solutions to the social ills identified the opening paragraphs.

The World Report (2018) observes that although the Swaziland Constitution makes provision for equality, there is no explicit undertaking to prevent discrimination on account of sex or gender identity leaving loopholes for the violation of women rights. Swaziland is ranked poorly and represents a 'low human development' index (Hakura, Hussain, Newiak, Thakoor and Yang, 2016).

Women are still dependent on men who control domestic resources. In addition, women are still unrepresented in the decision-making machinery of most public enterprises (Gaidzwana, 2016). The researcher noted the decline in the number of female delegates who attended training in supervisory development programmes during the period 2010 to 2015, as shown in Figure 1.1.

FIGURE 1.1: FEMALE SUPERVISOR TRAINEE AT MANANGA
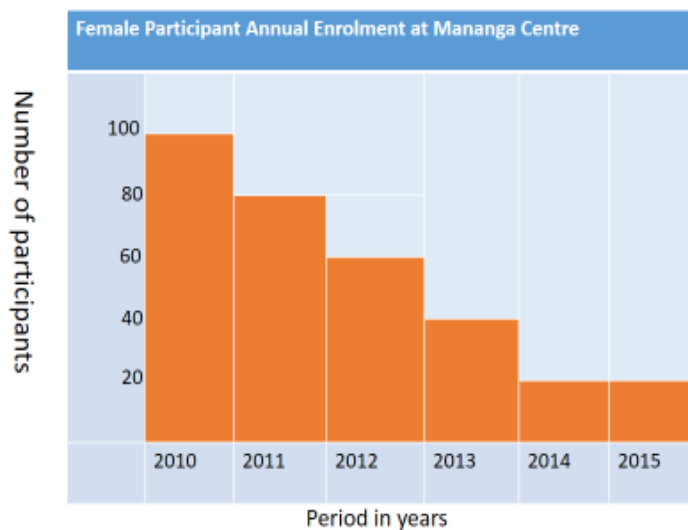
Source: Mananga Management Centre Statistics (2016)

A marked decline was noted in the participation of women training courses for leadership programmes at Mananga Management Centre in Swaziland. Figure 1.1 shows women who attended supervisory training courses at the Centre, during the period 2010 to 2015. The

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stereotype perspective in Africa that treats men as breadwinners and therefore according them the privilege to work over women tends to justify the belief that the role of women is to raise children in the home, signifying a major obstacle facing women in their attempt to take up leadership positions. Furthermore, while women groups play a paramount role in the economic and domestic life in Swaziland, as evidenced by their participation in associations and cooperatives, only a few of them occupy leadership positions in public enterprises. Given these observations and the above perception, the impetus to delve into a study of this nature was inevitable. Despite the grim outlook portrayed in the preceding sections, there is the likelihood for accelerated growth if all resources, including female human capital are appropriately and effectively utilised (Athineos, Kozak and Harkins, 2017). Recent studies advance that the dearth of women leadership could be derived from a paradigm in which women participate in the labour force through gender inclusive leadership (World Bank, 2017). Known backgrounds of successful women leaders are likely to stimulate vast interest in aspiring new leaders through an analysis of their backgrounds, thus building insight into the nature of barriers likely to be encountered. Furthermore, a country's leadership impact is mostly experienced in its public and private sectors which focus almost exclusively on the political leadership landscape (Matsiliza, 2017). This study seeks to investigate the under-representation of women leadership likely to be addressed through gender inclusive leadership where women play an equally fundamental role in direction performance and decision-making processes.

1.2 The Study Background

As the debate intensifies for leveraging leadership imbalances across different sectors of the economy, widespread consciousness seems to be emerging to accelerate women advancement to strategic positions (Alsubaie and Jones, 2017). However, ethical scandals which have become almost commonplace in the contemporary world have drawn attention to ethical leadership and good corporate governance likely to be achieved in diversity and gender inclusive leadership (Agbim, 2018). Despite codes of ethics documented in the business world corruption tends to be deepening compelling closer reflection on the type of leadership with gender being the focus. Some of the business practice iniquities included the falsification profits and the collapse of ethical values by largely male top executives (Grant Thornton International Business Report, 2016).

Women issues are gradually becoming an integral part of governance strategies arising from the increased recognition of women contributions in both the political and economic developments

arena (Olusola, 2016). The continent placed more emphasis on issues of women, with the African Union (AU) declaring the decade 2010 - 2020 as the "African Women's Decade," drawing several leaders into recognising progress made on gender equality and female empowerment as frustrating (FEMNET, 2016). Research reveals that women in Sub Saharan Africa (SSA) on average represent 87% achievement of the outcomes of masculinity in development which is a significant statistic to implore an increased women representation (Hakura, *et al*, 2016). The same source reports that all forms of inequality on gender costs the Sub Saharan Africa an estimated US$95 billion annually. The position of Eswatini regarding the development of human capital is illustrated in Figure 1.2.

FIGURE 1.2: HUMAN CAPITAL DEVELOPMENT
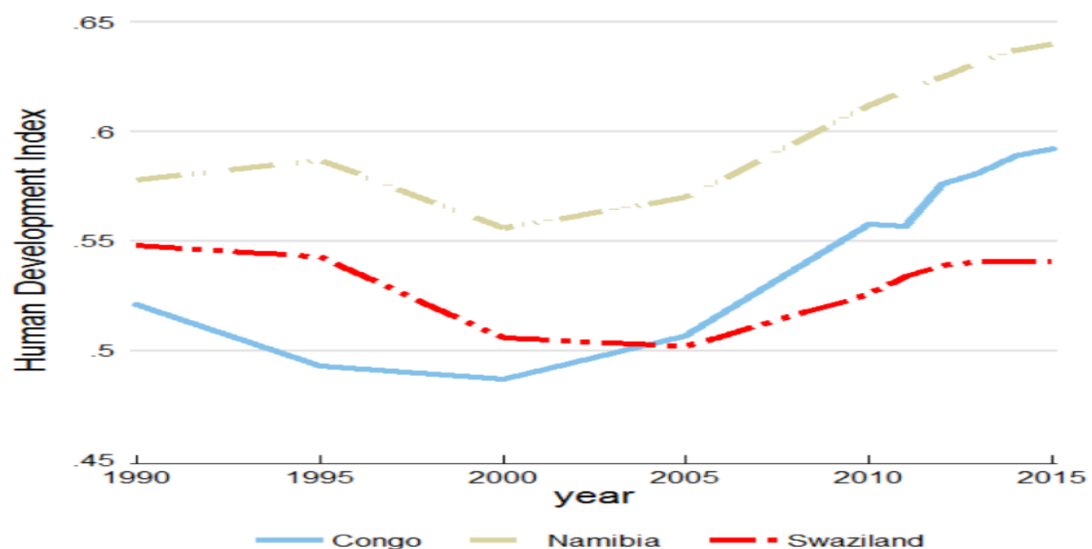
Source: Hakura, Hussain, Newiak, Thakoor and Yang (2016)

A comparison of Eswatini with two other countries indicates that gender human capital receives little attention. For the period from 1990 up until 2004, Swaziland had a more attractive Human Development Index (HDI) than Congo, though lagging quite significantly behind Namibia. Although there was a steady increase thereafter, it did remain below both countries (Africa Human Development Report, 2016). This trend is harmful and indicates little attention placed in developing skills particularly for women, thus deepening further the gap in women leadership

under-representation. This report also found out that a single percent increase of gender inequality negatively affected the HDI of a country by 0.75 percent, thus hindering women to effectively participate in decision-making processes. Studies further reveal that any improvement in gender parity is likely to increase the productivity of the neglected continent's population (African Development Bank Group, 2015).

However, literature on women leadership, particularly in public enterprises in Sub Saharan African context appears meagre, compelling further enquiry into the underlying causes of leadership disparity (Gaidzanwa, 2016). However, the available publication cite a number of causes for women under-representation arising from cultural, historical and religious factors that remain intertwined (Alsubaie *et al,* 2017).

Several possibilities have been cited, drawing largely from Western studies with little convincing empirical evidence to support the African setting. Although numerous women leadership studies have been offered, a huge gap continues to be experienced in this field, with the majority of women visibly placed in the lower echelons in the broader Sub Saharan Africa (Bahiru *et al,* 2018). Slow changes are gradually emerging, although retarded by a number of barriers that present themselves in different forms. In this study, an attempt is made to analyse the potential avenues that impede female advancement and further solicit more insights into the seemingly fundamental barriers within the context of Sub Saharan Africa.

1.3 The Study Problem

Societies in the Sub Saharan Africa have not made meaningful reforms to some of the cultural traditional practices that restrict women participation in the labour force. Consequently, this has made it extremely difficult to reverse some of the cultural stipulations such as the traditional division of labour (Alsubaie *et al,* 2017). This argument underpins the mismatch existing between women under-representation in leadership positions across hierarchical structures, and the over-representation of women in operations, particularly in public enterprises. Elsewhere in the studies pertaining to women under-representation, the concept of the glass ceiling is used as an artificial obstacles that arises from attitudes or prejudices that obstruct eligible candidates from advancing to leadership positions (Athineos, Kozak and Harkins, 2017). The same report refers to women leadership under-representation in the workplace as an "invisible barrier" that hinders women access to leadership positions. Figure 1.3 illustrates the gap witnessed in women leadership under-representation in public enterprises within Swaziland.

FIGURE 1.3: WOMEN LEADERSHIP GAP PARADOX
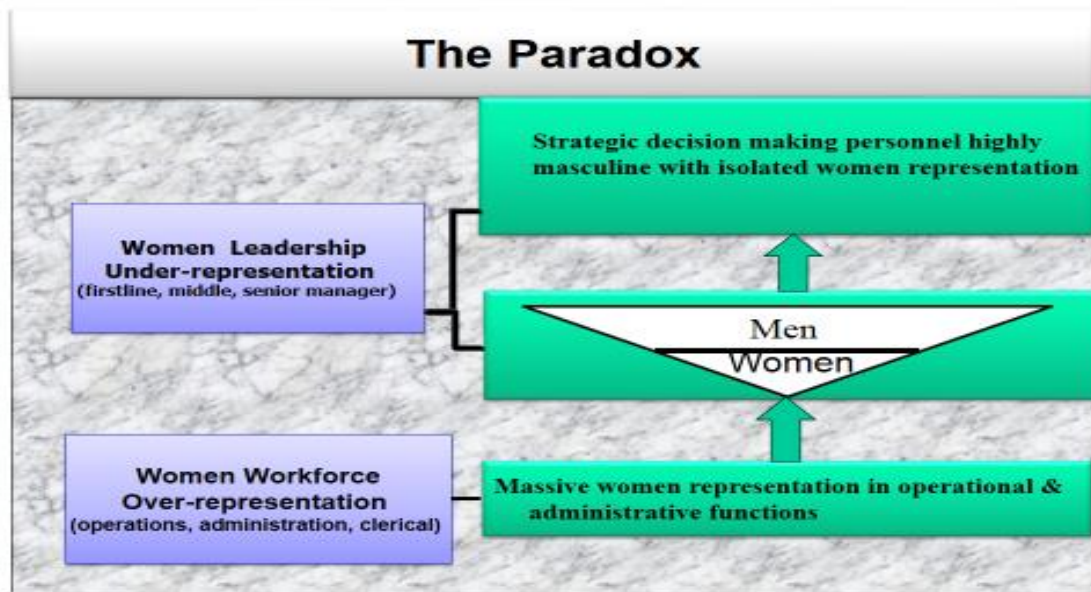
Source: Author generated

This figure depicts a paradox indicating a strikingly low representation of women in leadership positions and high representation of women in operational and administrative functions. Acquaah and Kiggundu (2017) mirror the same viewpoint, observing the existence of little research on non-Western women managers and leaders. The above paradox shows a high degree of representation in the middle and operational levels in the public enterprises in Eswatini on one hand related to a low representation of women in the middle and top leadership positions, resulting in a huge gap. The absence of literature specifically focusing on women leadership in public enterprises in Eswatini creates an interesting anxiety on how women view themselves in their active participation in the decision-making processes of these entities. It would therefore be plausible to understand the phenomenon of, and implications of women under-representation in public enterprises in Swaziland.

The significant drop in female participation in the leadership courses during the period 2010 to 2015, from 70 to 10, represents a massive decline of 86%. These figures suggest a high degree of

complacency in women to improve their leadership skills and therefore advance to higher positions. This fall in women participation demonstrates low attention on women leadership development, further dividing the leadership gap far apart in the workplace. These figures demonstrates the degree of complacence in women to embark on leadership studies as strategy towards addressing the women leadership paucity. Women in general continue to encounter sexism, biases, marginalisation and the lack of professional development prospects in the workplace which compound the barriers (Beckwith, Carter and Peters, 2016)

1.4 The Purpose and Objectives

The purpose of this study was to explore the reasons for under-representation of women leadership in public enterprises within Eswatini. The study therefore considered a number of parameters that hindered women acceleration to leadership. The following objectives were identified:

- Explore barriers that hindered women from occupying leadership positions in public enterprises.
- Evaluate the effectiveness of women leadership by distinguishing their talents to masculine leadership.
- Identify strategies that are likely to enhance women leadership in public enterprises in Swaziland.
- Evaluate the impact of policy in promoting women leadership in public enterprises.

The research purpose and objectives created the framework for understanding impediments to women leadership and therefore strategies for stimulating their participation in the labour force, including promotions to leadership positions. The ultimate goal was to provide gender equity meant to reducing poverty and fuel economic growth (Amanchukwu, Stanley and Ololube, 2015).

1.5 The Research Questions

The research problem that constitutes the under-representation of women leadership characterises the need for a qualitative rather than quantitative enquiry suggesting the development of a research question that generates empirical data. Research questions help describe a phenomenon under investigation and are key aspects of the research design in that they define what the researcher wants to learn or understand (Alvi, 2016). These views are echoed by Manuell and Graham (2017) who believe that the researcher's interests and worldview including the existing literature shape the research questions.

The main research question set out to establish what factors prevented women from advancing to leadership positions in public enterprises within Swaziland. To gain deeper insight into the study, further research sub-questions were identified:

- What is the impact of women special talents distinguishable from male leadership in realizing organizational effectiveness?
- What are the barriers hindering women from occupying leadership positions in public enterprises?
- Can strategies be developed to enhance women leadership in the public enterprises?
- What impact has the current gender policy made in enhancing women leadership?

The research questions provided the driving force for the study process aimed at unleashing new knowledge on women leadership under-representation.

1.6 Research Merit and Contribution to the Study

Adams (2016) observes that sustainable development is only achievable if an equitable distribution of opportunities, resources and leadership is transformed equally between the genders. A reassessment of the gender roles becomes inevitable for positive change. The voluminous studies on women under-representation on the global scene have been well documented, yet limited research exists in Sub Saharan Africa, with generally little attempts being made to make this available in Swaziland, particularly in public enterprises. The gender-specific stereotypes experienced in Malaysia and Australia on male and female supervisors' value seem to show a significant difference embedded in their cultural orientation (Hughes, Ginnett and Curphy, 2015). Although these barriers are relevant in making conclusions about the status of gender inequality, particularly regarding women under-representation, it would appear necessary to explore the specific barriers from a Sub-Saharan African perspective, whose solutions are likely to be different from these countries. For example, the same studies further observed that societies regard effective leadership differently. It is generally acknowledged that aspects such as traits, follower behaviour and situational elements form essential components to the scientific development of women leadership (Bahiru *et al*, 2018). These views are particularly critical in the design of a gender inclusive leadership in public enterprises. Enhanced literature in the public enterprises provides more scope in the construction of a reference checklist for women leader aspirants.

A further contribution to science in this field involves the need to re-design specific capacity building programmes that get to the root causes of women under-representation, with fewer

studies specifically focused on challenging the developmental opportunities facing women in the African context (Africa Human Development Report, 2016). An understanding of strategies for addressing barriers that are manipulatively designed to discredit women leadership provides tools for combating future similar patterns. Few studies in Sub-Saharan Africa have attempted to analyse the relationship between gender and organisational behaviour, suggesting that loopholes that trigger gender barriers are present.

The paradox of women leadership under-representation in the upper echelons in relation to an over-representation of the female operations workforce in Swaziland's public enterprises presents a major gap likely to cause the social iniquities being experienced nationally and globally (SADC Gender Protocol Barometer, 2018). The working population of women in Swaziland concentrates in the lower levels of operations, despite being an economically active segment within the age group of 55 – 64 years (Motsa, 2018; World Bank, 2017). Gender inclusive leadership in Swaziland is still an unexplored phenomenon, warranting considerable investigation. In this discourse, an attempt is made to analyse the barriers to women leadership through a gap analysis, further supported by existing literature that helps build on the study findings to reconstruct the phenomenon of gender inclusive leadership**.**

Gender inclusive leadership in Sub-Saharan Africa has the potential of ensuring equitable leadership distribution and therefore, the possibility of achieving the regional millennial development goals (SADC Gender Protocol Barometer, 2018). The protocol on Millennium Development Goal (MDG) 3 sought to promote gender equality and women empowerment by 2015, but little strides were made along this goal. Additionally, the Equal Employment Opportunity legislation obliged organisations within its territorial mandate to implement equitable recruitment and promotion practices with a deliberate bias on women inclusion (Neher, 2018). However, the observations above have not been substantially proven in SSA, compelling further research in the area of study.

1.7 Key Concepts in the Study

In order to gain a firm grip of the study framework, major concepts relevant to the study are discussed in the following sections. These include public enterprises, under-representation, gender inclusive leadership and women leadership.

1.7.1 Public enterprises

The definition of public enterprise, as known in Swaziland and State-owned in South Africa is generally agreed to refer to corporate bodies and legal entities instituted by the government with a dual purpose in public and enterprise dimension (Matsiliza, 2017). The state takes a passive role in the management of these entities whose performance has not been encouraging prompting closer examination regarding their governance. These enterprises require ethical and visionary leadership which has not been sufficiently demonstrated evident in the poor service delivery and the accompanying protests. These public enterprises are expected to not only serve as engines to economic growth and the interests of the government, but to provide societal needs of citizens as social corporate responsibility (Zhua, Liub and Laic, 2016). The public dimension characterises public interests, ownership, control, management and accountability on one hand while the enterprise dimension relates to the organisation's decision making, its uniqueness, capability to make goods and services, risk-taking and profitability all of which are made possible through commercialised undertakings. Thus, public enterprises have a dual role to fulfil the public mandate and the commercial imperative to generate revenues.

These characteristics constitute the growth objectives in less developed countries and form the criteria upon which their performance is measured. Public enterprises are evaluated from their financial and economic capacity to produce efficiency and effectiveness (Azmat and Fujimoto, 2016). It should be noted that where these enterprises operate as national monopolies, they are not expected to make profit or run as profit-making schemes (Olusola, 2016). Their existence is often compromised as they do not operate independently without government interference and in the main, supporting political patronage. Matsiliza (2017) noted the collapse of service delivery provided by public enterprises calling for a transformation towards social economic development. As a result, public enterprises have lost their intended mandate as not only economic builders, but vehicles for providing the essential social services.

Poor management and leadership in public enterprises which continue to reel under the shackles of bureaucracy, presenting severe administrative constraints. The state-owned enterprises (SOE's), as also known, have their capital ownership not exclusively public, implying that they self-finance their operations with the state controlling a large portion of their stocks (Abdullah, Percy and Stewart, 2015).

Consequently, the low performance of these enterprises has attracted widespread calls for their overhaul mainly with the desire to redefine leadership roles viewed as inevitable in the approach

of a gender inclusive leadership (Alotaibi, Cutting and Morgan, 2017). The concept of public enterprise originates from independent states that seek to improve livelihoods of its citizens by developing their economies through commercialisation believed to attain profitability from a well-selected human capital, with the capacity to deliver excellent services. This view entails finding responsible and innovative leadership whose vision seeks to fulfil this goal (Amanchukwu *et al,* 2015). In public enterprises, the lower level manager consists of foremen and supervisors selected by management and are in direct contact with the workers in operations and customers. This level includes all managers in the entry supervisory level or firstline. They maintain the link between workers in operations and the middle-level managers and often have limited authority in making final decisions.

The Government of Swaziland categorises these enterprises as category A and B, where the former derives the majority of interest and receives government intervention, with the latter drawing the minority of interest from the government. These characteristics seem to affect the performance of the enterprises, calling for creative and innovative leadership, if they are to survive (Dividend Policy on Public Enterprises Report, 2015). These enterprises are outlined in Appendix 1. The under-representation of women in leadership seems to limit the horizon for attracting potential players. The public enterprises are expected to produce results where those in category 'A' target goals that are developmental, commercial and social, those in category 'B' pursue profit motives and therefore operate along business lines. In Swaziland, this is largely where most of the women leadership is visible. These leaders ensure that work is completed as planned by their juniors and therefore require effective leadership skills and the know-how that can be effectively developed through supervisory development training programmes (Centre for Women Business Report, 2017). While the Government of Swaziland has made significant efforts to train supervisors in public enterprises, there has not been a deliberate move to increase the number of women in leadership courses.

1.7.2 Women under-representation

As the search for gender inclusive leadership intensifies, the workforce creates an increasingly valued asset in an organization, with voices beginning to be heard for the involvement of women, particularly those in leadership (Potvin, Burdfield-Steel, Potvin and Heap, 2018; Workplace Diversity and Inclusion Strategy, 2011–15). The under-representation of women in the public enterprises is significant in that women are concentrated in the low levels performing merely administrative and clerical jobs. Women participation in strategic positions is predominantly low,

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provoking the impetus to interrogate possible reasons, as evidenced in the on-going debates on gender equality in business circles, but with little discourse experienced in public enterprises (Potvin *et al,* 2018). The under-representation of women therefore becomes visible and not adequately prioritised as an urgent issue. Berg (2015) reported the general inequality of industry leaders in businesses represented 55% male. The findings revealed disproportionate women under-representation in leadership positions, compelling the need to gain deeper insights into the possible impediments to gender inclusive leadership.

The concept of women leadership under-representation continues to exist unabated throughout the universe, with varied degrees of intensity in different parts of the world. Adichie (2017) views the conundrum facing women in securing leadership roles as more pronounced in Sub Saharan Africa, than in the Western economies. A large portion of nations globally experience some form of restrictions for women involvement in decisions, coupled with wide gender job differences (Fitzsimmons, 2012). Increased gender role differences perpetuated in traditional parenting are arguably deemed to be in the custodian of females who tend to resist letting go of their biological responsibilities. In our search for the causes that limit women to ascend to leadership positions, it emerged abundantly clear that some of these seemed to be self-inflicted. However, it is still unclear at what level in the leadership hierarchy barriers mostly manifest, given the different individual orientations (Abalkhail, 2017). Despite these observations, the study that uses appropriate methodologies is likely to proffer sound conclusions. It is unquestionable that women undertake a major role in the domestic environment likely to interfere with formal work. This research posits on the nuances of women parental roles as they relate to their ability to accomplish responsibilities associated with leadership in the workplace. This underpins the essence of analysing the concept of leadership in the context of gender and inclusiveness, to help establish the situation of women in this dilemma.

Furthermore, McKinsey and Company (2015) lament the paradox of huge numbers of women employed in operational low levels that are less remunerated vis-à-vis more men occupying top strategic, highly paying positions. These arguments point to the magnitude of the existing barriers that face women in their endeavor to assume leadership positions. However, it is most probable that any larger percentage of women represented at board level could be expected to influence higher percentage for CEOs, given the visibility of women at the decision-making position. Additionally, it would compel a further probing of other factors, suggesting a more elaborate investigation.

The SADC report (2018) presents an argument, indicating a reduced women involvement in top leadership positions, which represented only 24% of the decision-making positions. These findings however, cannot explicitly attribute where the decisions can be most effective if more women were involved. As observed earlier, the continued existence of job distinction by gender continues to influence the choice of decision-makers in different sectors of our society (Fitzsimmons, 2012). However, the visibility of gender disparity in leadership in a society with about half of the workers in a country being women raises the concern in the question of equitable leadership distribution. Furthermore, in light of the social iniquities experienced, the world-over, a new dispensation of a collaborative leadership seems to be a panacea where the combination of unique talents from different genders could combat these problems (Al-Asfour, Tlaiss, Khan and Rajasekar, 2017). As the enquiry seeks to close the women leadership under-representation gap, scrutiny is made on the meritocratic dialogue that reinforces diversity and offers long term benefits to business accomplishments often thwarted by philosophies that perpetuate self-interests and long-time players in conventional male powerhouses. The study is narrowed down from the broad diversity perspective to focus specifically on the increased disparity in women leadership. The participants in this study represented the public enterprises in Eswatini, attending leadership courses at Mananga Centre. The public enterprises, or state-owned corporations (SoC's), are expected to render affordable public services in their localities, but more often their performance is found wanting not only in Eswatini, but in the whole of Sub Saharan Africa (SSA), raising the desire for creative transformation marshalled most probably by responsible leadership (Matsiliza, 2017).

1.7.3 Gender and women leadership

Gender includes both male and female in relation to their social, behavioural and cultural attributes shaped by societal expectations and norms (Murray, 2016). Similarly, gender equality seeks to strike a balance in the factors between men and women, in respect of their relationship as a result of power and authority differences (Chen, Defoyd, Hetterich, Jeffords and Levine, 2016). While other forms of gender such as androgyny and homosexuality exist, this study focuses mainly on masculinity and femininity as major gender aspects. Gender is therefore a social grounded concept deeply rooted in political and religious circles and thus inextricably connected (Potvin *et al*, 2018). In addressing gender inequalities, women are often at the centre of the debate and discourse presenting a lesser focus on the role of men in charting out solutions to the problem.

This tends to aggravate cultural and historical perceptions, biases and discrimination that seem to place men and women apart.

Ahmad (2017) views inclusion as complex adding that a better understanding can be derived by asking questions on inclusion such as 'for what, 'by whom', and 'into whom'. These pointers require specifying the inclusion for gender inclusive leadership. For example, inclusion for 'what?' points to two perspectives of the notion of inclusion, with the initial definition of inclusion focusing narrowly on defining gender groups that seek to promote and emphasise diversity of the whole population and not restricted to gender. The nature of inclusion transcends beyond positional areas to include those cultural 'no-go-areas' created by social peripherals that restrict women participation in decision-making. Bahiru *et al* (2018) advocate a paradigm shift that re-defines stakeholders' broad values for diversity, equity, involvement and sustainability, all of which can be traced in the axiological perspective. These aspects do not imply a perfect theory, but rather encourage the constant movement towards a conscious engagement with desirable change in women leadership within public enterprises. Indiscriminate interpretation of the question '*inclusion into what?*' should be carefully considered to unearth possible risk of fundamental contradiction within inclusion. A further observation of inclusiveness abounds in the conviction that inclusion is inextricably connected to exclusion, with each necessitating the other in diverse milieus (Huber and O'Rourke, 2017). The volatility of human behaviour in different situations appeals to challenges associated with inclusion, manifest in diversity and the uniqueness of individuals. While inclusiveness may be the goal in gender inclusive leadership, there are still occasions when exclusiveness features based on socio-political and cultural backgrounds are experienced separately in different organisations. However, the concept calls for a more concerted enquiry specifically poised on the fundamental key aspects. The concept of gender diversity is currently receiving significant acknowledgement in the field of management which shares common purpose with gender inclusive leadership (Randel, Dean, Ehrhart and Chung, 2016).

1.8 Thesis Structure

In Chapter 1, the topic of this study was defined briefly to equip the reader with a sense of the purpose of the thesis. The chapter provided an overview of the study, which included the background of the field. The problem statement was defined, indicating the possible causes for the problem, but also highlighting its significance to be pursued in a study of this nature. The purpose of the study was outlined with the accompanying fundamental objectives that gave

direction to the goals to be achieved. The major research questions were stated, which helped to understand how the problem was to be addressed. An indication of why the research questions were pertinent was provided, which was followed by the study justification where the researcher indicated why it was necessary to delve into the study of this magnitude.

Chapter 2 presents the theoretical foundations in which the gender inclusive leadership framework is outlined. The study focus is given prominence where fundamental concepts are put into perspective to enable an understanding of the study development. The concept of gender inclusive leadership is presented with the aid of a diagrammatic illustration and is linked to the research questions identified in the study. A number of theories and models are therefore created and further developed around this framework.

Chapter 3 covers the literature review that is related to the topic on gender inclusive leadership. It provides the different theories and models pertinent to the field of study specifying the works that have been conducted over the years. A critical evaluation of the present literature is made seeking to elucidate on how the research question relates to the research findings.

Chapter 4 focuses on the methodology used to collect and analyse the relevant data by employing the qualitative method, whereby the respondents provided the needed data. The chapter seeks to solicit the views of respondents working in the public enterprises, with valid data that would be useful in making meaningful conclusions in the study. Thus, data collection and analysis proceeded concurrently with regular adjustment being made as new themes emerged.

Chapter 5 presents the study findings articulating participants' responses to the main research question and the sub-research questions. The findings are organizes in distinct but interrelated categories identified as barriers to women leadership, the impact of women leadership in improving organizational effectiveness, women leadership comparability, strategies that enhanced women leadership and the impact of gender policy. All these themes combine to provide a robust response to the study question.

Chapter 6 picked on the findings and discussed these in relation to the literature review and theories identified. This chapter centred on bringing into focus the core issues of the study findings getting further perspectives on how new theory added to the body of knowledge in the field.

Chapter 7 forms the final part of the study, where conclusions and recommendations are made, further suggesting the scope for future study. This chapter highlights how the research report responded to the research questions and the fulfilment of the objectives identified, further

providing a sense on how the study attempted to address women leadership under-representation and further indicating further how other emerging gaps were to be closed.

1.9 Chapter Summary

In this chapter, the introduction and background to the study were presented, where the context of the study was described in more detail and further placed the problem into perspective. This was followed by an explicit discussion of the study problem to show its significance as necessary in addressing women leadership under-representation, but also as an urgent issue that needed societal attention. The chapter also described major concepts in the study in an effort meant to deter any ambiguity that could otherwise arise in the discussion of key fundamental parameters. The objectives of the study were stated, which were meant to direct the progression of this study purpose. These were enhanced by research questions which acted as triggers for exploring the topical issues under the study. Both the research objectives and questions determined the focus and scope of the study within which the discussion gravitated. The next chapter provides the theoretical foundations in which the study framework is constructed to further help gain insight into the pertinent gap under enquiry.

CHAPTER 2: THEORETICAL FOUNDATIONS

2.1 Introduction

The concept of gender inclusive leadership tends to be gaining momentum globally shading light to the growing need for transforming organizations to remain viable under the difficult economic environment where leadership is being scrutinised. A number of theories and models have been developed focusing on alternative solutions that are likely to address the economic challenges. The research question which focused on barriers facing women leadership further explored strategies for enhancing women leadership by providing foundational inputs in the construction of a gender inclusive leadership where both women and men achieved shared equally in the leadership. Leicht, Goclowska van Breen and de Lemus (2017) argue that fixed female identities derived from existing biological roles tend to impede women advancement to leadership thus providing little access to decision making. Introducing women to increased leadership tends to trigger societal conflict deriving from perceptions that consider such actions as an attack to the institution of the historical and cultural social order.

Several studies have cited gender inequality in the workplace as considered stubbornly persistent in a number of organisations with global women labour force participation declining from 57% in 1990 to 55% in 2013 (World Bank, 2017:ILO, 2015). Abalkhail (2017) observed that women in full-time employment faced challenges in balancing between work and family responsibilities, causing the leadership effort in the workplace to appear burdensome. From a cultural and traditional perspective, women are expected to assume a greater role in the family including looking after the extended families while men little time and spending much of their excess time outside the family (Lantara, 2015). The demand for women in domestic responsibilities deny them time to be able to network, where information is exchanged for use towards building an awareness of the skills and experiences needed to become an effective leader. In the workplace, women are therefore considered frail and less effective since their energies have to be reserved for domestic chores (Diehl and Dzubinski, 2016).

2.2 A Framework for Gender Inclusive Leadership

The research centred on finding responses to why there were fewer women leaders than men in public enterprises and thus, engaged in a detailed enquiry into the key variables that either supported or obstructed women to ascend to leadership positions. To achieve this theories were constructed to shape the results of the intended outcomes of this study.

2.2.1 Structuring gender inclusive framework

In positioning the study to meet the above objectives, a gender inclusive framework was used that provided data and the strategies towards increasing inclusivity in leadership within public enterprises. Figure 2.1 illustrates the structural design of a gender inclusive framework.

FIGURE 2.1: GENDER INCLUSIVE LEADERSHIP FRAMEWORK
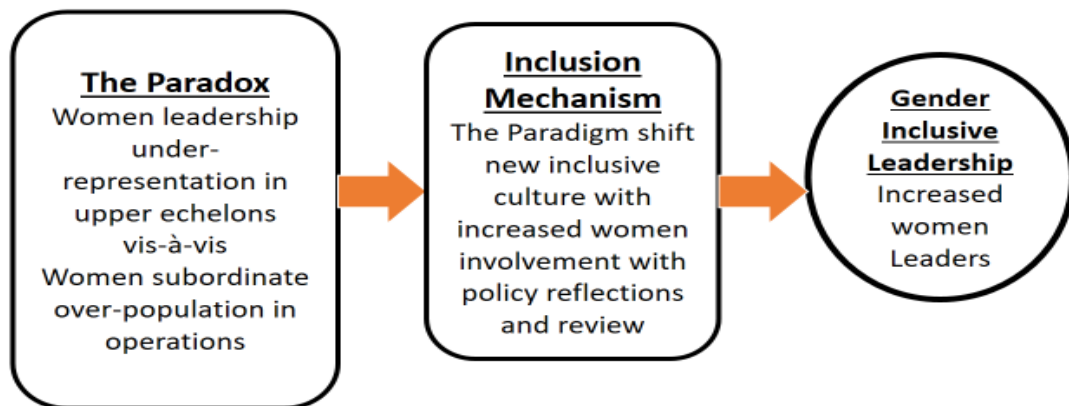
Source: Author generated

The above framework suggests a tapering gap in women leadership, achieved through an ontological constructivism that examines the reality through an epistemological investigation (Creswell and Creswell, 2018). By interacting with the participants in the public enterprises, the researcher gains appropriate knowledge based on the axiological decisions acceptable in the study milieu. The mismatch in gender leadership pervades the hierarchical structure where it is generally accepted that women are disadvantaged in strategic positions and their over-representation in low hierarchical levels represents profound gender inequalities (Ganiyu, Oluwafemi and Ademola, 2018). These perceptions tend to derive from the cultural and historical orientations within the patriarchal societies that make the major source of gender role segregation. This study therefore developed from a model that incorporated the existing schools of thought placing further thought on possible new horizons.

While women continue to be discriminated against as barriers to women leadership, women tend to characterize low self-esteem leading to a loss of confidence in taking up leadership positions, notably captured in the 'ambition gap' with fewer women who decide to come forward preferring to remain in their comfort zone (Al-kayed, 2015). These views are supported by a national

executive task force on women in the South African economy, which established that the desire for leadership in women tends to be weakened as they grow older because they become more aware of the frustrated ambitions regarded common in women (Fischer, Kret and Broekens, 2018). Some scholars contest these arguments arguing that women instead appeal to a variety of skill-building activities and usually proactively seek for advancement openings at any age range (Fitzsimmons, 2012). However, Azmat *et al* (2016) argue further that no substantive evidence exists to suggest women leader ineffectiveness, appealing instead to their ability to foster self-confidence in the workplace, while simultaneously fulfilling family obligations.

2.2.2 Sub Saharan Africa women under-representation

A catastrophic experience of weaknesses tends to hinder the drive towards gender inclusive leadership. A study conducted in South Africa in 2016 revealed that there were more female senior managers in the public sector (35%) than for the CEO/MD positions (4.4%), implying that women tend to be recognised more in the public than the private sector (Tadesse, 2017). However, the position may not be equally applied to the situation in the public enterprises and further that the findings fail to provide a clear distinction of, for example, directorship and chairperson, making the comparison seemingly unrealistic. It becomes difficult to draw conclusions on the basis of barriers facing women in the public enterprises. Nevertheless, assumptions could be established in understanding the presence of women leadership under-representation. It is generally acknowledged that women leadership representation narrows as one moves up the ladder (Yousaf and Schmiede, 2016).

It would appear women are allowed to occupy non-influential positions where incumbents are expected to consult with the higher office before the decision is implemented. It is however uncertain whether these observations can be applied in a similar fashion to public enterprises, for which this study is designed. Nonetheless, political mandates are similarly experienced in both government and public enterprises. These figures further raise questions on whether governments are genuinely committed towards advancing gender parity. A further study in Ethiopia revealed that 42% represented women employed in the government, but these were concentrated in low level positions (Grant Thornton International Business Report, 2016). These figures help explain the leadership inconsistences encountered in public enterprises where gender disparity is largely witnessed. The absence of an inclusive approach manifests in the form of the 'glass ceiling', which limits female advancement to leadership (Amon, 2017). These scholars present intriguing arguments that help explore barriers to women leadership in the public enterprise. For example,

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there are programmes such as capacity building initiatives, targeting women leadership development that could be used to help break the glass ceiling in the public enterprises (Bannier, 2016).

2.2.3 Gender inequality domains

The World Bank (2017) identified a gender strategy in which three main domains of gender inequality were cited and these included endowment, economic opportunity and agency. In the context of this study, endowment highlighted the leadership skills paucity, coupled with a low level of education, economic opportunity that accentuated a high degree of women domestic involvement and marginal women participation in the workplace and agency, entailing the lack of voice and decision-making as a result of women leadership under-representation. These domains are manifest in the dimensions of connectedness between them, potential interventions and climatic change shocks and conflicts exposing the gender imbalances (Fitzsimmons and Callan, 2016). The above domains and dimensions constitute foundational elements premised in households where individuals with varying needs, markets and institutions within the broader environment influence relationships between them and influences arising from dynamic society, thus influencing their attributes (Edstrom, Hassink, Shahrokh and Stern, 2015).

Women leadership under-representation occurs in a hostile environment where women experience an over-burdened workload in the home and little room for exercising authority and decision-making in the workplace (World Bank, 2017). These combine to create challenges for women leadership, resulting in conflict due to inequitable distribution of resources and further building up barriers to women leadership. Eagly and Heilman (2016) acknowledge the notion that organisations that consistently recognise women representation in leadership roles are likely to achieve sustainable competitive advantage through good governance thus leading to innovative, creative and intellectual thinking in boosting the bottom-line. The introduction of equal opportunity and equal treatment laws in the labour market indicates the commitment to reduced gender inequalities, yet the gender gap in accessing high-ranking positions still remains visible (Beckwith, Carter and Peters, 2016). These dynamics point particularly to the slow and limited women advancement, compelling further enquiry that can propel women leadership in public enterprises. Although the findings on women leadership under-representation have been widely publicised elsewhere, the situation remains narrowly attended to in Sub Saharan Africa (Helgesen, 2017).

2.2.4 The gender context

The male-dominated work has often been surrounded by masculine cultures that are not friendly to women. Several studies have been conducted covering gender issues in the workplace, the academia, and many other settings (Banchefsky and Park, 2018). Questions are being asked as to why the workplace remains stubbornly masculine and how progress could notably be achieved towards gender parity and women leadership representation. A major obstacle dominating the gender debate involves the influence of culture extended to include the workplace male-structured philosophies that pervade the male-dominant environment (Mundy, 2017). The gender debate has generated a number of gender ideologies based on two fundamental intergroup attitudinal dimensions on whether it is worthwhile to place concern on male-female difference and whether women are equitably evaluated. The first dimension seems to emphasise the need for understanding whether gender differences or gender similarities provide impact in making convincing conclusions (Hahn, Banchefsky, Park and Judd, 2015). Women in the corporate milieu are compelled to adopt a masculine work ethics abandoning their traditional and cultural identity. The next dimension involves the degree to which women are perceived to possess positive and respectful behaviours vis-à-vis dismissive and negative attitudes directed towards female (Banchefsky, 2018). The premise that all human beings are broadly equal regardless of their gender orientation provides justification for encouraging women to participate in leadership. Women core-exist with men in a society that his highly masculine and is one in which the workplace exhibits women leadership under-representation due to cultural philosophies. The research recognizes the existence of antitheses within a heterogeneous society likely to impede positive evaluation of women leadership.

A further aspect of contentious argument on gender involves unequitable pay. Pham, Fitzpatrick and Wagner (2018) found that capitalist and patriarchal societies experience widespread gender pay gap exacerbated by policies formulated from these economic perspectives. This entails a re-orientation of policy that seeks to analyse the gender pay gap. The disparity in pay provides a clear indication that women are generally discriminated against and are therefore unlikely to be considered for major promotions. Influencing women from a pay equality is likely to yield positive outcomes in stimulating women to leadership. The Institute for Women's Policy Research (2018) reports that in contrast to men, women seem to occupy lower-paying jobs in less lucrative industries and mostly employed in the informal sector. These findings suggest that

women are not visibly active in strategic positions of influence leaving the under-representation of women leadership as a workplace concern.

Pham *et al* (2018) trace the trends in pay disparity as arising from the pervasive stereotypes and prejudices in the workplace where the workplace support for work-life balance is low accompanied by devaluation of work primarily performed by women. These results are centred on occupational and industrial differences, differences in experience and education, region and unionization all of which are evaluated from a pro-masculine perspective (Mundy, 2017). This notion suggests that the gender divide is often experiences differently in dissimilar environments further influenced by socio-political and economic distribution.

2.2.5 Diversity gender and culture

The field of gender is currently receiving widespread attention where conversations, dialogues and discourse are being made to influence existing societal perceptions to appreciate the dynamics of culture. Major research work has been undertaken to conceptualise a multicultural intergroup ideology (Meeussen, Otten and Phalet, 2014). Cultural barriers as experienced in the workplace and the household seem to harm the performance of women. The discussions on gender inequality focusing on women leadership in its cultural context. Apfelbaum, Stephens and Reagans (2016) argue that organizations endeavour to shape the cultural context of the workplace to allow a meaningful discussion of diversity and social group differences. Nielsen, Alegria, Börjeson, Etzkowitz, Falk-Krzesinski and Joshi (2017) add that engaging in these gender arguments for these intergroup ideologies is likely to alter implicit intergroup prejudices and explicit behaviours towards stereotypes to women leadership. In fact the value of diversity in organizations derives from a multiplicity of viewpoints that balance the broader ideological perspectives. However, Apfelbaum *et al* (2016) warn against the indiscriminate use of gender ideologies and approaches to address women leadership in the workplace.

More often the state is drawn to support initiatives meant to address gender inequalities by instituting programmes such as gender quotas. According to Van der Windt, Humphreys, and de la Sierra (2018) while these measures contribute towards addressing these initiatives, formal groups including the state action may be of little influence particularly in the workplace. This argument suggests that the socio-psychological decisions are instilled in society from biological perspective right from an early stage of childhood through socialisation in gender norms with boys learning to be tough. However, giving voice to women is likely to make known the

preferences of women (World Bank, 2017). The notion of gender blindness suggests the idea of non-awareness where knowledge about gender relies mostly on research performed in masculine. Without adequate awareness of gender-biased research, there is the tendency to neutralize both men and women in the workplace giving way to traditional practices that promote workplace discrimination (Ahlsen, Bondevik, Mengshoel, and Solbrække, 2014). Despite the legal requirements to include men and women in the workplace, gender-blindness attitude still persists and at times leading to the needs of women being overlooked.

The development of competences through a well-established human resource management is a major organizational mandate that seeks to compete effectively in realizing quality services or/and products (Awaja, Awaja and Raju, 2018). Human resources become exceptional and inimitable assets in an organization contributing to competitive advantage by encouraging innovative ideas. In this essence, leadership emerges to be an exceedingly vital facet that stimulates the workforce to learn and attain their full potential. Organizations require leaders with organizational trust that creates an intra-organizational value chain which includes concepts constructed from relationships between colleagues, between leader-follower and between the workforce and the organization within socio-political exchanges (Jena, Pradhan and Panigrahy, 2017). The concept of trust creates a precondition for effective leadership likely to influence women leadership acceptability within the gender divide. Afsar and Masood (2018) consider trust as an effective power which promotes good leadership where the relationship between trust and innovation is deeply ingrained in organizational culture within which barriers to women leadership reside. In order to achieve reasonable women leadership representation in the workplace, their leadership is expected to garner a spirit of trustworthiness within the work environment which promotes entrepreneurial thinking and the possible improved performance (Van der Windt *et al*, 2018). Apart from the leader-follower trust relationship, the leader who exhibits intellectual stimulation prompts a high level of trust as role model for their subordinates. In pursuit of diversity as a tool for influencing women leadership, is the vital trait by transformational leaders which promotes creativity as they remain innovative with the leader individualised consideration behaviour instilling high degrees of trust in their followers (Al-kayed, 2015). Infusing the transformational traits into leadership styles provides the basis for understanding the needs, interests and security of followers thus further reinforcing the emotional bond between leader and follower with induced increased level of trust. Transformational leadership is likely to promote trust between leader and

follower which allows them to venture into the world of uncertainty as they seek to be creative and innovative.

2.2.6 Enhanced interpersonal relationship

In considering a framework for gender inclusive leadership, a further dimension relates to the level of interpersonal relationship that exists within a particular intergroup. In strengthening the concept of diversity, a number of aspects are considered including technological relevance in gender, leadership and emotional intelligence and the level of gender violence in the workplace.

2.2.6.1 Technological relevance in gender

The technological explosion has created a new society that has been enhanced in terms of communication breakthrough as data becomes extensively available for decision making. The G20 (2017) summit estimates that globally there are some 250 million fewer women online than their male counterparts with the developing countries having limited access often for women living in Sub-Saharan Africa and some parts of Asia. The under-representation of women in information and technology is also experienced in top management and the academia cutting across both developing and developed countries. However, despite this grim picture women are viewed as beginning to be remarkably inventive suggesting the possibility of narrowing the traditional gender gap (Olusola, 2017). These developments provide evidence that women hold the capacity to occupy leadership positions formerly the preserves of masculinity. However, women digital involvement still lags behind men compelling more ICT-intensive organizations to incentivise women entering this market with higher pay increases to stimulate their interest (OECD, 2018). These measure suggest that the realization that women are a marginalised population requires moving an extra mile to close the gap from a multiple approached.

The National Center for Women & Information Technology (2016) observes that using digital platforms provides women with greater access to the relevant industry, information flexitime work arrangements that promote work-life balance. These platforms are likely to enhance higher female interactions than the traditional structures would in making networking possible even with executives of the opposite sex in highly volatile environments. The use of digital tools may offer leapfrog opportunities for women economic empowerment. Such initiatives further point to the role of policy in respect of gender inclusive leadership vis-à-vis women participation (OECD, 2018).

Literature in the mobile money market had predicted the possibility of closing the gender gap by making women to access technological platforms thereby increasing transactions volumes involving women (Arntz, Gregory and Zierahn, 2016). Women involvement in technological transactions is likely to expose them to a wide spectrum of knowledge thus becoming aware of their contributions in the business world. Women become part of the financial inclusion and the likelihood to participate in the economic development. The use of digital platforms is likely to empower women to acquire leadership skills through the informal structure and allows women to have flexibility in work and learning times as long as connectivity is available (Breschi, Lassébie and Menon, 2018). Studies in Europe reveal a correlation that exists between flexible work hours and high employment rates among women with babies (OECD, 2018). Additionally, women access the job market globally and make their contributions through digital employment where mobility to the workplace is somehow minimised with a further reduction in risky incidents. In most parts of Sub Saharan Africa, these digital platforms remain alien as much of the required infrastructure is still under-developed. While digitalization brings benefits to most industrialised countries around the world, some developing countries especially in Africa still have few manufacturing industries to develop this sector (Arntz *et al*, 2016). The labour as opposed to capital-intensive economic activity tends to slow down the economic aspirations directed towards digitalization at a large scale.

An analysis of emotional labour provides two different processes of deep and surface acting with the former attempting to harmonize internal emotions with external expressions while the latter acting expresses excitement merely to show compliance with expectations (Lovatt, Nanton, Roberts, Ingleton and Noble, 2015). In deep acting, the subordinate creates the needed excitement within themselves while surface acting exhibits individual's appearance meant to satisfy expectations probably through facial expressions, tone and so on without realizing own feelings. This argument is demonstrated in the theory of cognitive dissonance in which service employees may be tense when displaying emotions that do not resonate with their inner emotional feelings (Ara, 2018). The notion that gender is a social construction is based on the premise that different emotions change and can be changed. An awareness of the emotions that combine to create gendered norms is likely to consolidate the dichotomy that depicts men and women as in inclusive leadership. Understanding the concept of gender-blindness provides scope for interpreting the 'non-awareness of the notion that much of knowledge in this field is performed by men. Madsen, Jensen and Esbensen (2015) concur by looking at the same notion differently observing that

gender-blindness is an obstacle that fails to take into account the needs and interests of women in or about to enter the leadership arena. It would appear one side of the coin with gender neutrality forming the other. This notion suggests that gender issues are considered irrelevant and therefore no need to bother about them (Hirsh, Hollingshead, Matthias, Bair and Kroenke, 2014). It is common practice to note how men fall under this category demonstrating an attitude of little interest in the needs of women leaders and believing their actions are in compliance with cultural norms and dictates. Without sufficient awareness about gender-biased and prejudiced research, it has not been uncommon to neutralize the concept of women leadership allowing male dominance to take its course.

2.2.6.2 Leadership and emotional intelligence

Effective leadership seems to be anchored around enhanced interpersonal relationships pronounced deeply in the leader's ability to understand people's feelings and emotions. The concept of gender inclusive leadership is a social phenomenon and which depends almost exclusively on how best the emotions are directly or indirectly used to influence reasoning and rationality (Ara, 2018). Neglecting the management of emotions costs organizations profoundly as these form the physical image of the organization. By managing and organizing feelings management is likely to realize increased performance. Most organizations seek to satisfy customers and can only do so if they are able to excite employee emotions. The differences in handling emotions tend to separate men from women in occupying the different jobs. Men frequently tend to be aggressive and curt in their approach towards their jobs while women would approach tasks through restrained aggression and anger towards transgressors (International Monetary Fund, 2017). Women are therefore considered compassionate, charitable, agreeable and nurturing. The sexual division of emotional labour impacts on the acceptability of women leadership in managing workplace emotions. In a study conducted by Ara (2018) the amount of emotional labour was found to increase remarkably when true feelings were expressed followed by deep acting with behaviours that are consistent with workplace expectations. These observations suggest the need to consider emotional intelligence as a concept for equipping leaders and managers to understand emotional labour.

Rahman and Haleem (2018) emphasise the essence of emotional intelligence in contributing to the success of individual and organizational development. The organization determines the level of interactive relationships between the leaders and followers. Individuals who make the organization demonstrate the ability ascertain self and others feelings and emotions which

influence the type of decisions being made. In service organizations, the interaction between managers and employees and organizations and customers has a significant bearing on the success of an entity (Fasihizadeh, Oreyzi and Nouri, 2012). The psychological role of emotional intelligence determines the quality of interaction between managers and their subordinates which in turn influences performance of work teams in increasing competitive advantage. It would appear therefore that employees with emotional intelligence understand the emotions of others and are capable of balancing the interests of both team members and organizations. The contents of emotional intelligence and its relationship to job satisfaction are illustrated in Figure 2.2 as independent and dependent variables.

FIGURE 2-2: EMOTIONS & JOB SATISFACTION

Source: Fasihizadeh, Oreyzi and Nouri (2012)

Scholars perceive emotional intelligence differently with some referring to it as the ability to understand , manage and control own and others' emotions while others considers it as the innate drive to feel, use, recognize understand and interpret emotions of the self and others (Nabih, Metwally and Nawar, 2016; Taboli, 2013). The notion of emotional intelligence seems fundamental to leadership and is likely to be understood differently from the different genders. Women tend to demonstrate a certain facet of emotional intelligence dissimilar to that in men implying further differences in leadership. Rahman *et al* (2018) observe that a plethora of research exists covering emotional intelligence (IQ) to the effect that senior managers who command a high degree of IQ demonstrate more job performance than those with low IQ. This argument tends to obtain from social perceptions where women tend to be considered emotionally unstable thus

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affecting their leadership style. As a result, emotional intelligence becomes the fulcrum for building as well as enhancing leader-subordinate relationship and development. Nabih *et al* (2016) affirm that adopting emotional intelligence provides remarkable relationship between emotionality and job satisfaction. These arguments seem to suggest that managing emotional intelligence provides effective leadership and a satisfied workforce that enjoys healthy interpersonal relationships. In fact, Taboli (2013) determines the existence of a relationship between emotional intelligence and personal traits as key aspects of a relationship between the leader and follower. An understanding of the self and others helps in both the leader and follower to express their thoughts, beliefs and attitudes creating an open atmosphere meant to develop cohesive teams. Zakieh and Aminilari (2013) depict the organization as a group of individuals with emotions that can be integrated into individual interpersonal skills, subject to being adaptable. In this study, an understanding of how women use emotional intelligence to process emotional information becomes exceedingly essential in achieving leadership acceptability. This suggests that leadership that manages emotions intelligently is likely to accumulate increased labour towards achieving organizational effectiveness.

2.2.6.3 Workplace harassment and leadership

This study pursues women leadership focusing on their acceptability as leaders within the patriarchal environment with sexual harassment at the centre of the controversy. Existing literature on workplace sexual harassment reveals the negative impact that creates a hostile workplace setting for women causing impediments to women leadership (Lean In and Survey Monkey, 2018). Women who experience sexual harassment in the workplace tend to shun any leadership positions that seem forthcoming in the pretext that such advancement may be considered unethical (Amnesty International, 2016). Women respond to sexual harassment differently with varied outcomes. The concept of workplace sexual harassment is a topical issue today interpreted variously in different milieus, suggesting that women leadership carries dissimilar perspectives as a result of cultural-historical orientations (Leicht *et al,* 2017). The paucity of consistent interpretation creates barriers for women leadership, as some actions may not be easily subjected to sexual harassment deterring in the process the potential for women to become leaders. Jiang, Chen, Sun and Yang (2017) concede that power influences the degree of sexual harassment experienced in the workplace from all sources including supervisors and subordinates alike with the possibility of occurring mostly where power differentials are high. However, in most instances, supervisors may hold absolute formal power likely to be abused as

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a result of their capacity to manipulate it evident in the perceived transactional leadership theory (Agbim, 2018). Women are likely to be victims to supervisors' actions who may demand sexual favours to those seeking advancement or may be enticed to enter into such intimacy likely to be labelled as sexual harassment. Sexual harassment is likely to be viewed a barrier prompting further scrutiny to establish its impact in such a relationship. These facets have far-reaching long-term implications on the bottom line and the organization's wellbeing.

The current attitude from men towards women emanates from cultural doctrines that exalt men to superior positions justifying their violent conscious or unconscious behaviours towards women. Workplace sexual harassment seems to have gained greater attention in the past few years within the gender divide literature with states proffering stern measures to curb its occurrence (Lippel, 2016). The Trade Union Congress (2016) affirms that generally, men tend to take advantage of the societal perceptions in making wild demands on their female subordinates by virtue of their masculine superiority. As this discourse considers priority options for a better women future in the workplace, strategies for addressing the impediments emerge appearing from all possible angles. By empowering women to confidently take up leadership positions in the workplace the sexual harassment incidents are either reduce or are exposed (Alexander-Scott, Bell and Holden, 2016). Agbim (2018) notes that both female and male employees are often subjected to a myriad of all forms of harassment including physical and psychological violence such as bullying, verbal abuse and cyber-bullying. Due to the hostilities that result from the harassment, there appears to have been greater female exodus experienced in the workplace. These factors combine to create impediments to women leadership.

2.3 Chapter Summary

This chapter laid down the foundation for indulging into a study on women leadership under-representation in public enterprises. while the objectives created the bedrock for answering the research question, the theories and relevant literature helped put the study development into perspective. A framework for creating a gender inclusive environment was constructed including a structure for developing gender inclusive leadership within public enterprises. An examination of parameters causing women leadership under-representation was carried out reinforcing an understanding of barriers to women leadership. The various milieus presented different types of barriers to women leadership in public and private enterprises. For example, it was established that from the available literature that women occupied the less influential leadership positions, an action meant to soothe the gender inequality debate. A further discussion in this chapter involved

finding a strategy made up of three main domains in gender inequality in which women leadership under-representation was put on the spotlight. A framework was outlined illustrating the design of gender inclusive leadership as achieved through an ontological constructivism. The domains included endowment, economic opportunity and agency all of which were fundamental to an understanding of the phenomenon. Despite understanding these parameters, the under-representation of women leadership remains a topical issue. Also critical was placing the concept of women leadership into gender context focusing mainly on the intergroup attitudinal dimensions within the male dominated environment. Reinforcing the study theoretical foundations were the concepts of gender, diversity and culture which formed the overarching premise within which the discussion was centred. The chapter finally discussed the concept of gender inclusive leadership where key dimensions were navigated to establish how interpersonal relationships were enhanced. Technological relevance to gender issues was analysed with a view to exploring women-friendly approaches to addressing women leadership. Outstanding thoughts were based on the impact of the digital platforms which served as one possible solution to the impediments to women leadership. The role of emotional intelligence was analysed where managing emotion and feelings developed the interpersonal relationship creating cohesive productive teams. Finally, the concept of sexual harassment was discussed relating it to the workplace and in particular, women leadership. The concept derived from the desire for observing ethical conduct where effective leadership maintained the right stream of values with minimal cases of harassment. The chapter further analysed the male-dominated workplace surrounded by an unfriendly masculine cultures. A number of questions were raised which pointed to the stubborn masculine workplace and inequality to leadership representation. The discussion further cited gender issues revealed in conversation existing societal perceptions to appreciate the dynamics of culture.

The next chapter reviews existing literature focusing on the leadership theories and models with specific reference to the gap in women leadership.

CHAPTER 3: LITERATURE REVIEW

3.1 Introduction

Women under-representation has been widely experienced the world-over but on a larger scale in Sub-Saharan Africa. The existing paradox is well known where women leadership representation in senior and middle managerial levels is not proportional to men. Recently, there has been much interest in the concept of women leadership and its relevance to organizational effectiveness. There has been fast growth in research theories and models on gender equality but little progress has been made to promote sufficient women to leadership positions in public enterprises. This chapter reflected on the existing literature in keeping with this study on what factors contributed to the under-representation of women leadership and the impact of their leadership to organizational effectiveness. The research study also examined the comparability of women leadership seeking to justify the concern reasons for closing the gap. The bulk of research on gender inequality often overlooks the distinctive qualities and talents in women (Kezar and Holcomb, 2017). The absence of sufficient research on women leadership in public enterprises in Sub Saharan resulted in a lack of intellectual inquiry on the subject. Much of the literature has been limited to gender inequality issues with little emphasis on women leadership in particular. In this chapter literature on the role of women leadership is reviewed with particular focus on leadership in the public enterprises and as it relates to improving organizational effectiveness.

Some scholars have argued that invisible barriers exist at all levels within the hierarchical structures and that these are equally felt rather than reside merely at the top (Hill, Miller, Benson and Handley, 2016). Additionally, these barriers are experienced variously at degrees of impact at senior, middle and firstline managerial levels. Creswell *et al* (2018) argue that the unit of study should be clearly identified to allow a credible analysis in any grounded study, thus avoiding some level of conflict resulting from biases. The associated emerging barriers are further scrutinised to establish the impact of women leadership in the context of existing leadership models. Issues of capacity building, women leader support and policy for a gender inclusive leadership are integrated to help form robust bedrock for addressing the research questions.

3.2 Leadership Theories and Models

In this section, several leadership theories and models are examined as background information to women leadership but also providing the basis for addressing the research questions. The models are creatively developed to offer scope for gaining insight into how the women leadership

under-representation gap could be closed in public enterprises. The theories and models as identified represents a framework within which the discussion is centred again building on the theoretical foundations.

3.2.1 Levels in the managerial hierarchy

The study explored the significance of the different managerial levels in the hierarchical structures from the firstline through to the middle and senior levels in the public enterprises. All managers in these levels were perceived to partake distinguishable managerial functions of planning, organising, leading and controlling (Oni, 2017).

FIGURE 3.1: LEVELS OF MANAGERS
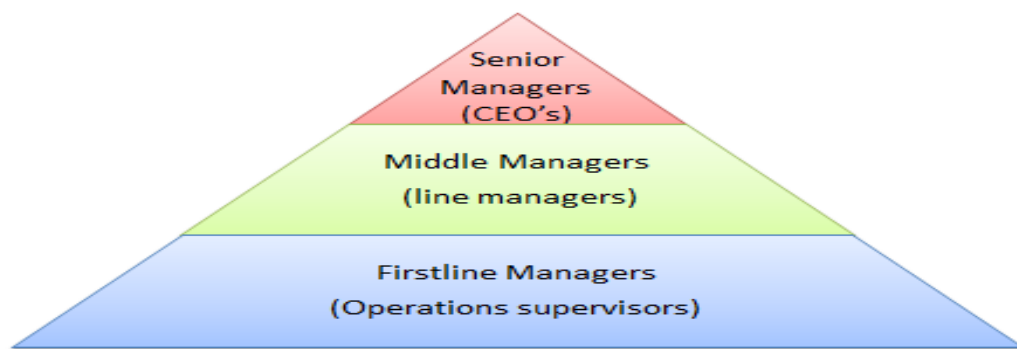
Source: Oni (2017)

The research investigated the under-representation of women leadership in the public enterprise focusing mainly on barriers that impeded women on their way to leadership positions. Longman, Daniels, Bray and Lindell (2018) report that there is an inverse representation of women in senior positions compared to an increasingly higher number of women at entry levels. Women obtain admittance to leadership positions but few make it to the middle and top posts. Recent research shows that women continue to suffer impediments as a result of their cultural vulnerability and are therefore less likely to achieve sustainable leadership breakthrough than their male counterparts who command long term professional leadership experience (Gehlert and Mozersky, 2018). However, Einarsdottir, Christiansen and Kristjansdottir (2018) challenge this notion arguing that women display leadership characteristics such as a willingness to accomplish

organisational goals, demonstrated relationships with others, a propensity to assist other members to lower any tensions that they may experience.

These views highlight aspects of job scope, span of control and job complexity included in management. The study acknowledges the insufficient research literature existing in this field within the Kingdom of Swaziland, as evidenced in the paucity of leadership skills within public enterprises (Mohammadkhani and Gholamzadeh, 2016). Effective leadership utilises the human resource to obtain the most competences in people in order to achieve organisational and individual goals. In attaining these goals, leaders lead, escort, guide, trace, steer and manage others. Leaders are therefore expected to lead a group, working towards performing some organisational functions where a meaningful direction is clearly set with every member brought on board and ready to adaptively confront the challenges that surface (Gehlert *et al,* 2018). Leadership tends to focus on those characteristics associated with women capabilities which include socialising within communities pointing more towards a leadership style seemingly suitable in directing public enterprises.

3.2.2 Gender and women leadership

Curated Research Report (2017) contend that there is urgent need for researching the possibility of increasing women leadership, aimed at making explicit the conundrum that there are several benefits accruing, where women are supported into acquiring leadership skills and maintaining the leadership roles in society. While women are not fully recognised as leaders, they possess the competencies expected in leadership, raising questions about why they are not included in leadership positions. These questions tend to be situated in the extent of discrimination in society largely directed on women who continue to be marginalised (Itulua-Abumere, 2017). Existing studies indicate the importance of researching further to explain how these challenges may be addressed to allow women to occupy strategic leadership positions (Muralidharan, Etayankara and Pathak, 2018). The studies demonstrate prevalent women leadership under-representation in the United States, showing possibly a much higher degree of female leadership under-representation in Sub Saharan Africa with insufficient studies having been conducted. While strides continue to be accounted for elsewhere, it remains frustratingly evident that very little effort exists in Eswatini. There are benefits likely to accrue where leadership is shared between the genders (ILO, 2015). Inequalities between gender is thought to have been reinforced by more workplace policies, procedures and standards that were written by men and often use masculine pointers such as 'he' (Fitzsimmons, 2012). Consequently, this biased view has disregarded the

interests of women who are placed behind the scenes. For instance, leadership proficiency in organisations tends to be explained and assessed in masculine terms where the roles of women are thought to be championed in the home (kitchen) and not in the workplace. Organizational practices tend to mirror societal norms which exalt masculinity thus importing the perceptions from the broader community to the workplace.

A dichotomy on masculinity and femininity appears necessary at this stage to shade more light on how women leadership is subjected to discrimination. The distinction dates back to ancient times and describes the dimensions that separate the emotional roles of men and women based on biological and historical perceptions. Masculinity is perceived to characterise the values of society in the form of assertiveness, tough and the propensity for material gains while femininity values aspects such as caring for others and emphasise the upliftment of the quality of life (Akram, Murugiah and Arfan, 2017). Lantara (2015) challenges this argument stating that the emancipation of woman in various areas of life has changed the landscape with women gradually taking up masculine traits. Women are beginning to possess the power of being stiff, tough, and accurate in decision making. Bahiru *et al* (2018) argues that women are likely to provide meaningful contribution to increased organizational performance if challenges of balancing work and domestic roles are addressed. However, Helgesen (2017) maintains that women find themselves within inhabitable environment especially in the formative years of their career demanding aggressiveness. As a result, Diehl *et al* (2016) cite obstacles to women leadership advancement which they organize as macro, degree of societal significance, meso as group or organizational impact and micro being the individual level. These challenges are not present in isolation but occur simultaneously.

Leadership is perceived as a form of responsibility directed towards achieving certain objectives through carefully coordinated use of appropriate resources including organisational members and other resources (Fitzsimmons *et al*, 2016). Fitzsimmons (2012) acknowledge this observation citing that leadership may not be a 'one-size-fits-all' phenomenon, but rather permeates through the different considerations manifest in attributes such as clarity on inspiring vision, commitment and competence as well as decisiveness and self-determination. These views seem to suggest that leadership entails some level of competence required for achieving set targets in a particular function. It is evident from the above arguments that leadership is centred on achieving organisational goals, while considering the well-being of individuals in the organisation. The

arguments seem to point towards identifying traits untenable in the personality of women due to the many roles they partake in the domestic sphere.

Although a substantial amount of research exists to support the above notion, generally leadership entails effectiveness that can be varied between genders, with observable differences in women and men (Chen, Defoyd, Hetterich, Jeffords, Levine, Milligan *et al,* 2016). For example, the argentic style described as "think manager-think male " attempts to justify and perpetuate male dominated leadership (Benjamin and Golom, 2015). However, these views seem to be aggravated by cultural beliefs held mostly in Sub Saharan Africa, where leadership is largely considered masculine, confining women to household functions. As a result of these stereotypes, men are incidentally placed in superior advantage. Eagly *et al* (2016) argue that women could still reclaim leadership if the fundamental explanations are applied where leaders perform their goal setting roles and become increasingly involved in influencing others. Additionally, women tend to command an over-riding advantage by virtue of their societal involvement. While a substantial amount of research argues in favour of a predominantly masculine leadership, femininity in leadership continues to play a paramount role when perceived in collaborative and interpersonal terms (European Union, 2017). However, Choobineh (2016) offers a contrasting opinion advancing that men assess female leadership in terms of tokenism and therefore find it difficult to subject themselves to feminine leadership further strengthened by cultural and spiritual orientations. Helgesen (2017) advocates for a more benevolent and inclusive work environment that encompasses both genders as the preferred leadership collaboration in this irking and turbulent ambiance. While it is widely conceded that most Sub Saharan African countries subscribe to strong cultural beliefs and socialisation as evidenced in Eswatini, women are explicitly absent in high leadership positions. A sound leader-follower relationship does improve organisational performance, yet it remains unclear whether female leadership makes material difference in increasing productivity.

In considering gender and women leadership, gender mainstreaming tends to provide an intriguing strategy for diffusing the gap on the under-representation of women leadership through a spread-out awareness on the visibility of gender. Acquaah *et al* (2017) perceive gender mainstreaming as a process that systematically integrates gender perceptions in all aspects such as legislation, social policies, programmes and projects, their action plans and budgets. This process enables the expectations and interests of both men and women to be incorporated as integral elements in planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the programmes

affecting the political, social, economic and environmental factors in order to achieve gender equality. SADC (2017) seems to focus mainly on gender mainstreaming requiring efforts to be made that broaden the participation of women leaders at all levels in decision-making. Increasing women involvement and decision making becomes the guiding principle in gender mainstreaming. For instance, to accelerate these efforts in gender policy, FAO allocated 30 per cent of its operational work and budget at country and regional levels that targeted women. These policies acted as strategies towards enhancing women leadership. Thus, achieving equity between the two genders was likely to address some of the societal iniquities facing Africa through the combined leadership which would act as an in-built control mechanism (Africa Human Development Report, 2016). Gender mainstreaming is an essential component in addressing the under-representation of women leadership as an awareness is created.

3.2.3 Contextualising the 'glass ceiling'

The concept of glass ceiling tends to be rooted in the Western countries, where masculinity enjoys an over-riding advantage in the attainment of leadership positions. This concept is slowly finding its way in developing countries as women continue to undergo strenuous scrutiny in vindicating their leadership proficiency, thus weakening their potential for success (Amon, 2017). The cultural perceptions tend to embellish the belief that women are not fit to hold public office and therefore should of necessity remain submissive to masculinity. Consequently, women face double-bladed barriers that manifest in cultural norms and the workplace demands. Top leadership seems unattainable due to the un-surmountable glass ceiling. The barriers tend to be overtly visible in top-level leadership positions. Figure 3.2 illustrate this situation.

FIGURE 3.2: THE GLASS CEILING

Source: Amon (2017)

36
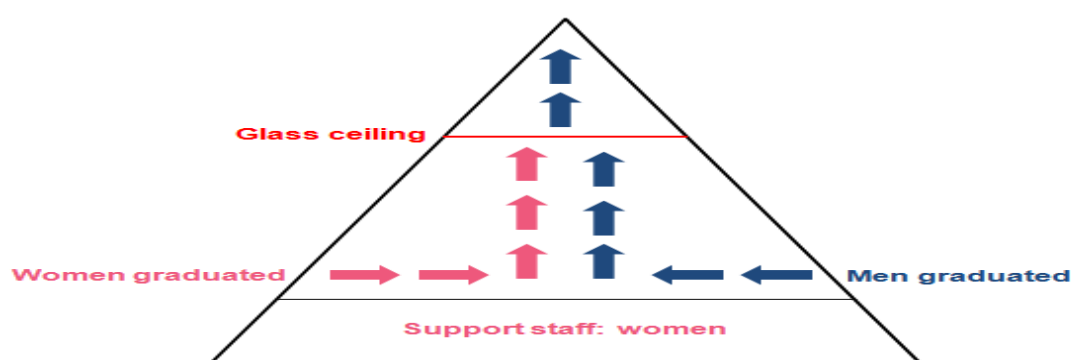
The above diagram displays the glass ceiling as largely subtle and seemingly an invisible obstacle that women face in their efforts to attain leadership positions (Ganiyu *et al,* 2018). Women advancement to leadership positions looks a tedious road to tread and therefore, exceedingly slow and difficult. While the barriers appear to be externally motivated, women tend to contribute substantially to these impediments, causing women under-representation to be complex and illusive (Helgesen, 2017). The glass ceiling seems an unofficial barricade from multifaceted sources likely to compromise female upward mobility. However, it is still unclear whether female leaders encounter more negative evaluation from their own female than male counterparts (Hill *et al,* 2016). It is however evident that women get leadership in-flows from political affiliations meant to garner their support (Oxfam International, 2016). Furthermore, it seems evident that the leadership is a complex and strenuous challenge that women experience as they move into these positions (Dhatt, Kickbusch and Thompson, 2017). Although the Civil Rights Act of 1964 in the US made gender disparity illegal for employers, the glass ceiling has existed for decades, with statistics showing only 25% women representation for doctorates in Math and Science, with less than 17% in engineering, computer and information science ((Baldoni, 2013). Fitzsimmons (2012) on the other hand, observes that few CEO's are visible in organizations, recording a further significant gender disparity in the workplace. Despite extensive research, little data exists on the topic in Sub Saharan Africa. This study examined the under-representation of women leadership in Swaziland, borrowing extensively from the experiences of other developing countries in Sub Saharan African where the glass ceiling continues to play mayhem.

Diehl *et al* (2016) admit that the lack of qualifications forms part of the causes for the glass ceiling presenting at varied degrees. Other barriers relate to family commitments where women are expected to serve their matrimonial partners as a priority in the home, while in the workplace, executives expect them to handle the clerical and administrative responsibilities believing these are similar to domestic functions they are capable of handling. Adichie (2017) believes that supporting women who seek to ascend to leadership positions extends beyond gaining the mere qualifications where mentorship is likely to play a major role. Although the role of women mentorship has been widely documented, its impact remains largely insignificant. Executives and husbands hold weird perceptions used to block women participation in obtaining leadership skills (Douglas and Leite, 2017). Thus, female leadership seems questionable due to shortfalls in leadership styles caused predominantly by the paucity of qualifications and skills. Furthermore, the socialisation of the girl child tends to neglect the essence of exposure to any leadership

experiences likely to be assimilated in the long-term due to prevalent cultural biases. As a result, most women tend to dominate in technical and managerial functions, rather than in leadership roles and functions that demand creativity and interpersonal relationship.

3.2.4 Leadership and management dichotomy

As this study continues to pursue the position of women in leadership, it is imperative to dichotomise what actions relate to leadership and which belong to management. Hughes *et al* (2015) first distinguish between a leader and leadership, stating that these are entirely different, with the term "leader" describing an administrative and maintenance function formally instituted. However, the concept may also be used to describe the person undertaking the leadership function, despite formally appointed. On the other hand, Fitzsimmons (2012) argue that leadership is generic and can be performed by both genders. The distinction seems to imply that leadership permeates in all levels within the hierarchical structure, regardless of whether one is in management position or not. There is the inclination that female may be regarded leaders in disguise while in reality, they perform managerial functions. The researcher therefore scrutinised respondents' descriptions of leadership in the light of this dichotomy. The distinction helped the researcher to analyse participants' responses on what they regarded as leadership, as opposed to management. Engendering the notion of women leadership therefore entails engaging in an exhaustive analysis of the barriers that are associated with gender accompanied with clearly defined terms to be equally understood. Berry and Bunning (2016) further clarify the distinction by referring to management as characteristic of control and the formalisation of power in the position occupied by appointed incumbents, as opposed to leadership which focuses on visioning and a display of the ability to inspire, innovate and motivate followers.

While the two concepts differ, they tend to complement each other, thereby creating confusion in using these terms interchangeably. Braveman (2016) however regards the compatibility of these concepts viewed in both official and informal terms, with leadership essentially sprouting from within the actors themselves. In striving to answer the research questions, the study sought to emphasise those qualities that suit the leadership theories, rather than those relating to management (Lyness and Grotto, 2018). Leadership was therefore viewed to emphasise the intended outcomes achieved through change and visioning, as opposed to management which focused on predictability and the execution of vision while maintaining the status quo and therefore tended to be associated with masculinity (Shafique and Kalyar, 2018). The authors further view management as a science that militates against risks, while leadership postulates

some art for taking calculated risks. Additionally, leadership is seen to encompass a host of both soft and hard skills (O'Neill and Domingo, 2016). These authors relate soft skills to intangible personal leadership competences, cultural values and relational interactions, while hard skills elements in management include configurations, structures and business framework (Dailey, 2016). The enquirer confined the study to leadership, where soft skills played a major role in determining women leadership in the public enterprises. This observation underpins the quality of leadership within the realities pronounced in soft skills, as opposed to managerial aspects. However, we cannot conclusively draw a dividing line that separates the use of the two dimensions, as these concepts overlap in the majority of cases (O'Neill *et al,* 2016). Management tends to encompass a broader spectrum in which leadership is one of the components, as illustrated in Figure 3.3.

FIGURE 3.3: MANAGEMENT FUNCTIONS & MANAGER LEVELS
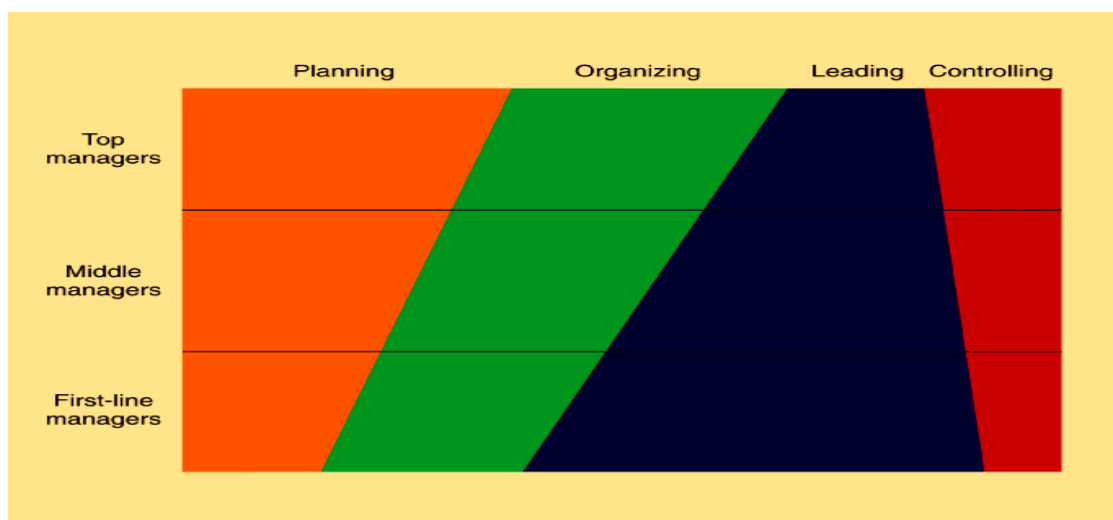
Source: O'Neill and Domingo (2016)

The function of leading appears to be the largest and is mostly visible in the lowest levels, but gets smaller as one ascends upwards within the hierarchy. While leading is vitally useful in the higher echelons, the function of planning tends to dominate, supported by an effective organising knowhow. The controlling function in the higher levels is sufficiently larger to ensure plans are on track, but also making provision for measuring results (Anderson and Caldwell, 2017).

Management therefore emphasises specific skills derived from knowledge, information and aptitude for carrying out the functions of planning, organising, leading and controlling, with decision-making taking place at each function (Mekonnen, 2017). Decisions are implemented when performing tasks using human relations through interpersonal relations and communication skills that promote improved work relations (Lantara, 2015). The contemporary organisations are increasingly valuing the role of teams, sharing of information and coaching subordinates as essential ingredients of effective leadership.

Liyanage, Dale and Dulaimi (2016) describe the development of organisations through a process of institutionalization, where value is placed on the entity rather than the products or services. It would appear cultural disagreements manifest in value differences, affecting organisational effectiveness. The under-representation of women leadership tends to lose ground when a certain type of culture eliminates unique strengths of the different backgrounds brought by people. In fact, conflicting organisational cultures manifest in people issues are a reason for major failures in attaining financial goals (Longman *et al,* 2018). While women leadership is immersed in cultural and historical perception differences, it is important to handle any paradigm shift without attracting cultural clashes where none of the groups is undermined.

Leadership, as observed earlier, entails the ability to influence others to achieve organisational goals (Shafique *et al,* 2018). Leadership may be formal, where office bearers are placed in the official positions as senior, middle or firstline managers leading units, departments or organizations as a whole and informal leadership pervades the hierarchical levels which makes leadership different from management as it highlights the innovative and creative capabilities of the leader. This becomes the dividing line that makes some managers to emerge as more effective leaders who think outside the box. These ideas seem to suggest that leadership involves the art of influencing that is outside formal organisational structures and seemingly often more important than formal influences. In this study, emphasis is laid on non-sanctioned leadership with authority acceptability attached to the decision-making framework, hence the essence of formal appointment. However, both leadership and management play a pivotal role in ensuring optimal effectiveness where the status quo is challenged by leaders who create a future vision and therefore, inspire organisational members to demonstrate some keen desire to achieve those goals (Braveman, 2016). It remains logical to conclude that management seeks largely to help formulate comprehensive plans, construct organic organisational structures and supervise personnel on a daily basis. On the other hand, latest findings offer two conclusions that traits can help predict the

emergence of leadership. Being an effective leader cannot therefore be determined a priori, as leadership may require the ability to mobilise a team for goal realisation (Ebrahimi, Chamanzamin, Roohbakhsh and Shaygan, 2017).

3.2.5 Coaching and mentorship in women leadership

The main goal of coaching is to support and guide personal career growth, while mentoring seeks to improve job performance or skills with the mentee or protégé taking charge of learning as the coach directs that learning (Latu, Mast, Bombari, Lammers and Hoyt, 2018). Coaching tends to be future-oriented, while mentoring presupposes corrective mechanism towards desirable results and suggests that both the mentor and the mentee are volunteers. Coaching entails training or development by a coach who supports the learner to accomplish both individual and organisational goals, where the informal relationship becomes a guiding principle (Jack, Hamshire, Harris, Langan and Barrett, 2018). The mentee relies on the experience and expertise of the coach who offers advice and guidance and this may not be possible where the coach is female, due to cultural influences. The importance of personal informal relationship in coaching poses further challenges to women who may need coaching from coaches of a similar genre, yet the majority of the supervisors are masculine (Curated Research Report, 2017). The possibility of promoting women leadership is curtailed in the absence of this facility as mentors are obligated to mould future leaders in various forms that include visioning, inspiring and driving the success of an organisation. Leaders offer professional guidance to subordinates through a bonding that provides lasting impressions on both the mentor and the mentee. This is largely dependent on personal relationships which may not easily be applied in different genders (Erdogan and Bauer, 2015).

Effective leadership ensures that subordinates are coached and mentored to remain focused on the goals of the organisation. Coaching focuses on how leaders can best utilise the potentials of their followers, rather than sanction them for under-performance, while mentoring entails the leader imparting own professional experience, learning points and advice to their subordinates. Smith and Gayles (2018) point out that mentors who are male are most likely to facilitate promotion than their female counterparts. Mentoring suggests an accompaniment emanating from sponsorship where women have not been visibly active in career development than the mere psycho-social disciplines, placing them at a disadvantage. Some study found that mentors for men were more senior than those for women, justifying reasons why more men advanced to top positions (Hughes *et al,* 2015). In all these findings, female leadership is likely to suffer

experiential information scarcity for effective leadership, if sponsorship is not sufficiently offered to women. However, the absence of adequate women leadership representation creates mentorship challenges for potential women leaders. This is further compounded by a lack of exposure in the form of networking, as opposed to their male counterparts.

Mentorship as a leadership function helps senior employees in supporting the less experienced subordinates as protégés. Women aspiring to leadership fail to find proper mentors because there are fewer women in leadership positions who can carry out this function. Muralidharan *et al* (2018) perceive that informal mentoring relationship develops when a less experienced low-level employee with the potential for future leadership is attached to a mentor, particularly of the same gender. The protégé is then tested with a more challenging task to determine skills mastery, thus building scope for confidence and acceptance. This approach presents a powerful learning mechanism for protégés who actually experience the practicum in skills transfer. Using mentors allows the organization to develop positive attitudes of lower ranking employees who are protégés as source of early warning signals for any organisational problems in relation to leadership through interactions. However, where an effective mentoring relationship is achieved the protégé who is connected to powerful network is likely to build relationships that will assist the protégé advance as the needed resources are made available for such development. In addition, Lantara (2015) views networking as an informal approach and therefore significant source of career development despite the fact that a protégé is connected, or not as mentors normally tend to rely on their connectivity strengths and experience which may be absent in the encounter.

Numerous studies have been used to demonstrate exhibited leader actions that are irrelevant, instead supporting experience and training as critical for a leader's effectiveness (Wong, Loy and Teo, 2017). Despite these observations, mentoring continues to play a vital role in women leader development, backed by sponsorship systems becoming exceedingly popular in directing aspirant women leaders through succession planning strategies, with sponsors advocating for their protégé to achieve visibility. However, the existence of female sponsors has not been widely significant, with men experiencing greater advantages over women (Smith *et al,* 2018). Apart from negotiating for the positions, sponsors also recommend capacity building initiatives where skills and knowledge are found wanting, advising on relevant courses or exposures to be pursued.

3.3 Key Leadership Theories

The preceding section dwelt at length on defining leadership, providing the opportunity to delve further into the leadership theories that have been advanced. Vast notable women leadership

literature has been developed over the past decade (Alsubhi, Hoque and Razak, 2018; Al-Asfour *et al*, 2017). These sources provide invaluable theories for constructing a comprehensive model likely to advance women leadership in Sub Saharan Africa. Senaji, Metwally, Sejjaaka, Puplampu, and Adedoyin-Rasaq (2014) highlight the need to examine both the nomothetic and idiographic personality features in the study of women leadership as a sexist analysis that transcends the 'nature versus nurture' debate. Furthermore, such description helps understand the scope for gender inclusive leadership. However, as Mekonnen (2017) observe, women tend to lack the capacity for modifying the fundamental personality aspects that encourage leader self-reflection and how they impact on others.

3.3.1 The 'Great Man' theory

This theory is based on the belief that leadership is hereditary and therefore embraces the belief that leaders are born (Stephan and Pathak, 2016). The idea of kingship and monarchies provide a clear example of this theory, where leadership trickles down to identified personalities. This view is different from a business perspective where a number of factors are taken into account. In business circles, traits play a paramount role in identifying effective leaders, but these cannot be singled out as the sole determinants in describing leadership (Tadesse, 2017). The authors argue that several factors should be considered if a balanced view is to be realised. The researcher established that innate and divine endowments combine and provide scope for a comprehensive leadership that develops over time through practice and experience or trial and error, suggesting that leadership evades the exclusive belief that leadership is masculine (Amanchukwu *et al*, 2015). The 'Great man' theories therefore play off women leadership, assuming that the capacity for leadership is not inherent in men alone who are born leaders. While the title of this theory includes the word 'man' as opposed to 'woman', it is nevertheless implied to include both female and male. The title is misleading, as it tends to accentuate masculinity in leadership, with women excluded from leadership roles right from the beginning. Mazonde and Carmichael (2016) acknowledge some degree of traditional and cultural heroism associated with dominance in masculinity. The role of the trait theories in leadership tends to emphasise personal qualities and characteristics as criteria for differentiating leaders from non-leaders (Northouse, 2016). This notion goes back to the earliest stages of leadership research which is still undergoing scrutiny as to acceptable determinants. It is however uncertain whether woman leadership could derive impetus within this theory.

Researchers cite a number of traits such as extraversion, sociable and some level of aggressiveness as strong predictors of leadership (McKinsey and Company, 2017). Research found that conscientiousness and extraversion were positively a variable of self-efficacy in leadership, as people are prepared to follow a leader who commands confidence in pursuing set goals. While these variables were essential traits to leadership, efficiency was underscored by the ability to manage emotional intelligence (EI) that appeared to be prerequisites to effective leadership (Alsubhi *et al*, 2018). A leader with emotional intelligence is able to manage emotions and express empathy and genuine sympathy for subordinates' actions and reactions, which are related to performance and productivity. It is important to establish the link that exists between traits and behavioural theories, where both could be used beneficially if applied in the right context, though their effectiveness is still not empirically proved at this stage.

Most workplace tasks are male fashioned where prejudices occur when female gender roles are inconsistent the leader's role. It is uncommon to observe women wielding substantial power and authority in decision making in these circumstances (Fitzsimmons, 2012). Generally, people are unaccustomed to experience women commanding authority particularly in male dominated patriarchal societies. Women capabilities are therefore not only doubted, but the need for compliance to the culturally and hierarchically instituted order becomes an aspect of importance in this regard. Women are therefore faced with challenges when working in a male dominated environment as they are compelled to adapt male attitudes if their leadership is to be acceptable (Horsford and Tillman, 2012). As alluded earlier, corporate policies and guidelines maintain the male prominence suggesting that any actions ought to be interpreted in masculine terms. These stereotype structural prejudices place women in difficult conditions when leadership opportunities arise. The 'Great Man' leadership theory therefore assumes that effective leadership is fundamentally masculine (Davis and Maldonado, 2015). Lack of women leaders implies that female talent is being squandered in stereotypes leading to businesses losing out on the leadership supply. By and large, organizations seem to be realizing need for injecting diversity into their management teams. Scholars therefore concur that the corporate world requires charismatic leaders with the ability to inspire followers and put the interests of others first (Horsford, 2012). The need to recognise a diverse workforce that includes both female and male is likely to provide leadership that is capable of transforming public enterprises to meet the global business challenges (Horsford *et al*, 2012; Zeidman, 2011). By putting together ideas from a diverse community of workers, business solutions are likely to be established through observation (press), discussion,

discourse and conversations (academia) in a democratic society. Women empowerment through the development of expertise and authority are likely to balance cultural philosophies and behaviours that seem different from their own (Northouse, 2016). A myriad of challenges result from cultural orientations which limit the professional growth of women to leadership positions. Open dialogue is likely to take the centre stage in influencing societal perceptions for locating women capabilities, interests as well as men's willingness to work together with them particularly in leadership positions.

3.3.2 Leadership-member exchange theory (LMX)

In their study of Leader-member Exchange Theory (LMX), Martin, Guillaume, Thomas, Lee and Epitropaki (2016) observed the importance of establishing healthy relationships between the leader and follower built on the concept of trust. Relationships entail such aspects as mutual trust, affection and dual respect, which are also fundamental components of leadership. Groups are also influenced by a well-crafted relationship strategy which earns spontaneous loyalty through a differentiated treatment of individuals within the particular group. The leader supports members by providing developmental opportunities and mentorship to their actions positing challenges to women leaders who may not be fully equipped to undertake this function (Tadesse, 2017). However, by increasing women to leadership positions, there is the likelihood that a wider spectrum of women mentors could be created further raising chances of entry into leadership positions by more women. Women are better off when placed in these functions, considering their social nurturing experience and exposure to developmental work.

Selzer, Howton and Wallace (2017) found that supervisors socialised recruits by offering them advice and modelled their roles through guidance, suggesting a high degree of excellence in LMX. It is however doubtful whether LMX represents an acceptable model for organizations to measure the degree of stability given the need for punitive measures when certain actions are not desirable. Nonetheless, those leaders that demonstrated a high-quality LMX with their followers achieved a remarkable degree of support from followers, implying reduced amounts of corrective measures, supposedly promoting a highly preventative rather than curative approach. Reprimanding may seem to destroy possibly the high quality relationship earned over the years through trust and respect (Yasin and Khalid, 2015). While this theory provides insights into the role of relationships in the leader and follower, the World Report (2018) observed that leadership in Africa is a topical issue calling for conscious attention on issues of justice, fairness, individual rights and respect for human dignity.

These concepts became engulfed in the concept of mutual trust in the leader-member relationship. Fischer, Kret and Broekens (2018) perceive trust as a psychological process demanding follower-leader reciprocity based on emotional perceptions, revealed in follower characteristics in building the trust. Trust exists when both parties agree to be vulnerable to each other, on the understanding that they both have positive or negative expectations about the outcomes of their relationship. Trust therefore becomes a prime attribute of leadership which commands great impact on any team's performance. Trustworthiness modulates the leader's access to information and collaboration, resulting in high quality decision making. Leaders who garner trust from their followers are likely to have the latter's respect as they believe their interests and needs are taken into account (Kezar *et al*, 2017). This seems the product of transformational leadership which seeks to promote a supportive environment for both subordinates and leaders. There is therefore compelling evidence that transformational leadership generates a greater degree of trust from followers, further promoting mutuality and increased team confidence likely to improve performance and the ultimate organizational effectiveness (Shafique *et al*, 2018).

Leader-member relationship is dependent on the quality of trust, resulting from the key characteristics likely to lead people to believe that a leader is trustworthy. Evidence from studies identify three crucial aspects in trust, which encompass integrity, benevolence and ability: integrity revealing honesty and truthfulness; benevolence pointing to the trust put in the other while ability specifies the technical and interpersonal knowledge and skills of an individual (Rao, 2018). These are essential ingredients of an effective leader whose relationship with followers is likely to garner acceptability. Figure 3.4 illustrates the relationship among these ingredients.

FIGURE 3.4: LEADER-FOLLOWER TRUST INGREDIENTS
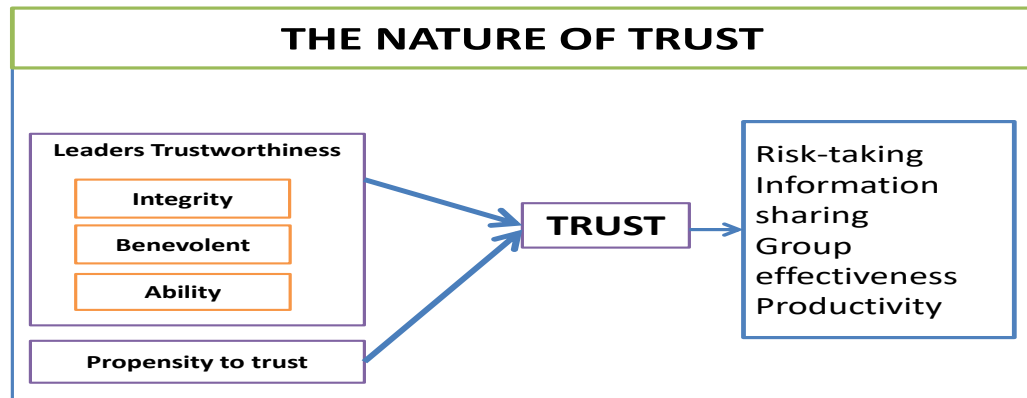
Source: Rao, 2018

In pursuit of women leadership where trust is secured, the leader is able to take risks confidently, as it is shared within the group with information flowing from both directions for effective decision making. The diagram above demonstrates that trust is a product of the combination of integrity, benevolent and ability, all pointing towards the type of trust likely to occur. The presence of trust is likely to generate group cohesion and therefore, effectiveness that ultimately increase productivity. Through trust information sharing is achieved, women leaders could confidently take risks in their independent decision-making within collaborative leadership framework. Women tend to lack self-confidence threatening their self-belief as leaders (Randel *et al*, 2016). The lack of trust tends to be bidirectional being shared by both female subordinates and leaders alike. The arguments seem to create an antithesis to female desire to become leaders jeopardising their potential for leadership.

3.3.3 The contingency theory

Unlike the transformational theory, the contingency theory provides that no single leadership style is considered the best and appropriate in all situations. Martin (2015) highlights this notion adding that success is dependent upon a number of variables such as leadership style, the competences of followers and other relevant features obtaining in a given situation. The theory seems to suggest that the contingency leadership theory depends almost exclusively on the degree to which the leader's abilities and style are dovetailed to fit a particular situation. These views are predicated

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in the situation leaders find themselves operating, which determines how each prevailing circumstance is interpreted in light of the type of leadership considered appropriate at that particular moment. According to Mekonnen (2017), performance becomes a function of leadership styles determining how leaders fit with the conditions at hand. Women leaders are therefore likely to be excluded in those situations that are historically considered masculine and further relate to biological differences. Early socialisation and biological characteristics seem to have created fixed categories for different situations, compelling natural distinctions between men and women making it difficult to break the structures that prevent women from attaining leadership in some fields of work (Hunt, Prince, Dixon-Fyle and Yee, 2018). Nevertheless, this should not be ground for perpetuating women leadership under-representation, as this theory stimulates an inquisitive approach to analysing the possibilities of women involvement. Additionally, the above perceptions are slowly varnishing, with women filling up almost every job. This theory is also weakened by the fact that a leader's favourableness to a particular group situation may not often be easily identified in the absence of evaluative skills for a given situation. This claim suggests the need for a critical scrutiny of the situation under focus, an activity that may be not only costly, but time consuming. Nevertheless, it is possible to modify the group's outcomes or the leadership style through experience and training, but it also appeals to the leader's innovative skill to initiate small paced changes for the group under scrutiny (Mekonnen, 2017). These aspects were interrogated in light of women leadership with some challenges emerging in the process. These efforts are usually apparent in some leadership models that have been solidly ingrained in cultural stereotypes leading to the belief 'think manager-think male' paradigm where men are perceived superior over women (Banchefsky *et al*, 2018).

Since the contingency theory stresses that there is no one-size-fits- all leadership style, several approaches become necessary for consideration. Berry *et al* (2016) cite varied leadership perspectives which focus on leadership styles that stretch beyond power formalisation through hierarchical positions by equally stimulating the value in envisioning to inspire, innovate and motivate subordinates. It would appear the contingency leadership approach is quite appropriate in the informal structures which allows some degree of creativity to take place as opportunities open up (Braveman, 2016). This leadership style is therefore best applied to environments of uncertainty in which risk abounds. Since women tend to be risk-aversive normally preferring predictability, this leadership style may be unsuitable. In contrast, the business world recognizes entrepreneurial leadership that is innovative and prepared to venture into the unknown to seize

opportunities. While this trait might be missing in women leadership, the concept of inclusivity becomes inevitable where certain deficiencies are overcome by employing an all-encompassing approach where several leadership styles are considered.

3.3.4 The situational leadership

The situational leadership approach focuses mainly on leadership based on the situation and finding the best leadership style appropriate for improving performance. Leadership styles therefore become adaptive based on the identified growth levels of subordinates, presenting further some correspondence with the contingency approach (Mohammadkhani *et al*, 2016). The theory emphasises the two concepts of competence and commitment used to measure subordinates' developmental levels. Where subordinates exhibit both a high level of competence and commitment, there is increased delegation accompanied with minimal supervision. On the other hand, low levels of competence necessitate the leader to direct the subordinate, providing appropriate coaching and mentoring where possible (Latu *et al,* 2018). This theory tends to favour women leaders whose coaching and mentoring competencies are limited, where competent male subordinates may find the relationship appealing and warranting (Amanchukwu *et al,* 2015). However, the argument is not definitive as other factors would need to be considered. In addition, the variables of competence and commitment do not often succumb to quantifiable measurements, resulting in only subjective assumptions. Women leaders tend to be on the receiving end, in light of the existing background which is likely to influence any decisions for leadership roles. However, these variables still provide useful indicators for selecting an appropriate leadership style if the analysis is extensively conducted. For example, based on competence, the situation points to which leaders would be the most knowledgeable and experienced to direct a particular group. In respect of group members who are considered possessing the requisite skills, again an appropriate leader is ostensibly desirable (Itulua-Abumere, 2017). However, these observations do not always hold in all situations as the opposite might hold, suggesting the absence of objective empirical evidence to support the arguments.

From a commitment point of view, the components of trust, involvement and satisfaction seem to influence an increase in an organisation's turnover (Mazonde *et al,* 2016). The authors observe that, unlike the competence variable, commitment offers a barometer for determining organisational effectiveness, where several indicators are observable such as turnover, job performance and job satisfaction. Organisational commitment is therefore perceived as fulfilling both organisational and personal goals in terms of performance and satisfaction, respectively. A

further dimension of employee commitment with the organisation is manifest in the extent to which employees' intentions to leave the organisation are low, or would be viewed as enhancing the desire to remain in the organisation (Grant Thornton International Business Report, 2016). In all probability, commitment levels are increased when due consideration is placed on employees. It still remains yet to be determined whether female leadership could stimulate commitment in subordinates, in view of their dual responsibilities shared between domestic and work demands. In as far as commitment is concerned women are confronted with shortcomings when it is also viewed to entail an active participation in both formal and informal leadership activities where women take little involvement in the latter. Itulua-Abumere (2013) observes changes taking place in family set up where the traditional order seems threatened by the revolution of young generation which is accommodating a shared responsibility approach. The emergence of double family incomes seems to be diluting absolute power in masculinity causing women to be actively involved in activities outside the family. These developments present the opportunity for policy makers to review the support for domestic activities including the role of men. This suggests the need for a paradigm shift that reflects on changing the current societal perceptions giving way to women leadership.

3.3.5 Transformational and transactional leadership

The transformational and transactional leadership approaches continue to dominate research as constituting two important leadership theories in which leaders in the former inspire and motivate followers using their creative capability to garner subordinates' admiration and respect (Ebrahimi *et al,* 2017). These qualities are also exhibited in charismatic leadership, where the focus is on providing exceptional attention on the individual by stimulating critical thinking. Despite the theory portraying admirable characteristics, there is uncertainty as to whether productivity increases as a result. Perhaps further exploration of these variables becomes necessary before conclusively adopting the theory. There is however a far-reaching advantage in applying the transformational leadership theory on a broader perspective where the leader and follower are both engaging and motivating to each other, thus thinking beyond the ordinary approaches (Kalysh, Kulik and Perera, 2016). Both the transformational and servant leadership approaches seem to have commonalities in that they focus on improving relationships as condition for improved organisational performance.

Contingent reward leadership becomes more effective when tied to transformational leadership and manifest in individualised consideration, intellectual stimulation and inspirational motivation

and idealised influence. The model tends to suit a well-integrated approach that balances the categories within transactional and transformational approaches. Ebrahimi *et al* (2017) view transformational leadership as more effective as it encourages more creative leaders who solicit their followers to follow suit. Leaders using this approach demonstrate a greater decentralisation of responsibilities tackling risks as they confront the future to realise long-term results. Workers who are empowered in leadership generate positive feelings of personal control among other workers thereby increasing their creativity in the workplace.

A further revelation of transformational leadership is the demonstrated general agreement which may be shared among senior managers about the organization's direction, contributing towards superior organisational performance (Anderson *et al,* 2017). Transformational leadership tends to improve performance by instilling group members' consensus. Leaders are likely to increase follower self-efficacy, giving the group a "can do" spirit. It should be noted that transformational leadership is not an effective approach in all situations. However, this approach may have more impact on the profits of smaller and privately owned organizations than those complex ones. Some studies tend to reveal a number of aspects that contribute to effective leadership that transcend cultural differences by focusing on universal aspects such as vision, foresight and the provision of encouragement, trustworthiness, dynamism, positiveness and proactiveness. Ebrahimi *et al* (2017) add a further perspective that takes into account ethical considerations in leadership, believed to foster moral virtue in their relationship with subordinates.

On the other hand, the transactional theory seems to be in direct contrast with the transformational theory emphasizing the role of transactional exchanges. This phenomenon tends to have crept deeper in the present African leaders, whose main desire is self-gratification. Merkle, Reinold and Siegel (2018) cite an intriguing incident of leader power abuse of office when those in power reward themselves hugely, while pushing for layoffs for long-time workers as cost cutting measure. Leadership dates back to the classical times where a leader's influence tended to intrinsically place over-riding purpose of vision which garnered little support from followers. Leadership, the authors observe, continues to be rarely challenged leaving the transactional theory in dominance. This view tends to suit the traditional beliefs that assign leadership to masculinity, placing the possibility of women leadership at stake. Models focusing on the importance of vision emerge with visionary and charismatic leadership theories, where transformational leadership takes a centre stage opening room for women leadership. Within the transformational model, vision becomes fundamental with followers subscribing to the leader's vision, further

complicating the position of women. The organic theories share characteristics with the visionary and contemporary theories. This development poses stern challenges to gender inclusive leadership, since the theory is historically immersed in cultural philosophies that espouse male dominance (Einarsdottir *et al,* 2018). However, the theory focuses mainly on relationships that emphasise connections between the leaders and followers. Creating connections therefore becomes a critical aspect of leadership with motivation and morality becoming increasingly important aspects for both followers and leaders.

Relationship theories or transformational leadership theories compare favourably to charismatic leadership theories where such qualities as confidence, extroversion and clearly stated values are manifest and typically favour femininity and could therefore be used to advance female leadership (Shafique *et al,* 2018). Relationship leadership therefore motivates and inspires group members' aspects of which are visible in women. Women are likely to influence subordinates using this theory, as a result of their biological stance in terms of promoting relationships through their natural endowment. Women leadership is likely to focus on the performance of group members through their communal traits, but also on individual persona as a result of the biological perspective (Stephan *et al,* 2016). In contrast to transformational leadership, transactional leadership entails a process of leader-follower interchange in which for example, remuneration or penalty is exchanged for efficient performance (Berry *et al,* 2016). This theory tends to characterise managerial features where the welfare of subordinates is accorded little regard. Transactional theories are sometimes regarded as management theories as they focus on the maintenance role of systems and policies rather than creatively directing followers. Most women leaders tend to use this theory unknowingly thinking they are engaged in leadership. In other words, the notion that a leader's job is to create structures that make it abundantly clear what is expected of followers demonstrates the formal leadership positions in a hierarchical set-up. The consequence is that either reward or punishment is instituted in meeting or not meeting expectations and seems to be highly predictable, thus failing to withstand the leadership test (Bahiru *et al,* 2018). These characteristics are distinctive women leadership which seem to constitute managerial rather than leadership qualities.

When women undertake the activities in management they believe they are performing leadership. Transactional theory therefore characterises managerial qualities, though erroneously considered a leadership model within organisational structures (Ndalamba, Caldwell and Anderson*,* 2018). Adopting this theory in the drive for women leadership creates shortcomings

that are likely to discredit women for assuming leadership positions as they interact with subordinates. However, the leadership approach is not essentially the most efficient theory, although preferred either by employers or employees. It is nevertheless logical to argue that transformational, unlike transactional leadership, stimulates action through participation and involvement and is likely to reduce the gender gap (Martin, 2015). It is therefore widely accepted that effective leadership combines both elements of transformational with transactional leadership to achieve diversity through a broadened leadership approach that promotes creative problem solving and realise competitive advantage likely to increase the bottom-line in organisations (Fitzsimmons *et al,* 2016). This, however cannot be determined *a priori* as the fundamental argument is bent towards creating a solid framework for gender inclusive leadership. Lantara (2015) accentuates this notion, stating that women leaders are most likely to exhibit an all-encompassing, synergistic leadership approach in making decisions. Furthermore, there is the perceived conviction that although men and women are the same, there is the biological difference which seems to be variously interpreted in terms of its impact on leadership thinking and personality and the further impact on self-confidence that may seem to discredit the foregoing assertions (Kato and Kodama, 2015). These views are espoused in the patriarchal philosophy where women are perceived as fulfilling the producer-reproducer role while attending to full-time workplace assignments. This condition imposes a heavy burden on women who are expected to handle both leadership roles and the conventional domestic responsibilities. Women leadership therefore tends to suffer limitations from historical and cultural perspectives. Despite the pros and cons cited above, both transformational and transactional leadership approaches may apply simultaneously further bringing together both genders as illustrated in the model below.

FIGURE 3.5: TRANSACTIONAL - TRANSFORMATIONAL LEADERSHIP
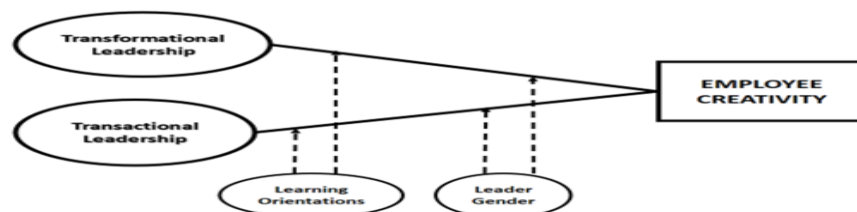
Source: Ebrahimi, Chamanzamin, Roohbakhsh and Shaygan (2017)

The above diagram illustrates the relationship between transformational and transactional leadership, where both approaches offer learning orientation and open for utilization by both genders. However, employee creativity determines the suitable time and situation to apply any of the approaches or both (Ebrahimi *et al,* 2017). Put differently, leaders with high regard for innovation and the promotion of relationships tend to use transformational, but still need to fuse in the transactional approach when need arises as learning. This is the crux of gender inclusive leadership which seeks to accelerate creative organizational performance. Learning orientation tends to be highly crucial in shaping the women leadership styles as they enter the male dominated environment in terms of acquiring and disseminating information, achieving shared interpretation of cultural and historical perceptions for maximising organisational outcomes (Latu *et al,* 2018). The Grant Thornton International Business Report (2016) accentuates this view arguing that learning orientation involves a commitment to self-development, coupled with an understanding of shared vision through an open-mindedness that appreciates the differences in biological and cultural orientations among team members. Employee education and training for women becomes exceedingly critical in equipping women leaders with the requisite skills for effective leadership (Gipson, Pfaff, Mendelsohn, Lauren, Catenacci and Burke, 2017). However, this is only achievable if the cultural dynamics are accepted by transforming team perceptions (Bai, Lin and Li, 2016).

Top managers build the vision and provide the role model by encouraging subordinates to exhibit greater values of moral obligation, putting aside their self-interest and focusing on team spirit and organisational commitment. Dailey (2016) views transformational leadership as an organic connection that promotes stimulation and ethical behaviour within reach of leaders and their followers. It seems to promote a sound relationship between the leader and follower, based on mutual trust and understanding, both of which are the conditions for responsible behaviour. On the other hand, transactional leadership, in which exchange transactions are pivotal, seeks to gain follower compliance to the leader's demands but may not generate genuine commitment to participate in responsibly. Transactional leadership typifies instrumentality and therefore, is appropriate for enhancing subordinate control but is less likely to trigger their ethical behaviours, beliefs and intentions. Leaders may find it difficult to reconcile followers' authentic behaviours and their intentions. The concept of responsible leadership may not have received warranted significance, but effective leadership is virtually evaluated on the basis of ethical choices which are considered acceptable in society (Ndalamba *et al,* 2018). However, this view may breed

subjectivity as societies are also made up of subgroups which may hold opposing convictions to the broader society, triggering ambiguity to what is generally considered acceptable. Nevertheless, available literature on responsible leadership is inclined to suggest that leaders' traits and values chase self-interests at the expense of societal expectations, which harm stakeholders from loss of economic prosperity and corporate philanthropy (Rao, 2018). This claim remains unsubstantiated due to the absence of empirical evidence to base the argument on.

3.4 Socialisation and Women Leadership

The human resources advocate for the socialisation of the workforce through work-based learning that equips employees on the culture of the organisation, including leadership expectations (Nikkila, 2017). Reilly, Kadie and Germine (2016) view socialisation as an empowering tool where individuals learn acceptable social behaviours and norms by internalising organisational values passed onto them from the significant others. Knowledge and values are often transmitted through socialisation programmes where prospective women leaders gain the opportunity to acquire leadership skills. While these provide essential tools for transmitting an organisation's culture from one generation of employees to the next, these programmes tend to be limited to middle and top level managers (Domingo, Rocha Menocal and Hinestroza, 2015b). In the absence of access to such programmes, women fail to be properly assimilated into the organisation. Effective socialisation entails understanding the firm's mission and philosophy, job performance required, a proper fit with colleagues and conformity to the organisation's standards. These aspects are often ignored, making it difficult for women leaders to adopt their leadership styles. Nevertheless, women are aware of the leadership selection expectations of their organisations and therefore endeavour to integrate the organisational strategy and culture during assessments. Most effective firms in highly competitive environment go an extra mile to ensure the process of socialisation is managed effectively (Alexander-Scott *et al*, 2016). Socialisation mirrors the therapist leadership discourse that sought to solicit in leaders, their emotional literacy to drive the workforce psychological and emotional awareness as conditions for achieving an organisation's competitive advantage and the ultimate profitability. The new leadership dispensation that seeks to be inclusive is likely to incorporate the aspect of socialisation in women leadership. Women as a vulnerable marginalized group tend to suffer leadership obstacles as a result of inappropriate socialisation that fails to introduce them to acceptable leadership principles (Olusola, 2016). Starting with family leadership roles, the perceptions of women about leadership are modelled along this basis and applied in different milieus. Women recognise their gender as reliable and

supportive to rule out external influences, highlighting the belief that socialisation inspires both genders; further epitomising stereotypes through their various gender specific actions (Al-Asfour *et al*, 2017).

A further aspect of socialisation relates to environmental influences that shape the behavioural perceptions in the different genders. Banchefsky *et al* (2018) believes that women tend to adopt masculine traits and attitudes as a coping strategy as they behave like men. These attributes may be witnessed in their dress codes, leadership styles and participation in what used to be male sporting. Furthermore, women may develop some discomfort for being women in certain environments. Mundy (2017) reiterates that the culture employees adopt in the workplace defines the attitudes, behaviours, interactions and structural features shared by individuals irrespective of their gender. Thus, the general socialisation process is viewed as conceptualising a culture of masculinity that is likely to make women feel inferior in relation to their male counterparts (Cheryan, Ziegler, Montoya and Jiang, 2016). Apfelbaum *et al* (2016) perceive the contextual landscape within which gender ideologies are prescribed to colour the socio-political beliefs which influence gender differences. Women are therefore compelled to adjust by accepting certain workplace practices that favour masculinity which becomes a socialisation aspect for new entrants. The socialisation of women may be male-dominant leaving women with no choice, but to adjust to the prevailing organizational culture.

3.5 Responsible Leadership

Scholars continue to hold divergent views on the notion of responsible leadership, but intelligible arguments are often put forward that suggest leaders' sensitivity to values, quality of judgement and actions cumulatively impacting on integrity in organisations, as perceived both in the short and long-term occurrence (Agbim, 2018). Corporate social responsibility programs, social and community support initiatives, or concern for the wellbeing of subordinates from a leader's individual efforts, are all ethical behaviours opposed to corruption, deceit and occupational discrimination. The latter values seem to be eroded in contemporary leadership, compelling a rigorous reflection onto the type of leadership that is likely to achieve responsible leadership. In an attempt to address the fiasco, although gender inclusive leadership is not a panacea, there seems to be inroads that can be gained by reshaping the existing leadership, particularly in the public enterprises, considering the limelight demonstrated by female leaders in the universe (Al-Asfour *et al*, 2017). In pursuing responsible leadership, the ethical values identify implementation of acceptable standards of conduct in an organisation that is likely to be shared by all stakeholders

as good conduct that guides business operations (Rao, 2018). The same authors also observe that organisations that show bad conduct are those captained by male leaders. Although there is little evidence to suggest the validity of this perception, there is the general conviction that advances this argument. It is therefore logical to note that responsible leadership can equally be applied to both male and female leaders, but still remains arguable to distinguish the degrees to which gender carries the greater responsibility. It has been common practice to assign corrupt practices to masculinity, thus exonerating female leadership (Newcomb, 2017). This view can still be contested, providing that no evidence exists to support the view that female leaders are not corrupt. Bahiru *et al* (2018) observe that in spite of the available regulations, policies and statutes, both women and men indulge in these practices, given the wide degree of discretion for top managers, which is sometimes manipulated to serve personal interests. The same authors view responsible leadership in dual perspectives, limited economic view that accentuates shareholder primacy and extended stakeholder view. Advocates of shareholder primacy argue that decisions made by management should be entirely aimed at shareholder value maximisation (Brescoll, Okimoto and Vial, 2018). The authors believe engaging in corporate social responsibility is an investment decision arrived at just like any other business opportunity. However, it would appear managers take advantage of these principles ending up behaving irresponsibly, despite their gender. In most cases, female leaders are manipulated by their male subordinates. Being responsible and irresponsible can better be understood by relating the meaning to action and non-action, depending on the situation an individual is found in.

The concept of responsible leadership is based on two broad dimensions, socially responsible and socially irresponsible behaviours. These dimensions are further categorised into proscriptive and prescriptive moralities. Proscriptive morality or immorality suggests avoidance from acting irresponsibly or responsibly, whereas prescriptive morality, on the other hand, involves doing well, being responsible or doing bad, being irresponsible (Deloitte, 2016). Gender inclusive leadership is likely to accelerate responsible leadership when the two genders are scrutinised in all earnest. Leaders are therefore expected to act responsibly or avoid acting irresponsibly. This implies that leaders may be viewed to be acting irresponsibly if they remain inactive, where their actions are anticipated. However, it is commonly known that women naturally avoid risks and may therefore be tempted to act emotionally and therefore irresponsibly (Beckwith, Carter and Peters, 2016). This therefore weakens the possibility of women to advance towards leadership positions since risk taking is a critical aspect within leadership domain. Leaders are also expected

to act beyond the minimum when deemed necessary for ethical reasons. It is a known fact that some world leaders have indeed demonstrated some degree of responsibility and resilience in the face of harsh hostility.

3.6 Ethical Leadership

The above discussion maintains the assumption that 'doing-good' and 'avoiding-harm' are theoretically discrete sets, with different emotional sources and backgrounds (Agbim, 2018). In terms of a gender inclusive leadership framework, personality traits can be placed under scrutiny to allow for checks and balances where differentials on gender are evaluated in light of their applicability to ethical leadership. Culturally different values remain embedded in societies that determine levels of corruption and bribery acceptability in a particular group of people and become variously institutionalised in different countries (Akram, Murugiah and Arfan, 2017). The argument suggest that a positive relationship exists between the amount of corruption and pressures facing multinationals and their subsidiary companies where, for example, bribery in some instances receive some level of tolerance. This notion emphasises the need to consider women leadership in its various contexts, whose backdrops play a crucial role in accepting certain cultural practices. However, responsible leadership, though an elusive phenomenon, tends to fit well in different cultural orientations, with gender inclusive leadership likely to play a significant role (Al-Asfour *et al*, 2017). An understanding of diversity is particularly sought for by different organisations and is likely to meet the current needs of society. For example, programmes meant to check on leaders' behaviour are equally essential to promote responsible leadership. However, while these initiatives are rich insights for benchmarking responsible leadership, there is little assurance that these could be a panacea for adoption in public enterprises, especially in Sub Saharan Africa. In addition, the role of the media in the community continues to play an insurmountable role in scrutinising public and operate as a watchdog that checks undesirable practices the world-over (Diermeier, Goecke, Niehues and Thomas, 2017).

Similar mechanisms could be employed to propagate women leadership successes likely to lure prospective women leaders who wish to occupy leadership positions. Additionally, the technological advancement provides an excellent resource for strengthening responsible leadership and transparency, where social media and up-to-the-moment web information provide fast and easier means of exposing ethical violations with the precision it deserves (Anderson *et al,* 2017). The explosion of social networking including social media has become new and fast sources of information, causing severe concern for most autocratic African countries whose

human rights records are questionable and unscrupulous (Nugent, 2017). This is equally an intelligible tool for promoting women leadership as individuals and groups are empowered by communicating issues of social concern at the highest possible velocity and enables the voiceless and marginalised to be heard. Arguably, these tools have shortcomings when questions are asked in respective information reliability or whether it derives the intended effects in the absence of appropriate mechanisms to determine both validity and credibility. For example, information may be a scheme created to cause mutiny or instability, leading to social unrest and pessimism. In all earnest, the availability of information is an important resource that requires continuous scrutiny and validation.

An expeditious inclusive leadership theory offers a new leadership dimension where both genders can be allowed to unleash their potentials in presenting authentic and ethical leadership framework, where checks and balances are the norm. Any scandalous acts at all levels in society are being exposed by the click, indicating an advanced information technology within the ethical exposure compel a move towards inclusive leadership which appeared suppressed for lack of genuine and accurate information. Through corporate social responsibility (CSR) positive attitudes towards the organisation are built, obliging the release of information that relates to women leadership barriers that seem hidden in stereotypes (Agbim, 2018). The author also relays intriguing findings on the role of media which showed a positive increase in responsible leadership and which could be used to address barriers to women leadership. However, the media may not capture all the unscrupulous dealings and the notion of irresponsible leadership still needs further investigation noting the new and sophisticated scandals that continue to ravage society. While the media have made inroads in unearthing corrupt practices in society, we hasten to state that it is an internal moral value that has the greatest impact for leaders in behaving responsibly. The qualities of leaders are scrutinised through a study of this nature where the concept of gender inclusive leadership may have far-reaching influence in widening the leadership reservoir from which appropriate and suitable leaders may be identified. The observation made above demonstrate collectively a compelling link between media mandate and the inclination for leaders and the organisations that they work for, to promote 'do-good' and 'avoid-harm' actions. The existence of negative publicity acting as a watchdog can also be looked at differently, where positive reporting through disclosures in corporate social responsibility is likely to publish an organisation's integrity and strength as doing 'good' in business (Rao, 2018).

3.7 Authentic Leadership

The authentic leadership theory tends to build on transformational leadership by providing positive psychological resources to construct a foundation for leader development and preparedness in qualities such as self-confidence, resilience, control of emotions and motivation (Shafique *et al,* 2018). The fundamental argument is that by creating self-awareness, self-regulation and shaping their leadership, authentic leaders nurture the growth of authenticity in people they lead. In the process, followers are expected to embrace authenticity in their performance copying from authentic leaders. Conversely, women leaders are not treated in a similar fashion due to elements of misconception held by some societies on gender status influenced by cultural stereotypes (Leicht, Goclowska, van Breen and de Lemus, 2017). Unfortunately, this perception is mostly noticeable in women subordinates who regard themselves neglected and consider the promoted female leaders as unresponsive to their vulnerability, electing to withdraw their allegiance (Ndalamba *et al,* 2018).

In our quest to delve deeper into understanding the key drivers to authentic leadership as it relates to women, some schools of thought attempt to clarify the distinction between men and women from a biological perspective, style or substance, real or perceived in the probable effectiveness (Nikkila, 2017). The biological leadership difference seems to emphasise leadership as biologically perceived with masculinity overriding, whereas the style or substance determines leadership from a socialisation perspective, accentuating the notion of gender roles in attaining leadership. The other approach focuses on selecting causal factors within the environment with attitudinal factors such as self-confidence, experience and the amount of networking relative taken into account. When all the variables are considered in totality, women leadership tends to suffer additional barriers as uncertainty looms in as far as authentic leadership is concerned. The views raised do not, for example, indicate how women leadership can use the qualities to advance towards leadership. The arguments instead perpetuate the position of leadership as socially instituted in men. However, while the above factors may suggest differences in leadership between men and women where the former is preferred, it remains unsubstantiated whether such difference signified increased productivity in an organisation. Noland, Moran and Kotschwar (2016) argue that although there are greater similarities than differences between male and female leadership behaviour, they insist that female leaders are more effective than men. Female middle and senior managers tend to be confronted with factors that challenge their competing forces in a male-dominated workplace due to a tilted gender distribution that drives gender biases (Sebastian

and Moon, 2018). An example of this scenario is cited mostly in the construction industry, with these perceptions also applying in public enterprises. On the other hand, leadership that is effective exhibits argentic skills such as ambition, assertiveness, shrewdness and self-reliance, all of which are more pronounced in men than women (Sassler, Michelmore and Smith, 2017). However, there is a formidable mismatch in female characteristics reflected in the gender stereotypes where qualities such as warmth, nurturing and compassion are all fundamental feminine traits corresponding more to women than men. What we expect as effective leadership and gender stereotype tends to be incompatible in deciding authentic leadership, raising uncertainty on route towards women leadership. However, some degree of compassion, nurturing and warmth are necessary for effective leadership, regardless of gender, suggesting that these variable reconcilable. These qualities tend to find ground more in managerial than leadership roles, thus weakening the position of women leadership. Rayyan (2017) still argues that waiving the prescriptions of gender stereotypes and supporting women leadership from a gender perspective is inevitable. In fact, gender inclusive leadership lends enormously to the concept of authentic leadership as it seeks to build a leadership approach that befits a diverse society. Globalisation has seen managers confronted with different cultural doctrines, placing pressure on them to act ethically in a particular region and sometimes driven by normative, as opposed to own moral convictions (Rao, 2018).

3.8 Change Management and Leadership

Change underscores organisational development in its movement to bring about more formalised, complex and differentiated leadership. Women leaders enter the workplace at different stages of an organisation's development, with high leadership expectations (Burns and Bargal, 2017). However, these qualities need not culminate in the firm's decline and failure. Leaders are expected to respond to these changes, but it is often highly improbable for executives to understand how to manage any adaptive culture of a firm (Beckwith *et al,* 2016).

As firms evolve, changes occur along simplistic economic convenience. In adopting an inclusive leadership dispensation, internal shifts in organisations require early detection, implying the need for transformational leadership that brings about thought and resourcefulness to turnaround declines in organisational performance (Alsubaie *et al,* 2017). Leaders are therefore expected to understand key parameters that impact on improved organisational performance in changes such as job design and redesign that promote employee autonomy, focus on people employment relationships for adjustment towards long-term security and support.

3.8.1 Eco leadership and digitalisation

The changing environment confronted with climate change, urbanisation and pollution, coupled with diminishing natural resources, all combine to create social, political and economic collapse (Sebastian, 2018). Recent research reveals an Eco Leadership theory that ushers a new responsive leadership paradigm to modernity exhaustion. The concept is patterned into a network of distributive leadership connected to represent a web. Two important assumptions emerge in this theory where organisations form operational connections within the eco-systems. The first assumption tends to show parts within an organisation that make an interdependent whole, where a change in one part results in further changes in the organisation as a whole. This approach tends to favour an inclusive leadership approach that encompasses leadership diversity likely to nourish quality performance in different parts of the organisation. The second assumption views eco-leadership as a hive of interconnected and interdependent organizations within the broader industry as represented in Figure 3.6.

FIGURE 3.6: ECO-LEADERSHIP MODEL

Source: Hunt, Prince, Dixon-Fyle and Yee (2018)

The scourge of globalization tends to have caused industries to shrink as a result of organizational connectivity through technologies used to transform personal, social and economic worlds, and the networking society used to create new cultures, new democratic potentials, new business and economic realities and new challenges (Hunt *et al*, 2018).

It seems gender inclusive leadership is likely to achieve synergy at the global arena using the interconnectedness achieved from the various leaders. Al-Asfour *et al* (2017) further accentuates the essence of diversity and inclusion, where female talents are taken into account rather than disenfranchising common in the patriarchal society. These changes are likely to meet resistance along the way, suggesting the need for planned change in the process. Networking as emphasised in this model tends to be less popular in women leaders, considering the many roles they undertake and the limited time available to them when carrying out the domestic chores. However, Shafique *et al* (2018) believe that women propensity to create relationships strengthens the possibility for being actively involved. Thus, the online leadership provides the opportunity for leading employees who are geographically apart and are communicated with electronically. A carefully thought out process in which digital messages are initiated and transmitted seems likely to confront some of the challenges experienced with time and distance factors. However, the absence of face-to-face interaction still poses some level of mistrust in business dealings.

Digitalization seems to be gaining momentum in the technological era where investor confidence especially where businesses are geographically scattered and that the risks facing the companies are widespread (National Center for Women and Information Technology, 2016). Eco leadership ideal with women who are often not expected to network using the 'old boys' associations. In addition, the digital platforms are likely to provide quick reporting mechanisms for mitigating potential risk situations. Through digitalisation, data from a variety of sources is made available implying that women are equally privy to avail such information (G20, 2017). It would appear the digitalization of business has created a new way of viewing the business transactions formally surrounded by masculine structures as well as facilitating changes in the culture of organizations, embracing the opportunity to transmit cultural dynamism. This provides an entry point for implementing the paradigm shift for changing some of the obsolete cultural and traditional practices still espoused by men. Projects such as Global Reporting Initiative in the Netherlands provides a platform where companies communicate sustainability issues including social well-being, gender inequality strategies and governance (OECD European Union, 2017). These initiatives could be adopted to help communicate women leadership strategies using digitalization to reach a geographical scatter of marginalized women population. Olusola (2016), enlist some approaches for enhancing women leadership which include establishing increased frequency for reporting gender parity to boards, disclosure strategies that prioritize women leader needs, establish sustainability data management systems.

The existence of Eco-leaders in organizations highlights the need for promoting interpersonal relationships also from an ecological perspective where organisms, human beings included seek to maintain an environmental balance. Despite this observed interdependence, Olusola (2016) cites an institutional backlash where, at societal level laws are enacted as reaction against development by a privileged group. This backlash manifests at macro level and is cultural involving the perception of men towards women. Conversely, at micro level refers to the personal backlash in the form of antagonism directed towards fellow female employees, such as interpersonal violence. Both backlashes are culturally traced and are the basis for prejudices and discrimination. The idea of Eco leadership tends to mitigate against these perceptions by instilling a spirit on team work and diversity where both genders are collaboratively involved. The National Center for Women & Information Technology (2016) makes explicit argument about the essence of information sharing through Eco leadership techniques and digitalization where women roles and lifestyles have raised the awareness of educated women globally.

While Eco leadership and digitalization showed positive features likely to enhance women leadership, crime incidents appeared to be on the rise. As counter measures using the digital platforms and Eco leadership helped make available the massive information (OECD, 2018). For instance, intellectual property became the target for crime placing organizations under economic risks and as a threat to business competitiveness. The transformational leadership theory appeared to be the most appropriate approach necessary to counteract violations in ethical behaviour. Additionally, the growth in free trade due to digitalization as experienced in developing countries created losses in traditional labour for women (OECD European Union, 2017). A reduction in female workforce narrows women leadership supply source which further curtails effort to bridge the gap in women leadership under-representation. Furthermore, economic destitution makes young women fertile ground for sexual abuse as they are lured to seemingly attractive economic activities both locally and abroad.

3.8.2 Change and women leadership

In working towards women leadership, a number of forces come into play that necessitate the smooth transition from the traditional and cultural perceptions to a more liberal thinking (Burns *et al*, 2017). As organisations undergo transformation to respond to the dynamic and environmental changes, an adaptive approach becomes necessary (Robbins, Bergman and Coulter, 2017). Several changes occur affecting the multicultural environment, demographic changes accompanied by the effects of technology on changing jobs and organisations with

economic shocks. Effective leadership likely to be met in inclusive leadership tends to embrace the change fundamentals situated in the type of changes taking place. The ideas of Kurt Lewin were developed in the works of Burns *et al* (2017) who proposed a model for change that acts as a framework for moving towards the desirable state.

FIGURE 3.7: CHANGE MODEL
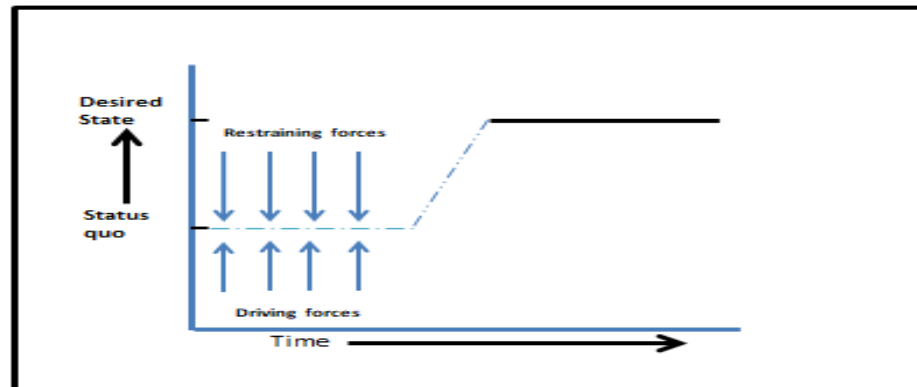
Source: Burns and Bargal (2017)

The model in Figure 3.7 depicts a change process that can be achieved over time by instituting strategies that are likely to reduce the gap on women leadership under-representation. The status quo which represents the undesirable women leadership under-representation is reflected on to help move towards a more equitable desirable state. However, the driving forces which include the need for inclusivity, paradigm shift and the general felt need for change all combine to trigger the desire for a new leadership dispensation. It is likely that the driving forces may overcome restraining forces shifting in a movement towards a new equilibrium. Studies reveal that organisations with robust cultures surpass those with weaker cultures at incremental changes, but tend to be overtaken by limiting factors against radical change. Once the new equilibrium has been established, the new status quo needs to be refrozen and institutionalised to sustain it over time. In view of the under-representation of women leadership, for example, the process of changing the status quo entails creating awareness for both women and men to change the existing perceptions from cultural beliefs that leadership is masculine and that the patriarchal influences dominate. The human resources could initiate a process that builds a culture of innovation by promoting training and development where gender inclusive leadership champions are identified. For example, idea champions are selected to help introduce innovation (Robbins *et al*, 2017).

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In order to ensure a proper women leadership dispensation is introduced in organisations, it is necessary to adopt a planned change model that take cognizance of the different stages in the change process. In the model above, unfreezing is juxtaposed with the driving forces to locate where forces should be concentrated. During the unfreezing, most if not all the stakeholders are likely to exhibit dissatisfaction with the status quo, demonstrating the need for change. Longman *et al* (2018) describes this stage as the beginning of constructive destruction of the undesirable state. Once the need for change is thoroughly understood, and then changing follows where systematic effort to address the identified problem is designed and developed through action plans. Sequential steps are identified where activities are planned for the purpose to be accomplished. The final stage in the planned change process is shown as refreezing, where new behaviours and actions as prescribed are adopted by the targeted group as permanent parts of the programme. The monitoring process is in-built to ensure progress tracking is timeous and checked automatically. The results of the change process are diffused and institutionalised to establish sustainability of the new process (Leicht *et al,* 2017). This is the basis for a planned process if desirable outcomes are to be realised. Shortening and strengthening the refreezing phase is aided by the timely tracking of financial and strategic results, measuring employees' behavioural and attitudinal changes and identifying action plan elements that need to be quickly reconfigured to succeed.

3.9 Leadership and Managerial Grid

In considering the fusion between women leadership and the leadership grid, Al-Asfour *et al* (2017) perceives these ideas as representing a leadership framework that promotes gender inclusive leadership used to further unleash women potentials. Figure 3.8 depicts the theoretical design which displays five major leadership styles with the intention of identifying the most productive theory. Often, leaders are confronted with a daunting task of deciding between placing concerted attention on people or focusing exclusively on production or both. These present the point of departure for assessing how women leadership is likely to be incorporated to achieve organisational goals. Production or services are an organization's purpose directed towards meeting intended organisational goals.

FIGURE 3.8: THE MANAGERIAL GRID
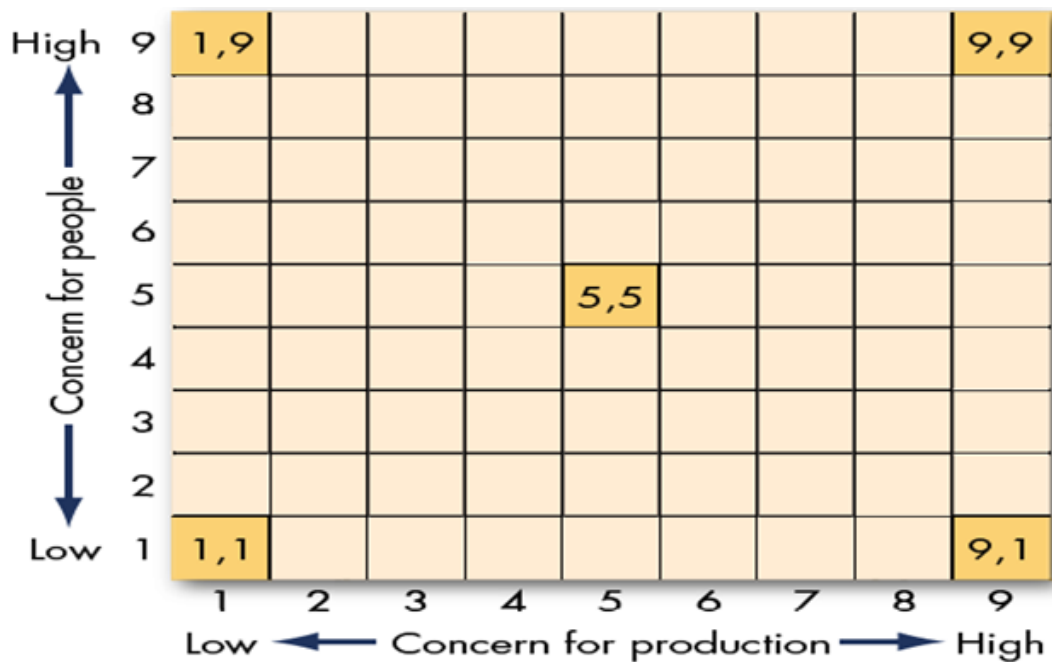
Source: Wong, Loy and Teo (2017)

Concern for people and concern for production represent two crucial dimensions creating the link on different leadership styles that influence the theories under discussion. Consequently, five broad styles emerge representing the degree to which leadership relates people or production. Women leadership tends to be associated increasingly with the concern for people (1.9), reflecting some degree of warmth, nurturing and collaboration but accompanied by a low concern for production (Wong *et al,* 2017). Some scholars, notably Oni (2017), challenge this view claiming that women possess the propensity for detail and are therefore results-oriented. On the other hand, men tend to demonstrate an autocratic style typifying high productivity (9.1). The rating tends to regard male leadership as largely autocratic demonstrating generally a low concern for people. However, this argument lacks substantial evidence and cannot therefore be relied upon. The impact of any region greater than 5.5 seems attractive although pointing towards the highest apex, 9.9 which is not easily attainable.

Some scholars maintain that the concern for people tends to motivate employees, creating the perception that a leader's consideration enhances commitment and ultimately, increased productivity (Noland *et al,* 2016). The transformational theory resonates with these views

normally favoured by female leaders. Muralidharan *et al* (2018) observe that women exhibit qualities that can be identified with transformational leadership such as nurturing and the concern for people. This approach seems to point to ethical leadership with subordinates being considerably influenced, demonstrating positive attitude, commitment and job satisfaction.

3.9.1 People or productivity

Newcomb (2017) provides that managers have a choice between employee-oriented and production-oriented leadership in constructing a structure where recent follow up studies showed that followers of leaders with high people consideration exhibit satisfaction in their jobs through intrinsic and extrinsic motivation. These aspects tend to highlight managerial features, but also provide some element of innovative leadership needed to motivate subordinates. A balanced implementation of concern for people and concern for productivity as represented in grid 9.9 is likely to satisfy people and increase organisational performance.

As Africa grapples with gross leadership inaccuracies, great interest is beginning to shift towards female leadership for accelerated gender inclusive leadership. While some prominent women leaders have emerged globally, few can be cited in Sub Saharan Africa making the concept of women leadership highly urgent. Industry captains who put faith in the fusion of transformational and the leadership grid are likely to favour an approach that taps from gender competences at all levels of societal hierarchies (Martin, 2015). Figure 3.9 illustrates a framework on leadership paucity, depicting a suggested movement towards gender inclusive leadership.

FIGURE 3.9: FRAMEWORK FOR WOMEN LEADERSHIP SKILLS
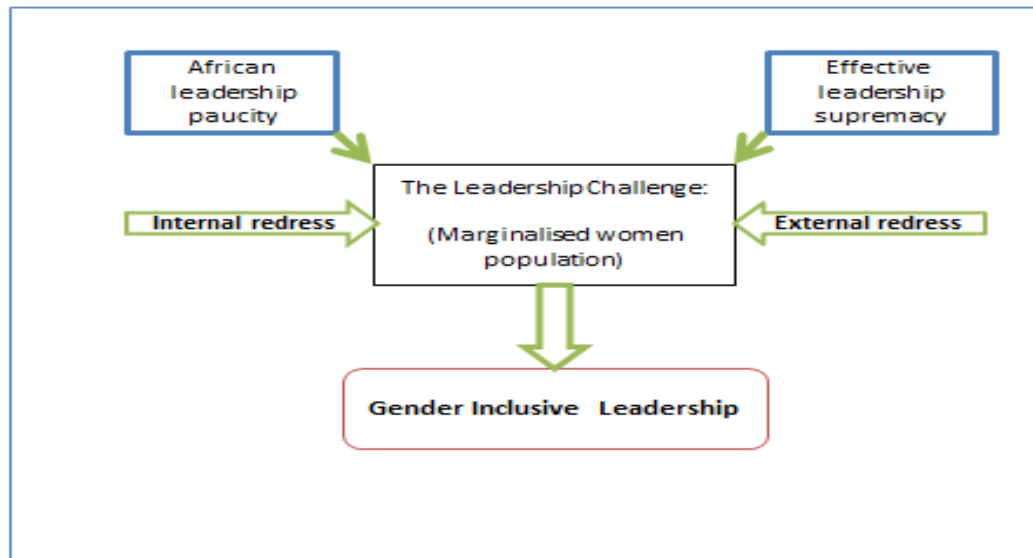
Source: Author generated

The current leadership paucity being experienced in Africa presents leadership challenges that can be addressed through an involvement of the marginalised women population. Through interaction with the male leadership and the utilization of resources within and outside the two genders are likely to forge a partnership towards a gender inclusive leadership. In the process, the women leadership under-representation gap would of necessity be narrowed. However, the existence of barriers such as the 'glass ceiling' seem to deter progress that could otherwise be achieved through a few competent women cited on the international scene (Hunt *et al*, 2018).

3.9.2 Women leadership and productivity

A number of research findings on leadership identified distinct tactics of inspiration, with legitimacy being seen as an anchor to positions of authority, further strengthened by organisational policies and rules (Martin, 2015). While authority counts in effective leadership, presentation of logical viewpoints based on empirical evidence provides power in the leader, as one develops emotional commitment to inspire the workforce towards achieving organisational goals. Furthermore, consultation within teams, a feminine characteristic tends to facilitate high quality decisions. In this regard, the transactional approach becomes essential in valuing members' contributions for meeting specific targets requiring women leadership to develop such

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exchange skills for implementing the approach (Ebrahimi *et al,* 2017). For example, leaders gain power and influence by acquiring compliance through friendship or ensuring members are loyal to the dictums of the organisation. Leaders therefore garner their power by using tactics such as flattery, praise or friendly behaviour likely to return loyalty to leadership, which is largely absent in women leadership (Robbins *et al,* 2017). In working with teams, leadership gains power when the leader is able to enlist the support of others through persuasive tactics not generally visible in women, resulting in a reduced leadership potential. These tactics are differently effective and require shrewd application, which normally occurs through training that helps ascertain the impact of the conditions.

The type of members in an organisation tends to determine what tactics are effective, as people are influenced by different motivational approaches. For example, individuals likely to select hard power tactics tend to be more action-oriented and extrinsically motivated, getting along with others easily (Marion, Christiansen, Klar and Schreiber, 2016). Women leadership tends to be disadvantaged when it comes to the tactics under this category, implying that training and experience would be vital in order to successfully perform the leadership task. Bissessar (2018) observed that individualistic nations seem to view power in personalised ways and as a basis for legitimising the achievement of their personal interests, while those in collectivistic states perceive power as socially shared, as well as legitimising the need to help others. Women seem to be associated with the latter type, where leadership is transformational and is based on the relationship between the leader and the follower. It would appear the values espoused in a society have a strong bearing on the type of power tactics favoured by leaders (McKinsey and Company, 2018). Western individualistic cultures tend to prefer more self-enhancing behaviours, as opposed to Eastern collectivistic cultures. Power therefore tends to be distributed unevenly, with gender experiencing different levels of impact as a result of the location and cultural tolerance in a particular setting.

O'Neil *et al* (2016) perceives politics as activities outside the formal roles of an individual in an organisation, but likely to influence the distribution of the benefits and losses in that organisation. Political conduct is therefore outside the job description of an employee, yet essential in determining decisional directions. Political maneuvering takes into account the varied actions and unauthentic behaviours leaders exhibit to influence follower loyalty which include reliance on whistle blowing, rumour-spreading, as well as confidential information leaks (Wong et al., 2017). Managers make decisions in ambiguous environment, allowing tainting of facts to influence their

decisions towards their interests, often referred to as politicking. Efforts to increase women leadership are likely to be jeopardized, as supervisors make decisions more inclined towards self-gratifying. Women leaders are therefore confronted with the risk of erratic decisions bent not on encouraging them to become leaders, but perpetuating patriarchal beliefs (Nikkila, 2017). The authors argue that immoral managers tend to justify almost any political actions to the extent that those considered more powerful, persuasive and articulate, have an upper hand in politicking others with the likelihood that aspirant women leadership become vulnerable to such manipulative actions. Politics plays a vital role to the advantage of both the manager and the subordinate if tactfully utilised. Women intending to advance into leadership positions are likely to employ political tactics to secure the attention and support of the relevant stakeholders.

According to Robbins *et al* (2018), several factors that influence political personality have been identified and these include personality traits, needs and other related factors. Managers, who demonstrate high self-monitoring, internal locus of control and a high need for power, tend to exhibit political behaviour. Employees are therefore likely to respond to different organisational politics, with women leaders also likely to benefit from an understanding of political tactics. It is highly improbable whether women leaders are able to cope with these political tactics and skills that influence the decision-making process. Thus said, women still command an edge over men for leading deriving their strength from the inherent feminine traits such as their emphasis on interpersonal cooperation as opposed to competition as well as equality rather than superior-subordinate 'horse-rider' relationship (Samuel and Mokoaleli, 2017). However, this view has been fundamentally contested by modern scholars who regard it as too simplistic believed to harbour prejudices that neglect the impact of contextual contingencies (Afsar and Masood, 2018). Leadership styles are a function of the situation and the competencies of team members further influenced by the type of needs, interests and conditions under consideration. Nevertheless, women continue to remain undervalued in their leadership as a result of negative perceptions about the competence of women leaders (Jyoti and Bhau, 2016). Women are therefore expected to remove these perceptions first before any leadership consideration commences. Despite these observations, women have been considered suitable and better placed to lead modern organizations (Rayyan, 2017). This argument is based on the premise that women are disposed to adopt collaborative and supportive leadership approaches in contrast to masculine authoritative leadership style.

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3.9.3 Bridging the gender divide

The concern for people seem to be strongly entrenched more in women than their male counterparts, considering their nurturing characteristics as observed above. The under-representation of women leadership in the public enterprise continues to dominate public forums supported by widespread public pronouncements, urging women to contribute to economic growth (OECD European Union, 2017). For example, the complex and strenuous impediments facing aspiring women to leadership which have since degenerated into the labyrinth are all indicators for the widening gap in the gender disparity experienced in the workplace insensitive to the role played by women (Lucifora and Vigani, 2016). This gap continues to perpetuate the historical gender divide that restrains socio-economic development, prompting the need to include them in the decision-making process especially in the top and influential positions (OECD European Union, 2017). The trends suggest the need for adherence to good corporate governance with diverse skills in the boardroom generating a positive drive to organisational performance manifest in demonstrated employee creativity. However, these arguments cannot be wholly relied upon, as achieving gender parity demands an exhaustive and comprehensive dialogue with all stakeholders included to secure their integrated viewpoints (Salvioni, Gennari and Bosetti, 2016). Although excitement has grown significantly in this respect, the gender equality progression has been frustratingly moving at a snail's pace dissimilar in the various regions. A number of initiatives have been undertaken to address the gender divide with, for example, companies executing mostly policy strategies for women to enter into the leadership positions through the quota system (Choobineh, 2016). One major breakthrough however, has been the degree to which top management embraced the changes toward this direction, supported by investor influence on the board's accountability, although insufficient evidence exists to account for achievements made through this notion (ILO, 2015). Proponents of gender inclusive leadership nonetheless argue that measures taken within organisations tend to exclusively focus on women rather than assimilate gender-intelligent approaches that raise male awareness to be part of the solution (Centre for Women Business Report, 2017).

A further mechanism for bridging the gender divide can be derived from a meticulously crafted recruitment process that is transparent and meritocratic, where qualified female candidates contest for leadership positions (International Labour Organisation, 2015). Recruitment systems that accelerate women advancement have been designed such as the one undertaken by the *Sistema de Alta Dirección Pública* (ADP) in Chile, based on open competition (Aloulou, 2018). These

measures however tend to be limited in scope and therefore cannot be implemented in isolation of other strategies. This argument suggests the need for a comprehensive and broad-based approach. A study of the practicability of these theories in Sub Saharan Africa becomes of necessity as little literature is found in the region.

It is natural that every human environment constitutes an unspoken culture that prescribes who belongs to what group prompting differences and similarities in how gender is perceived leading to men numerically dominating (Banchefsky *et al*, 2018). Changing the perception to allow a gender inclusive leadership may attract resistance from the dominant masculine group depriving women the opportunity to exploit their potential. Apfelbaum *et al* (2016) suggest that shaping the cultural context of the workplace requires meaningful and sincere discussion of diversity and social group differences to change intergroup prejudices. Nielsen *et al* (2017) concur arguing that multiple viewpoints imply the need for understanding diversity which reinforces innovation and productivity from balanced broader ideological perspectives. This argument tends to suggest the value in adopting explicit diversity policies that recognize the contribution of women and discourage those that allow women to act more like men. Banchefsky *et al* (2018) examines the argument from a different perspective citing the contrasting aspects in gender perceptions in which segregationism suppresses women voices assimilationism promotes women say provided this identifies with the significant male group. These views seem to introduce a certain dimension of discrimination in which women continue to remain subjugated in the workplace.

A number of research findings on the evaluation of female and male based on gender stereotypes show men as competent and women as caring thus compromising on women career progression (Bülow and Gert, 2018). The perception shows that men, as opposed to women are regarded competent and therefore linked to productivity while women demonstrate a social aspect of caring not directly focused on task. However, it seems evident that caring is associated with concern for people where the contributions of individuals are only noticeable in the long term. The gender divide seems to find expression in the biological difference of men and women and social and contemporary organizational settings (Epstein and Fischer, 2017). While the former perspective is distinctively visible the latter perspective tends to be complex requiring deeper insight into the phenomenon. The avalanche of extant literature on gender disparity the world-over seek to establish discrimination experienced in the advancement of women in leadership positions. This experience is not uncommon to Sub Saharan Africa including Eswatini and South Africa. The Centre for Women Business Report (2017) reports common perceptions held by society which

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often undermine female leadership competence subjectively evaluated against male perceived standards. The seemingly superficial comparative assumptions for female leadership capability creates difficulty in advancing to professional positions of authority.

The above sections set out to model strategies for bridging the gender divide through a change in perceptions but also policies that would reduce gender inequalities. The gender gap women leadership under-representation tends to create organizational deficiencies particularly for leadership (Beckwith *et al*, 2016). Developments toward bridging the women leadership under-representation gap seem polarised in Sub Saharan Africa though remarkable progress has been registered in Europe and other regions (Helgesen, 2017). Focus on the diversity, clearly planned programmes and exposure to women capabilities are likely to influence the realization of gender goals. These are likely to be exhibited in a well-established human resource management function where employee competences and talents are developed (Fitzsimmons *et al*, 2016; Awaja *et al,* 2018). Additionally, the G20 (2017) laments the huge disparity between women and men in connecting online with women being connected less than their male counterparts. Related to the obstacle to women leadership involves cultural machination where men enjoy a gender privilege which places women in an inferior status (Hahn *et al*, 2015). Thus engaging in arguments pertaining to the gender divide loosens the long standing tension caused by cultural prejudices and discrimination. The intergroup ideologies require to be understood adequately to clear up prejudices and stereotypes in the workplace (Nielsen *et al*, 2017). All these factors are essential components in building an inclusive leadership in public enterprises.

3.9.4 Women leadership and power politics

A number of research findings on leadership identified distinct tactics of inspiration, with legitimacy being seen as an anchor to positions of authority, further strengthened by organisational policies and rules (Martin, 2015). While authority counts in effective leadership, presentation of logical viewpoints based on empirical evidence provides power in the leader, as one develops emotional commitment to inspire the workforce towards achieving organisational goals. Furthermore, consultation within teams, a feminine characteristic tends to facilitate high quality decisions. In this regard, the transactional approach becomes essential in valuing members' contributions for meeting specific targets requiring women leadership to develop such exchange skills for implementing the approach (Ebrahimi *et al,* 2017). For example, leaders gain power and influence by acquiring compliance through friendship or ensuring members are loyal to the dictums of the organisation. Leaders therefore garner their power by using tactics such as

flattery, praise or friendly behaviour likely to return loyalty to leadership, which is largely absent in women leadership (Tadesse, 2017). In working with teams, leadership gains power when the leader is able to enlist the support of others through persuasive tactics not generally visible in women, resulting in a reduced leadership potential. These tactics are differently effective and require shrewd application, which normally occurs through training that helps ascertain the impact of the conditions.

The type of members in an organisation tends to determine what tactics are effective, as people are influenced by different motivational approaches. For example, individuals likely to select hard power tactics tend to be more action-oriented and extrinsically motivated, getting along with others easily (Marion *et al,* 2016). Women leadership tends to be disadvantaged when it comes to the tactics under this category, implying that training and experience would be vital in order to successfully perform the leadership task. Bissessar (2018) observed that individualistic nations seem to view power in personalised ways and as a basis for legitimising the achievement of their personal interests, while those in collectivistic states perceive power as socially shared, as well as legitimising the need to help others. Women seem to be associated with the latter type, where leadership is transformational and is based on the relationship between the leader and the follower. It would appear the values espoused in a society have a strong bearing on the type of power tactics favoured by leaders (McKinsey and Company, 2018). Western individualistic cultures tend to prefer more self-enhancing behaviours, as opposed to Eastern collectivistic cultures. Power therefore tends to be distributed unevenly, with gender experiencing different levels of impact as a result of the location and cultural tolerance in a particular setting.

O'Neil *et al* (2016) perceives politics as activities outside the formal roles of an individual in an organisation, but likely to influence the distribution of the benefits and losses in that organisation. Political conduct is therefore outside the job description of an employee, yet essential in determining decisional direction. Managers make decisions in ambiguous environment, allowing tainting of facts to influence their decisions towards their interests, often referred to as politicking. Efforts to increase women leadership are likely to be jeopardized, as supervisors make decisions more inclined towards self-gratifying. Women leaders are therefore confronted with the risk of erratic decisions bent not on encouraging them to become leaders, but perpetuating patriarchal beliefs (Nikkila, 2017). The authors argue that immoral managers tend to justify almost any political actions to the extent that those considered more powerful, persuasive and articulate, have an upper hand in politicking others with the likelihood that aspirant women leadership become

vulnerable to such manipulative actions. Politics plays a vital role to the advantage of both the manager and the subordinate if tactfully utilised. Women intending to advance into leadership positions are likely to employ political tactics to secure the attention and support of the relevant stakeholders.

According to Robbins *et al* (2018), several factors that influence political personality have been identified and these include personality traits, needs and other related factors. Managers, who demonstrate high self-monitoring, internal locus of control and a high need for power, tend to exhibit political behaviour. Employees are therefore likely to respond to different organisational politics, with women leaders benefiting from an understanding of the political tactics. It is therefore highly improbable whether women leaders can cope with these political tactics and skills that influence the decision-making process.

Men are powerfully placed in powerful leadership positions because they make significant numbers in positions of influence (Muralidharan *et al*, 2018). Because women are overwhelmed by men in strategic positions, their influence is often insignificant perpetuating impediments to women leadership. However, some scholars argue that appointed women leaders pose a great threat to men's prospects of being promoted who use any possible strategies to bar women participation in leadership (Taylor, 2016). The argument suggests that male-dominated environments are likely to be more gender equivalent if more women enter the leadership arena. A typical solution may therefore require to create a more inclusive workplace that allows frequent contact between men and women void of gender threats. The positive gender contact may include equal status, intergroup cooperation, supportive norms and acquaintanceship (Osland, Clinch and Yang, 2018). Managers at different levels within public enterprises are expected to demonstrate supportive culture where all employees subscribe to appropriate and positive intergroup behaviours. In addition, senior female managers who portray positive intergroup behaviours may act as role models for female employees creating profound impact (National Science Board, 2016). These behaviours imply creating leader archetypes for both female and male employees. It is important to realise that the acquaintance factor in contact theory suggests that if the contact between men and women is superficial in male-dominated environments then an increase in stereotypes is experienced. On the other hand, acquaintanceship created by sharing interpersonal information through friendly interactions is likely to minimise prejudices as lasting attitude changes are made. Men and women are generally considered inherently dissimilar (separation) with the belief that masculine values are viewed as more favourable than those held in femininity

(dominance) providing the power dominance as gender norms (Dresden, Dresden and Ridge, 2018). The existence of power differences between the genders is enough reason for gender inequalities likely to deter women from assuming leadership positions. Bridging the gender divide can only be successfully tackled where an understanding of these differences is determined.

3.10 Universal Barriers to Women Leadership

Kalysh, Kulik and Perera (2016) established that barriers to women leadership in senior positions appeared in two major forms; those that are situated in society at large and those pertinent to the corporate world. These barriers are further classified into categories to clarify their significance within the context of women leadership in public enterprises. It is important to note that these barriers are not restricted to senior positions alone, but permeate through all managerial levels. These are illustrated below.

FIGURE 3.10: BARRIERS IN SUB SAHARAN AFRICA

Source: Kalysh, Kulik and Perera (2016)

These barriers seem to suggest that they are experienced before women assume leadership positions, yet these in fact occur simultaneously at any time and essentially sporadic. Disaggregating the barriers deepens insight into these obstacles providing for concentrated scrutiny of each impediment within the leadership hierarchy.

3.10.1 Structural barriers

Barriers to women leadership advancement appear to be largely influenced by social activities perpetuated by set norms and values that exclude women in certain public milieus (Alsubhi *et al,* 2018). Corporate policy and culture tend to exult masculinity in favour of male decisions thus perpetuating gender discrimination. Promotion to seniority often requires more than competence and the know-how with masculine bias imposing constraints on women leadership aspirants.

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McKinsey and Company (2017) observe that guidelines for promotions may be ambiguously designed to leave room for male leader chauvinism and manipulation. Women therefore face unnecessary pressure to bow to forced relationships. Barriers emerge when women discover the hidden expectations in authority as condition for their advancement to leadership, at times ostensibly linked to their limited natural relationships with top male superiors (Reilly *et al,* 2016). Other barriers women face in their trajectory to leadership include the multiple roles widely experienced in patriarchal society, subordinate negative perceptions and the general risk aversion in women (Einarsdottir *et al,* 2018). As a result, women become less self-confident.

In addition, the existence of hierarchical levels tends to create distinguishing structures of status at different levels, resulting in the emergence of barriers that affect women's progression to leadership (Robbins *et al,* 2017). One such observed obstacle relates to women subordination to their fellow female leaders. The 'Queen Bee Syndrome' provides a further barrier in which those women promoted tend to detach themselves from fellow female subordinates (Almaki, Silong, Idris and Wahat, 2016). On the contrary, women leaders tend to be negatively evaluated by their female subordinates during and after ascendance to leadership positions (Alsubhi *et al,* 2018). The two perspectives seem to present a double-edged sword as barrier to women leadership, likely to exacerbate women impediment to leadership progression. The barriers so far identified seem to also demonstrate magnitude of the women leadership under-representation as women tend to exhibit the 'we can live with it' attitude shared by most women in the workforce within the public enterprise. Women therefore tend to be overwhelmed by the dominant male population in leadership positions. McKinsey and Company (2017) conclude that the prevailing philosophies and cultural convictions relating to women leadership are as a consequence reinforced. These barriers become harsh challenges to women leadership thus reducing their attempted self-confidence in the face of masculinity, setting apart advantages to leadership prospects (Carter, 2015). Additionally, Al-kayed (2015) in support of this view cites Saudi business women who are faced with institutional policies and cultural barriers in the form of poor coordination between government organs, lack of government policies on gender sensitivity in the workplace and restrictive cultural and social expectations from women. Saudi female leaders have to grapple with challenges such as dealing with a diverse subordinate personality. These challenges are no exception to Sub Saharan Africa likely probably to be experienced at varying degrees.

From a societal perspective and the assigned historical division of labour, women excel in specific domestic roles that are exclusively designated under their charge and that any deviation is likely

to attract resistance (Almaki *et al,* 2016). The historical and traditional barriers manifest in market imperfections and social norms that seem to favour masculinity, thus further embellishing the gender leadership inequality. This is also evident in the standards laid down by some organisations on reward systems set in relation to hours worked in the wake of rigid work schedules and seniority, placing women at a huge disadvantage (Lantara, 2015). Women particularly in traditional communities took up more domestic chores including nurturing their husbands, children and other members of the family. As these household functions weigh heavily on women, men tend to perceive that adding more work responsibilities on women overburdens their capacity to carry out the domestic chores more efficiently. However, recent scholars suggest that workplace diversity helps improve organisational performance, although this is largely only noticeable in organisations where CEOs are female and enjoy a greater proportion of women on corporate boards (Noland *et al,* 2016). Evidence seems available for top manager level but still scanty in the middle and firstline levels. In the absence of tangible numbers to support these assertions, it becomes obvious to conclude that women are not sufficiently represented at the top, further posing challenges to women leadership.

The gender ideological differences exist in the workplace with male employees devaluing women in male dominated fields and further that women themselves tend to endorse male dominance as leaders (Samuel *et al,* 2017). Women therefore become marginalised as they are considered falling outside the leadership domain where male employees outnumber them. The ideologies seem to expect women to conform to male established form of behaviour where women are assimilated. The ability of women in these settings is therefore questionable resulting in the concept of 'gender blind'. Based on these cultural beliefs and the lack of the under-representation of women, these obstacles result in reinforcing each other (Cheryan *et al*, 2016). The obstacle of male dominate cultures may be mitigated by injecting more women into male-dominated environments where explicit diversity policies are developed to accommodate women and consider their contributions and influence. Furthermore, propose to embark on approaches that discourage women from ideologies that compel women to behave more like men. Gender theorists value promoting diversity seen as strengthening innovation, design, and productivity (Nielsen *et al*, 2017). Structural barriers form major impediments where the influence of culture in the workplace dominate the fundamental obstacles in workplace male structured philosophies pervading the hierarchical levels (Mundy, 2017).

A major obstacle dominating the gender debate involves the influence of culture extended to include the workplace male-structured philosophies that pervade the male-dominant environment (Mundy, 2017). As observed earlier, these gender ideologies gravitate between the fundamental intergroup attitudinal dimensions. The structural barriers exhibited require careful examination of masculine and feminine differences influencing the workplace. The cultural-historical next dimension involves the degree to which women are perceived to possess positive and respectful behaviours vis-à-vis dismissive and negative attitudes directed towards female (Banchefsky *et al,* 2018). The premise that all human beings are broadly equal regardless of their gender orientation provides justification for encouraging women to participate in leadership. Women core-exist with men in a society that his highly masculine and is one in which the workplace exhibits women leadership under-representation due to cultural philosophies.

3.10.2 Prevailing perceptions

Al-bakr, Bruce, Davidson, Schlaffer and Kropiunigg (2017) acknowledge the existence of perceptions arising from biological differences and cultural beliefs that form barriers to women leadership. The patriarchal philosophy regards women as subordinate citizens expected to be submissive to men, thus making it difficult for male subordinates to reverse the status quo. Given their natural biological endowments, women are likely to offer effective leadership, thus dismissing the cultural beliefs in patriarchal societies. Martin *et al* (2016) develops this argument further by observing the existence of differences that separate men as breadwinners and women as homemakers, with the former exhibiting more argentic, assertive and therefore independent behaviour in contrast to women. These arguments seem to suggest different views held by women and men regarding the role of leadership as masculinity yet women are beginning to be considered desirable leaders in contemporary organisations (Carnes, Devine, Manwell and Byars-Winston, 2015). Despite barriers levelled on female leadership, women tend to be better managers than men, although compelling evidence still need to be advanced.

The argument is further contested when the capability of women leaders is placed under scrutiny in respect of work-life balance. Studies establish that women with full time employment find it difficult to balance work and family responsibilities (Hill *et al,* 2016). Either work or home is likely to suffer, with the workplace presumably being the target. Women are confronted with prejudices that regard them frail, lenient and less devoted to extra work activities than their male counterparts. Additionally, these gender stereotypes tend to deepen women leadership under-representation.

In view of the widely shared societal perceptions, women see themselves as in a dilemma, as no support is forthcoming for those women taking up leadership positions from peers and family members. Instead high expectations are directed on female leaders to perform than their male counterparts. The most common stereotype is reflected in the general belief that 'think manager, think male' stereotype which implies that female executives are only considered effective if they conform to masculine traits (Beckwith *et al,* 2016). On the contrary, if they demonstrate the traditional female characteristics such as nurturing and communal, they are considered too nice and therefore, feeble (Mekonnen, 2017). The stereotypes find anchorage in social mechanisms such as the "spillover effect" where social gender roles contaminate organisational roles, forcing female and male managers to hold different expectations. These assumptions tend to present some enormous burden on prospective women leaders, thus further compounding the barriers and biases viewed through unsound barometer. Nevertheless, Tamminen and Bennett (2017) argue that top management and executive positions demand some degree of aggressiveness and results-oriented approach, coupled with a high level of emotional strength and control seemingly not visible in most female leadership. Rayyan (2017) describes the predicament women face in choosing between adapting the preferred stereotype to be viewed successful, or run the risk to suffer the negative societal evaluation. Nevertheless, studies reveal that the more influential women who are in their leadership positions consider conformity to stereotypes as less of a burden (Pollitt, Robinson and Umberson, 2018).

Most men, with a few other women seem to hold the perception that women leadership succeeds when masculine traits are at play, although this argument may be empirically contested (Abalkhail, 2017). These perceptions tend to create major barriers that confront women in their trajectory towards leadership, especially when viewed from a male perspective. As a result, women become deprived when focus is directed more on evaluating their performance than creating learning opportunities that allow their growth in leadership (Lantara, 2015). In Sub Saharan Africa, a combination of social beliefs and practices are at the centre of influencing people's perceptions in the workplace where women experience resistance when perceived to display masculine features positing an antithesis of views for women leadership (Baah, Amani and Abass, 2015; Dulaimi, 2016). Two pertinent theories surface from these arguments, one being rather descriptive and relating to the manner in which a woman or man typically acts in terms of personality and the other being largely prescriptive, thus involving societal thinking on how individuals should act with regards to their gender. The prescribed gender philosophies tend to

portray some societal attitudes toward leadership qualities, creating fertile ground for inconsistencies when attempts are made to reconcile the two schools of thought (Baah *et al*, 2015).

Kalysh *et al* (2016) observes that women tend to hold the inferiority complex based on the traditional stereotypes which maintain that educating the boy child than the girl child makes more economic sense because the girl child will marry anyway and still remain under the charge of a man in the family. This perception is resonated in Pakistan's patriarchal society, where women desire to engage more in the informal sector and such flexible roles that allow them to focus more on family chores (Akram *et al,* 2017). The impact of these perceptions are equally traced in both African and Asian societies, but seem to be slowly vanishing, with women spending their substantial amount of time in both formal or informal employment. Nevertheless, women continue to dominate the household thus leading to doubts as to their efficacy to handle workplace demands.

A further barrier manifestation can be traced in the lack of women assertiveness likely to trigger both male and female insubordination. Women leaders tend to exhibit 'ambition gap' by often shunning leadership responsibilities that may be bestowed upon them (Sassler *et al,* 2017). The same authors hold the opinion that masculine leadership tends to focus mostly on strategic issues in the form of visioning and thinking, while femininity appears to proffer teamwork and collaboration. These claims seem to suggest that women uphold managerial features supported by the nurturing attributes different from masculinity which extensively direct effort towards the unpredictable bigger picture surrounded by risks. Tadesse (2017) adds accentuating that visioning entails risk-taking while collaboration implies sharing the risks evident in managerial circles. The latter notion seems to suggest some degree of interdependence often concealed when people act cooperatively, typically visible in most female leaders. Al-Asfour *et al* (2017) argue that while some degree of ambition and assertiveness may be observable in women, their leadership involvement is usually hampered by some religious and traditional beliefs which seem to curtail their social prominence as often witnessed in most Sub Saharan African countries and Asia.

It is further noted that some religious doctrines exclusively discourage female leadership, notably in the Catholicism where women are barred from becoming priests, thereby drawing widespread discourse on gender equality ((Nugent, 2017). In addition, religion and culture seem to play an overriding role in strengthening women leadership barriers, as espoused also by institutions such as the African traditional kingship. In contrast, Protestants tend to challenge these views, with women slowly being accommodated into the leadership positions in different castes (Kassa,

2015). Despite the pressures confronting women leadership, confidence and ambition tend to offer a robust catalyst in advancing women to top leadership positions. It is generally agreed that confidence that is built upon sound emotional intelligence is likely to provide a set of skills such as self-awareness and the ability to manage emotions and relationships, which constitute a solid leadership anchorage. Female leaders are expected to effectively manage their emotional intelligence that encompass the ability to perceive emotions accurately, generating emotions to develop thought, emotional knowledge and finally regulate emotions effectively to promote emotional and intellectual growth (Brescoll, Okimoto and Vial, 2018). However, it is uncertain whether women are able to accommodate these features of emotional intelligence, posing a threat to women leadership prospects in light of the difficulties that women experience when managing their own emotions.

3.10.3 Culture and leadership

Although culture permeates in all societies globally, it is nonetheless an elusive phenomenon generally viewed as encompassing people's shared experiences. Bissessar (2018) perceives culture as complex and encompassing knowledge, beliefs and morals acquired by societal members. Beliefs tend to override suggesting the need to uphold what that particular society considers acceptably valuable. Gipson *et al* (2017) describe culture as a set of distinctive aspects involving the spiritual, intellectual and emotional features that make a society including its lifestyle patterns, values and norms. These definitions seem to highlight inclusion of the individual into the broader dictates of the group. Both definitions point to the behaviours of individuals who collectively espouse common values, making it easy to share prejudices and biases among groups and sub-groups. The beliefs in cultural orientations tend to create a major source of obstacles and challenges facing women leader aspirants, implying that any altered mindset is likely to be met with resistance (Hill *et al,* 2016).

The impact of culture on women leadership tends to be experienced more specifically in organisations that have a shared understanding of a set of values, norms, guiding beliefs, and understandings where new members are oriented to the correct way of thinking, feeling and behaving (Akram, 2017). An undivided belief of these values tends to create unwavering allegiance to what values should be espoused regardless of their relevance to others or whether they stand the test of times. Since these aspects seem observable in the broader concept of culture, organisations cannot therefore operate in isolation of these values, creating the basis for prejudices and discrimination. It seems far-fetched to consider changing cultural beliefs held in a particular

society, but may be possible to incorporate certain facets thought to be alien (Al-Asfour *et al*, 2017). A major threshold seems compelling to reflect on the perceptions formally considered relevant and therefore not applicable in the contemporary world, taking into account cultural dynamism to curb prejudices and discrimination. Cultural prejudices and discrimination present themselves in the form of gender biases in organisational philosophies where leadership characteristics favour mostly masculinity and may be difficult to overcome (Kalysh *et al*, 2017). Cultural frameworks help shape leadership attitudes and intentions in the early stages of an organisation and as an important ingredient in understanding gender inclusive leadership. These arguments suggest that culture underpins distinguishable philosophical values that hold together a society through mental indoctrination based on spiritual but also emotional outcomes.

These parameters form the barometer for evaluating what constitutes acceptable leadership in a particular society within which women leadership exists (Al-bakr *et al*, 2017). However, the impact of cultural and social factors on women leadership effectiveness is a complex subject that requires a consideration of multiple variables that help break any potential for tension when faced with two or more backgrounds (Anderson *et al*, 2017). For example, certain societal values may conflict with those espoused in a diverse workplace. Additionally, strategic management requires input from expertise in an organisation supported by one group, with the possibility that others may not find it warranting. This implies that societal and cultural beliefs and values of staff have a direct impact on the progress of an organisation. Strategic thinking has developed beyond disciplinary peripherals, making the concept complex with insufficient evidence existing to offer a precise outlook in public enterprises.

The influence of cultural practices guides the way women ought to position themselves for leaders' positions in light of changes being experienced in the environment. Stephan *et al* (2016) cite the complementarity of the historical-biological orientations which identify women with domestic chores, with men expected to provide financial and protective resource aspects, raising further controversy into the authority designation. Currently, these biological differences seem to be blurred as more women enter the male dominated workplace (Martin *et al*, 2016). The cultural dictates are slowly being challenged as more women enter the work environment, stimulating women's desire into leadership. Alsubhi *et al* (2018) further identify leadership challenges in the form of misconceptions over the importance of leadership within traditional perceptions, highlighting the need to qualify the phenomenon according to the situation.

The culture of a country influences organizational culture which shapes how employees relate to each other through shared beliefs, values and norms (Apfelbaum *et al*, 2016). These cultural elements create the organization's identity based on the espoused beliefs, values and norms. The leadership style is also influenced by the prevalent culture suggesting that where diversity is upheld in a nonpartisan environment, decisions are all-inclusive incorporating the views of all members. Conversely, an individualistic environment seems to exhibit a bureaucratic structure with decisions being centrally concentrated. Nielsen *et al* (2017) seem to share these views adding that organizations for intergroup ideologies based on the beliefs and values shared displaying perceptions about how women are treated and accommodated in the decision making process. The degree of prejudices and biases is determined by the group ideology selected. For instance, group ideologies that value diversity are likely to favour decisions from multiple viewpoints. Women are therefore likely to be included when decisions are made paving way for leadership positions. Apfelbaum *et al* (2016) suggest a balanced treatment of gender ideologies when considering women leadership in the workplace. The role of leadership to creatively craft such group ideologies becomes critical. This entails a leadership that instils organizational trust where relationships are constructed to promote an open atmosphere of collegiality (Jena *et al*, 2017). Organizations are made up of heterogeneous groupings with varied political, religious, ethnic and gender orientations where leadership tends to play a paramount role of harmonizing these components into a cohesive intergroup. Due to the diverse cultural backgrounds encountered in organizations, leaders are likely to influence subordinates by creating an environment in which members trust and treat each other equitably regardless of their gender orientation (Afsar *et al*, 2018). By creating a culture of trust, it would appear the leader gains subordinates' loyalty and is able to command authority and power. The behaviour of women as perceived within the cultural environment determines the amount of trust likely to be generated to assume the desired leadership in an organization.

3.10.4 Prejudices and discrimination

Prejudices, biases, stereotypes and discrimination interconnect and generally relate to describe people's attitudes in social groupings (Reilly *et al,* 2016). According to Carnes *et al* (2015) biases also include conscious beliefs, feelings, and attitudes usually seen to be unfriendly and unwilling to admit actions of fellow group members. The historical beliefs that regard men as sole breadwinners highlight the state of dependency witnessed in women, creating further obstacles to women leadership potential noticeable in Sub Saharan Africa. Pollitt *et al* (2018) confirm the

perception of women as economically dependent on their spouses, thus magnifying the stereotyped gender prejudice. As observed by Olusola (2016), the political changes in Europe where women leaders are actively visible in decision-making present valuable inspiration for African women, not only in the political sphere, but in public enterprises where they are expected to take an active leadership role in the transformation of the different cultural practices. It would appear a gender inclusive leadership is likely to be mobilise the resources of both genders through a planned change that seek to modify the current cultural and historical orientations (Wilde, 2016). While women tend to be discriminated against, mostly in terms of their sex and social orientation, this appears bidirectional as discrimination is also applied by women against men. It is however acknowledged that women discrimination is rampart in the workplace and that men are also subjected to domestic discrimination as women take a larger chunk of the household chores. In support of this notion, Bahiru *et al* (2018) observe that divorced women tend to enjoy the more primary custody of children than their male counterparts.

These observations seem deeply rooted in the conventional backdrop and may not be easily altered, prompting a careful and detailed examination of the phenomena under study. Stereotypes seem to hold the belief that men belong to a superior social class, historically and culturally instituted with women perceived as inferior. These perceptions imply a social categorisation which triggers prejudice between the genders that deepen discrimination in the form of 'those' (out-groups) and 'us' (in-groups) syndrome (Einarsdottir *et al,* 2018). It may be interesting to note that these evaluations are equally attributed to both women and men, resulting in the conviction that a solution to this dilemma within the genders themselves. Kalysh *et al* (2016) provide a useful account in respect of the phenomenon suggesting that the preconceived and subconscious opinions tend to emanate from a lack of rationality and experience, resulting in treating others unfairly. Discrimination and prejudice constitute products of the broader culture that hold society together. However, with several Sub-Saharan African countries that gained independence from colonial governments, prejudice and discrimination towards women in society appears to be gradually disappearing, although this is not visible in the workplace where it is seemingly progressing at a snail's pace, casting doubts on whether equitable leadership distribution will be achieved any time sooner (Africa Human Development Report, 2016). The continued existence of conflicting societal perceptions are the cause for impediments in women leadership under-representation significantly experienced in public enterprises. An understanding of cultural dynamics is likely to provide a balanced analysis of factors that influence women leadership.

Pollitt *et al* (2018) add their weight on this notion that leadership is often perceived in patriarchal terms but acknowledge co-existence of women and men as a complimentary construction which allows the different roles to be performed separately. Gender inequality seems to manifest vividly when marital dynamics are put under scrutiny further revealing the power sharing inequalities as common place in these relationships. In patriarchal societies the perception that leadership is masculine seems to be losing ground in the gender co-existence and complementarity as both men and women are gradually awakening to the interchangeability of their social roles. For instance, the traditional and cultural division of labour which normally reinforces biological differences is being perceived differently in the younger people who are becoming egalitarian about marital choices (Itulua-Abumere, 2017). The study also revealed that while there may be barriers inflicted by societal influences women appeared to subscribe to their own leadership impediments.

Women are disproportionately targets of psychological violence and socio-economic status within the workplace prejudices and discrimination (Glynn, 2018). Such phenomena are a product of common prejudices and discrimination differently displayed in corporate hierarchies, levels of education and wage differences all of which favour masculinity. Conversely, women who demonstrate a higher managerial and political status are less likely to be targets to psychological harassment resulting from prejudices and biases. For instance, prejudices, biases and the lack of supportive policies combine to create pay disparity between genders (Nielsen *et al,* 2017). However, proposals are being made to raise wages likely to attract women into the workplace. Pregnancy discrimination protection and affordable child care and gender shared schedules are being considered as essential ingredients for enhancing women advancement to leadership in the workplace (Mundy, 2017). The prejudices and discrimination in both the workplace and household assign domestic responsibilities exclusively to masculinity resulting in women being overburdened. Additionally, women tend to suffer discrimination during pregnancy as certain activities may not be efficiently carried out. While the negative ideologies position male subgroups as dominant and superior over women, it is unclear whether there is significant difference on how gender ideologies shape men's perceptions in a female-dominated environment.

It is important to note that care ought to be taken in establishing the value of the ideologies under consideration. Separating the relevance of ideologies to a particular context remains critical for segregating them as personal or perceived gender stereotypes (Banchefsky *et al*, 2018). The

notion emphasises that gender prejudices and discrimination seem to be more relevant to attitudes relating to the workplace and non-work related contexts and domestic spheres.

Furthermore, the prejudices and discrimination seem to find grounding in the cultural and religious landscapes which are also shaped by political, technological and ethnic factors (Potvin *et al*, 2018). The debate on gender inequalities seems exclusively centred on women presenting a lesser attention to men who are equally important in addressing the gender divide. Thus, cultural and religious beliefs seem violated exacerbating inherent biases and discrimination that separate men and women. Al-Asfour *et al* (2017) attempts to alleviate the effects of discrimination by suggesting inclusion of both genders but carefully selecting the type of inclusion within specified parameters. By clearing the long standing prejudices and discrimination, women and men are likely to work collaboratively in identifying relevant solutions to problems in women leadership under-representation.

3.10.5 Self-inflicted obstacles

Ganiyu *et al* (2018) observed that women avoided leadership positions for fear of being labelled unwomanly, harsh and insensitive to the needs of other women, resulting in their low self-esteem. As a consequence, it remains uncommon to encounter many assertive women who may face the bravery to ignore this evaluation (Hyllegard, Rambo-Hernandez and Ogle, 2017). A leadership that adopts both transformational and transactional approaches is likely to counteract this perception where diversity is becomes the solution (Ebrahimi *et al,* 2017). Eagly *et al* (2016) observe that perceptions could either be accurate or inaccurate suggesting that the immediate environment and situation play a pivotal role in influencing gender inequalities. The locations in which perceptions are being examined provide a bearing on interpreting issues at hand, implying that women leadership perceptions differ regionally. A further influence on perceptions of inequality involves press coverage where stories of inequalities tend to perpetuate barriers to women leadership when negative experiences are uncovered (Diermeier *et al,* 2017).

As expressed earlier, masculinity characterises the value of assertiveness, with domestic chores and relationship building identifiable in femininity (Rayyan, 2017). On the other hand, Newcomb (2017) believes that both male and female have an equally paramount role to play in promoting effective leadership, with the roles capable of being performed interchangeably. McKinsey and Company (2018) advocate a leadership approach that encourages collaborate work for both genders neutralising weaknesses and reinforcing strengths in both masculinity and femininity. Al-Asfour *et al* (2017) observes that high masculinity exalts male leadership to cultural heroism,

compelling women in leadership to admire and imitate masculine characteristics. Conversely, femininity seeks to promote social relationships and harmony and therefore receives less attention (Hill *et al,* 2016). Itulua-Abumere (2013) posits an intriguing observation where geographical locations play a major role in determining the degree of masculinity where men are perceived tough.

There are however, mixed interpretations by both male and female subordinates on female tokenism in top positions, leading to parity illusion (Jiang *et al,* 2017). Leicht *et al* (2017) believe gender stereotypes in women result from their nurturing and caring characteristics that tend to portray them as feeble individual's incompetent to assume leadership positions. Leadership is seen to require some degree of firmness and toughness in decision-making. Similar findings accentuated gender stereotypes that impose limitations on female practices such as prejudiced performance assessments which were designed with men in mind and therefore over-emphasise masculine standards (Einarsdottir *et al,* 2018). While the cultural perceptions influence the way women leaders are evaluated, women leaders are faced with the daunting task of proving their mettle. Women often lack confidence and sometimes doubt their leadership capabilities, prompting insubordination from both male and female followers. Women are therefore challenged by their lack of self-confidence which jeopardises the potential to leadership.

Women are aware of the demands of patriarchal societies which perpetuate cultural barriers, where for example women are expected to be submissive to their spouses who in turn become domineering as a result of the privileges conferred on them. Al-Asfour *et al* (2017) believe women are overloaded with domestic responsibilities which require them to prioritise domestic performance rather than add on other responsibilities found in the workplace. The work overload is regarded a barrier to women leadership take up additional workload in the workplace. In addition to these views, Apfelbaum *et al* (2016) claim that the social orientation seems to apportion greater authority, power and status to masculinity than femininity in the belief that the performance of men in management and leadership outweighs that of the female counterparts. Men are considered as naturally endowed with superior authority and stature to influence and lead within organizational settings. Women in positions of authority are perceived to be violating the culturally constituted gender role (Danbold, Felix, and Huo, 2017). This view compels women to demonstrate some degree of courage and assertiveness to justify their eligibility in occupying such positions against all odds. In most cases, women withdraw or consider securing masculine support.   Women are also seen to create own barriers through poor relationship among

themselves. The 'Queen Bee Syndrome' is one case in point where women leaders detach themselves from associating with their followers (Jiang *et al*, 2017). Prejudices and biases tend to influence their perceptions about how their subordinates feel about their appointments. These views are also shared by Osland *et al* (2018) who observe that female who vie for leadership positions are likely to withdraw in the pretext that the positions are considered superficial. These perceptions exhibit robust barriers among women likely to affect the perceptions of male and female subordinates alike.

Mousa (2018) believes that, as opposed to men, women tend to harbour the most prejudices and biases directed mostly towards their female counterparts. When these prejudices are related to cultural philosophies and religious beliefs, the factors become barriers not easily uprooted. These prejudices and biases create mistrust within women which they are aware of and decide to find solace in male support (Ganiyu *et al*, 2018; Leicht *et al*, 2017; Taylor, 2016). These perceptions which are noticeable in women are likely to yield a lack of confidence in women leadership, resulting in their failure to either lead or become leaders. Furthermore, women tend to respect cultural compliance by avoiding to be labelled as acting unwomanly. The absence of these evaluations in men places them in an advantageous position against women resulting in the women leadership under-representation.

Women further create barriers for themselves when they fail to manage their own emotions and therefore attracting conflict (Jiang *et al*, 2017). Alsubhi *et al* (2018) consider the impact of emotional intelligence in leadership as highly essential in building performing teams that increase organizational effectiveness. Women are considered to be risk-aversive and therefore act emotionally when confronted with unpredictable and authority threatening situations (Beckwith *et al*, 2016). Women are therefore characterised by the desire to act ethically and therefore avoid harming others. These poles place women in precarious position often ending in emotionally filled decisions (Agbim, 2018). However, Bissessar (2018) thinks differently arguing that women make decisions within cultural constraints rather than failed emotions. The cultural complexities tend to affect women more than their male counterparts. In addition and according to Lyness *et al* (2018), women tend to be more sensitive to the impact of their leadership evaluation becoming emotional when they perceive their feelings are not taken into account. This argument is reinforced by who observes that women are more inclined to focus on romanticism and socio-emotional tendencies (Alsubhi *et al*, 2018). These traits can be traced in the biological propensities variously inherent in the different genders.

3.10.6 Radical women gender activism

Female gender activists often draw public attention to fragile topical issues in gender dialogues, triggering resentment in the male gender and further exasperating patriarchal customary biases (O'Neil *et al,* 2016). Influential women tend to fall prey to the scathing biases that label them 'exceptional troublemakers' different from the 'woman we know'. To offset this notion, women are nominated to sit on boards or occupy other high offices of authority as an ostensible strategy for breaking the glass ceiling. However, as Oxfam International (2016) observes, the few women leader aspirants tend to withdraw as they view these positions as honorary, offered without any authority attached and in the process deepening the disparity. Al-Asfour *et al* (2017) proposes the use of woman-friendly institutions that seek to balance gender recruiters and recruits and offer comprehensive women focused induction and progression checks combined with inclusive leadership. In fact, Beckwith *et al* (2016) postulate intriguing arguments that perceive women as generally an oppressed species within male-subjugated milieus. In this regard, women themselves tend to perpetuate the repression stemming from their life-view of social roles that are embedded in their involvement in life. In this regard, women accommodate self-low-esteem compounding male dominance. Kalysh *et al* (2016) however argue that these factors emanate from intolerant male-controlled societies where the majority of women are compelled to tolerate self-gratifying interests leaving leadership as a male prerogative. As a result, female leaders suffer detrimental effects caused by female reports, with male subordinates receiving promotion tips created for them by those female leaders. As a result, female employees tend to avoid women leaders in order to sustain their career development, preferring to be led by male leaders.

Although women activists are common in gender inequality spheres, these groupings seem to be generalised and are not specific to a particular field. By organizing women into particular lobby groups, certain messages may be clearly articulated to influence their particular views (O'Neil *et al,* 2016). The groups tend to be biased towards women activists and therefore lack diverse voices and perspectives from across this field. These groups are likely to benefit if men are also incorporated, including a variety of practitioners with key conceptual and political backgrounds. More often these groups tend to focus highly on transforming the processes in gender equality and gender justice issues to strengthen their lobby mechanism. Beckwith *et al* (2016) consider inviting a number of gender "champions" from development organisations including researchers and gender practitioners to be engaged in critical reflection on gender policy designs. These groups thus seek to interrogate and understand the consequences of such organized initiatives

around gender issues. Gender inequality has shown to be generally intractable with isolated resistance in bureaucracies.

Feminists continue be working towards social transformation using the political platform and further engaging with policy makers, international networks of researchers and other activists across the globe (Africa Human Development Report, 2016). Such initiatives seem to create partnerships not only with local resources, but include a wide range of contributors who add value to the content of their messages. The focus of these initiatives includes balancing work-life, where role interchangeability becomes the main focus (Bahiru *et al*, 2018). Additionally, feminists would advocate for the involvement of women at a large scale with independent decision making rather than the mere cosmetics ceremonial role. Emphasis on collaborative work that is free from prejudices and discrimination where men also take an active role should be the focus (European Union, 2017). This is the basis for gender inclusive leadership which seeks to incorporate the views of all stakeholders irrespective of their social and biological orientation. These views are echoed by Helgesen (2017) believes in the impact of inclusive work environment in which both genders take part in leadership collaboration. Activists and feminists are likely to influence this though if the composition of their lobby groups are made up of both male and female players uttering the same messages and exhibiting a non-discriminatory function.

The process of radical social transformation involves involving those who hold the power and resources both locally and internationally (Berg, 2015). This view implies involving all stakeholders identified first at local, national, regional and international levels. All these levels may require equal representation of women and men as a condition for achieving gender inclusive leadership.

3.11 Addressing Women Leadership Barriers

The relationship between gender parity and the performance of public enterprises cannot be established conclusively without further enquiry. Existing studies show a considerable connection between women leadership and an organisation's financials further indicating that enterprises with increased senior women leadership representation outstrips those with less representation (Yousaf *et al,* 2016). Some of the possible strategies are discussed in the following sections although, in some cases, these have emerged to be the source of further barriers.

3.11.1 Capacity building initiatives

The development of businesses on the global market calls for some special skills to cover the talent shortages through intensive search for high-skilled labour force. Capacity building initiatives therefore create the basis for aligning and securing skilled manpower development. The need for highly skilled talent will reach 40 million workers by 2020 (McKinsey and Company, 2017). The same authors believe that women have made considerable educational gains than their male counterparts in most regions, with the former demonstrating high qualifications which are a fundamentally under-utilised potential for economic development. It is therefore still unclear whether the female potential can indeed be translated into improved performance in the workplace, thus necessitating further enquiry. It is in this context that a well-structured and comprehensive capacity building mechanism becomes imperative for removing barriers to women leadership. As noted above, the under-representation of women in leadership positions is experienced differently across hierarchical levels in different organisations (Chen *et al,* 2016). Improvement in educational achievement for women and their gradual participation in the workplace are strategies likely to equip them with the skills and techniques for effectively carrying out the leadership roles that were once the preserves of male employees (Hill *et al,* 2016). As a consequence, organisations seem to adopt greater diversity inclusive of female leadership potential, where a substantial number of qualified women augment the leadership pool. For this reason, there is a growing intent to increase these numbers, evident in the post-2015 Development Agenda where unique opportunities are created to articulate common priorities, opportunities and challenges (Union, 2014). This entails youth development and empowering through human resource development.

While these programmes tend to constitute a strong tool for addressing the barriers, these seem to be inadequate if not supported by other long-term mechanisms such as targeted mentoring programmes tailored specifically to meet the skills for women leadership. Mentors would involve experienced and influential senior members of staff who offer psychological support and career growth to female subordinates, vying for leadership positions (Kalysh *et al,* 2016). The argument suggests that those subordinates with experienced mentors would normally obtained increased job satisfaction resulting in greater commitment to work and therefore better promotion prospects than those without. The notion seems to indicate that satisfaction and commitment tend to create prospects for promotion. However, satisfaction is viewed to derive from two distinct perceptions that relate to objective (inherent) and subjective (extrinsic) mentoring functions (White, Stainer,

Cooper and Waight, 2018). Thus, mentoring becomes an unpredictable tool for advancing leadership and may require a combination of several other strategies. However, informal mentoring encounters which emanate from spontaneous relationships built upon experience sharing between mentee and mentor tend to be an effective starting point if carefully implemented. Furthermore, it would appear peculiar to perceive a female being under a male mentor, which would most likely create superficial and unreliable revelations to the opposite gender (Neher, 2018). In the process, this generates extra challenges in the absence of sufficiently represented female leaders who could be reliable mentors. On the other hand, senior female leaders may feel uncomfortable to mentor female juniors, for the fear of losing their leadership grip and putting their status at risk (Kalysh *et al,* 2016). In spite of these limitations, in mentoring, networking continues to remain a strong force in accelerating the leadership drive (O'Neil *et al,* 2016). In essence, Hill *et al* (2016) argue that mentorship and networking can stimulate promotional prospects more positively than improve performance and skills. From the above observations, it would appear the benefits of mentoring and networking are widely experienced more by men than women, especially when it comes to promotions and remuneration.

To this end, a further related approach to supporting women leadership relates to 'sponsorships' which improves on the cited limitations of mentorship with the sponsor sharing both status and the unfolding opportunities (Oni, 2017). From these arguments we can deduce that there still exists handicaps for women as the availability of experienced sponsors may not be suitably positioned to reciprocate the needs of the women aspirants. This approach therefore points to the dominant male sponsorship that is immersed in women under-representation. Inter Parliamentary Union (2017) observes that while the male-female sponsor relationship can still be effective and valuable, female are likely to benefit more if placed under another woman sponsor especially on positions beyond entry levels.

The United Nations conference on Women (Neher, 2018) reported that the creation of an enabling environment accords women and girls' education prospects, independent thinking and a stereotype-free atmosphere that inspires women leadership. The same report adds that women who are educated tend to command abundant autonomy in decision-making and leadership. It still remains unclear as to which type of education is most suitable for women leadership, while at the same time uncompromising cultural expectations in society. To address the above issues, companies are considering introducing diversity programs that invoke widespread awareness and equality within the workforce. Regrettably, inequality still exists in most regions, with huge

under-representation of women leadership in the public enterprises (McKinsey and Company, 2017). Recent findings however suggest the impact of diversity in the workplace, which provides hope for concerted effort in pursuing the women leadership trajectory although there are few leadership CEOs in public enterprises (Norand *et al,* 2016). A European Commission (2015) study conducted in OECD states produced statistics where women employed in central government were above 50%, but carried a women representation of 29% in top management positions, with an average proportion of 34%. These figures demonstrate disparities in women representation in different countries, in addition to supporting economic and company growth, building inclusive societies and investing in women has the effect of reducing inequality. Moreover, Noland *et al* (2016) maintain that investing in women's education and employment contributes enormously to economic growth than focusing on addressing only the gender parity. As talent becomes scarce and the need for a qualified workforce skyrockets, tapping into an often overlooked, under-exploited source of highly skilled women is imperative and good for business. Gaidzanwa (2016) argues that women represent the next emerging market, which could only be understood by involving them in business operations. Gender-balanced management can become an asset for companies and an economic resource nationally, where, for example, gender diversity programmes which increased in the past decade had their results differently experienced, with some showing reinforcement for gender discrimination and racial stereotypes (Alfonso and Garcia, 2015*).* Nonetheless, some programmes demonstrated positive achievements where participative and interactive sessions presented large scale bias-reduction interventions (Carnes *et al,* 2015).

3.11.2 Accelerating women access to education

The 21st century experiences widespread digitalisation, resulting in increased opportunities for developing appropriate knowledge useful in addressing several societal challenges with open educational systems gaining popularity (Moorley and Chinn 2016). A number of training options exist, including off-the-job training, live classroom lectures, videotapes, public seminars, internet courses, group teleconferencing and e-training (Msomi, Munapo and Choga, 2016). Additionally, training takes the form of on-the-job training such as job rotation, apprenticeships, mentoring and counselling programmes. In terms of training for women leadership, a variety of training possibilities are available, depending on the level of participant's satisfaction and the degree material is transferred to the job. This implies that rigorous measures of several training outcomes require consideration in every training intervention. The effectiveness of each training option

needs to be evaluated before implementation, with women leadership deriving benefits where such training is related to the aspirant women leaders (Robbins *et al,* 2017). For instance, women with an internal locus of control, emotional intelligence and high cognitive ability are likely to conceptualise more skills through various training interventions. Where training plans involve potential women leaders, the trainee becomes highly motivated as the atmosphere will appear supportive. However, the support of supervisor and team members tend to have greater influence in the transfer of knowledge learnt.

Mohammadkhani *et al* (2016) observe that leadership changes and therefore compels organisations to have leadership succession planning to avoid surprises as a result of poor picks randomly made. Arising from this realization, women aspirants to leadership positions require to prepare themselves through different forms of training such as the ability to understand effective visioning accompanied by building trust, skills in mentoring, as well as situational-analysis skills. It is evident that where women are trained as leaders through modelling exercises, including transformational leadership, they tend to be effective leaders likely to improve performance. Considering the numerous obstacles that prevent women from pursuing leadership learning due to varied reasons, the philosophy of open learning becomes exceedingly popular in view of its accessibility and neutrality (Kezar *et al,* 2017). Globalisation and professional mobility require agility to respond rapidly to the volatile, uncertain, complex and ambiguous environment. However, it is worth noting that digital and open learning sourced education bring with it several challenges in the form of connectivity efficiency and in the main, lack of appropriate infrastructure to support the system, particularly in rural and peri-urban areas in Sub Saharan Africa (Bannier, 2016). Nevertheless, if the Open and Distance Learning (ODL) approach is developed to meet the identified gap, it is likely to offer a flexible type of education that could be used by aspiring women leaders often deprived from developing the requisite skills on offer by conventional universities and business schools. While numerous institutions of higher learning recognise the existence of this demand, there has not been sufficient research to explore this into detail on the strategies that specifically target the masses of aspiring women leaders in such positions within public enterprises. Alfonso *et al* (2015) however note that there is an increase in training institutions which are supporting conventional universities paying particular attention to the vocational aspect. This presence the need for creating partnerships and alliances between these institutions, universities and public enterprises to collaboratively influence women leadership while becoming responsive to the changing environmental demands. This strategy tends to

suggest a more focused approach which introduces a gender inclusive leadership dispensation that is identifiable with industry in both the private and public sectors.

3.11.3 Management training programmes

When organisations go through financial difficulties, training budgets became the first items to face the scathe as cost-reduction measure as witnessed in several countries, including the UK, where funds decreased in over half (52%) of those organisations studied in the period 2009 to 2010 (Chartered Institute of Personnel Development, 2010). Educational qualifications appear to be a stumbling block for women leadership advancement, as witnessed in the Kenyan and Colombian situations, where women demonstrated their ability to mobilise and influence legislation against women discrimination (Domingo *et al,* 2015). Additionally, the report observed that education has the capacity to dislodge gender customs perceived impediments to women progression, as cited in the actions of Afghani women legislators who used night school facilities to improve their academic and professional status (Tadros, 2014b). Robbins *et al* (2017) identify some training skills type that include basic literacy, technical, interpersonal and problem-solving skills including ethics training, as paramount in leadership. With technological advancement, the workplace has become highly sophisticated, requiring accurate basic skills in reading comprehension, writing and mathematics and has become a global challenge, especially in the least developed countries (Gipson *et al*, 2017). It is unlikely to find more women employees equipped with these skills, prompting further investigation into the level of skills in this regard. However, there is an increasing progress noted in women, in terms of use of decimals and fractions, communication and the reading of charts, graphs and diagrams.

Most companies offer their employees short courses on technical skills such as management training programmes. Women are likely to benefit if these skills are offered to women aspiring to leadership positions. These notions suggest that when organisations form partnerships with training institutions, relevant course curricula are built likely to satisfy the needs of the industry. In terms of interpersonal skills, organisations are now beginning to adopt flatter structures to expand team involvement and thus breaking traditional departmental barriers and promote effective team interaction (Leicht *et al,* 2017). Human resources managers have become conscious of the effects of social behaviour in the workplace, paying more attention on incivility problems, bullying and being ignored or excluded from social situations or having your reputation undermined in front of others. Additionally, the activities that sharpen logical reasoning, problem defining skills and the ability to consider causality and therefore determine alternatives in

identifying solutions become necessary in any training intervention (Hyllegard *et al,* 2017). The authors acknowledge that problem solving training has become in-built in most organisation training programmes as an aspect of self-managed teams in quality-management programmes. Ethics training has become exceedingly essential, particularly in developing countries. Proponents of ethics training accentuate that values can be learned and adapted after early childhood and that ethics training has the effect of reaffirming organisational expectations in ascertaining that employees are likely to behave ethically (Agbim, 2018).

While organisations are steadily depending on informal training which is typically unstructured and adapted to specific circumstances and employees, there is more room to incorporate formal training, which is structured with more planned monitoring and evaluation mechanisms. Both informal and formal training are essentially useful methods of improving performance in the workplace and are likely to equip women in becoming effective leaders (Neher, 2018). Both the formal and informal training tend to disrupt work activities if not properly planned, causing losses in financial resources. However, these training interventions are necessary and usually create long-term returns where a proper cost-benefit analysis is considered. Hyllegard *et al* (2017) subscribe to the view that training acts as a 'change agent' tool aimed primarily at changing workers' knowledge, skills and attitude towards improved performance. Training helps observe and assess what needs to be changed and adopted into an organization's corporate culture. Thus, Mohammed (2017) advocates training that seeks to assess gender differences using multi-group structural approaches. The views of different participants from men and women are incorporated to construct models that cover the interests all sundry.

3.11.4 Role models as a learning resource

Abalkhail (2017) advocates for an approach that offsets the negative impact of stereotypes by exposing women to particularly female role models. Nonetheless, caution is inextricably necessary in identifying pertinent role models who command impactful suitability and relevance. In considering role models, it is important to note empirical works that show gender differences in leadership approaches which paint a negative picture in women role model rationality. According to past research, role models can either be inspirational or injurious to others calling for diligence in handling the different personalities in group members (White *et al*, 2018). As a consequence, citing successful women role models provides excellent learning resources. The biographies of some popular female leaders who exhibit admirable leadership qualities are likely to arouse the interests of prospective women leaders. The accomplishments of successful women

leaders signify the leadership type worth emulating in the public enterprises in Eswatini, as well as within the whole of Sub Saharan Africa. These successes were received with mixed reactions, with some poor Liberians stating that little effort was made to transform their lives. One such prominent female leader, Germany Chancellor Angela Merkel, won the 2006 Laureate of the Africa Prize for Leadership for the Sustainable End of Hunger further demonstrating some courageous stance on the plight of migrants to Germany and Europe in general (Helms, Van Esch and Crawford, 2018).

Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala, former Minister of Finance in Nigeria, the largest country in Africa, helped the economy to grow at an average rate of 6% per annum over a period of three years. While credit may not exclusively be assigned to her, the fact that she was at helm of the finance department during this period is significant enough to recognise her role as a woman leader (Power Women, 2015). Further works included the development of reform programmes that improved transparency in the government, which stabilised the economy and the first woman finance minister who also served as the foreign minister. Like Ellen Johnston Sirleaf, who also served at the World Bank as a development economist (Grant Thornton International Business Report, 2016). These achievements have not been fully publicised in Africa to reach a wide population of prospective aspiring women leaders, especially at grass-root levels.

Role models offer a sense of attitudes and latitudes that is from leaders in society. It is however conceded that, due to the under-representation of women leadership, few women role models exist thus impeding the aspiration of would-be female leaders. However, the few existing women role models are likely to provide a significant resource for motivating other women. While role models are a robust exemplar for advancing women leadership, the perception that women leaders exhibit some degree of masculinity dilutes their impact as positive models. Women leadership in public enterprises remains the subject to such evaluations.

Due to changes in the workplace influenced mostly by the explosion of technology new ways of leading people becomes a necessity (National Center for Women & Information Technology, 2016). Finding role models who demonstrate new leadership skills that are applicable to requisite technological skills may be a challenge for the few women leaders. Training therefore becomes critical in leveraging past and present experiences. It is therefore useful to identify senior female leaders to demonstrate positive performance skills and act as role models for subordinates (Muralidharan *et al*, 2018). The creation of informal skills transfer is such a powerful learning resource as it infuses the practicum. Models are also accessible through networking and

listening to the idea formation by experienced executives (Lantara, 2015). While the concept of role models is likely to produce positive results, women still remain deprived to take advantage of this resource due to the limited number of female role models in the field of gender. Men therefore derive an overriding advantage and appear well connected thus exacerbating the women leadership under-representation gap.

3.11.5 Effective feedback and women leadership

In view of women vulnerability to cultural-historical philosophies, it would appear plausible to consider strengthening feedback mechanisms for women in leadership and those aspiring to do so (Robbins *et al,* 2017). Managers tend to avoid providing feedback to subordinates if policies and procedures are not explicit for fear of conflict. However, according to Velema (2015) constructive feedback tends to develop interpersonal relationships which ultimately improves performance and the bottom-line. An important aspect of significance is to promote female leadership through the fundamentals of effective feedback communication. In 1969 Joseph Luft and Harry Ingham developed the Johari window model which highlighted the crucial purpose of giving and receiving feedback in the leader-follower relationship (Hamzah, Othman, Hassan, Razak and Yunus, 2016). The extensive application of this model to performance management has helped leadership in guiding, motivating and reinforcing employee behaviours. A further consideration is the essence of feedback as a source of information exchange and therefore expedient in modifying an individual's behaviour. This means employees work more positively through regulated and monitored feedback with specific tasks appropriately understood. Figure 3.11 provides a diagrammatic representation.

FIGURE 3.11: THE JOHARI WINDOW
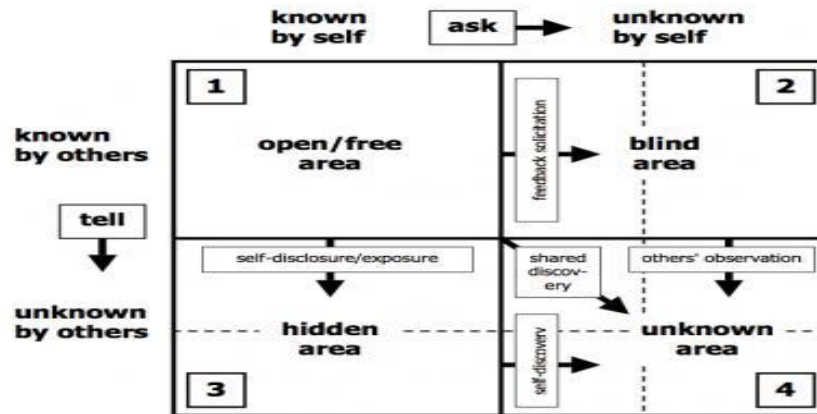
Source: Hamzah, Othman, Hassan, Razak and Yunus (2016)

The overriding perception in this model is the assumption that people, women included often hold self-images which are either visible or hidden, and yet are frequently observed differently by others (Hamzah *et al*, 2016). Self-image enables individuals to recognise their uniqueness in respect of others, showing differences in thinking between ourselves and others. The model reflects four dimensions structured in a 2 by 2 matrix, with each pane reflecting a unique quadrant. The first dimension, open arena (1), reveals personality known to both the self and others while the blindspot represents knowledge unknown to the self but to others. The third area, the hidden area (3) constitutes features known to the self but unknown to others whereas the last area (4) the unknown presents knowledge that is unknown to both the self and others. Women leaders are likely to benefit by knowing their weaknesses and strengths if the 'blind' and 'unknown' areas are to be reduced, with the simultaneous expansion of the 'arena'. This emphasises the wisdom in teams where shared information is likely to provide useful contribution to decision making. By engaging in self-disclosure with appropriate personalities, women leaders are likely to experience unique revelations built on self-discovery as observed by others. This shared discovery tends to unleash the hidden talents likely to be demonstrated in women leadership. Women are generally withdrawn personalities and can only unravel this through the feedback process. The role of in-group identity is reinforced by engaging in effective communication where feedback tends to remove hindrances that seem to undermine the value of women leadership. As leaders, both men and women need to understand effective performance reviews based on giving and receiving

feedback. An appropriate feedback technique which uses fair appraisal systems tends to realise long lasting results likely to improve performance (Robbins *et al,* 2017).

While the model provides sound benefits, it also manifests drawbacks with one such significant limitation cited in its failure to disclose major psychometric properties directly applicable to situations confronting women leaders. Women leaders therefore tend to use more of self-regulation to close the gap that exists in the absence of reliable feedback. It is however important to note that feedback is often given in several forms, including staff meetings, using the informal approach or in a one-on-one encounter.

3.12 Gender Inclusive Leadership Policy

The political economy of decision-making explains shortcomings in social hierarchies facing women substantive influence over private and public involvement in society (Mazonde *et al,* 2016). There is evidently the paucity of meaningful guidance for policy makers who advocate women leadership and the involvement of all players, including opponents of positive gender changes, a facet critical in gender inclusive leadership. Gender policy reforms require consensus and synergies between men and women if sustainable independent and balanced leadership is to be achieved. It remains prudent to reflect on gender equality policies to determine strategic direction in the political powerhouse.

3.12.1 Pillars of policy in women leadership

The gender policy reforms provide significant strategies to address the prejudices through a well-crafted gender inclusive leadership concept (Al-Asfour *et al*, 2017). Einarsdottir *et al* (2018) draw an interesting argument about leadership differences between men, holding the view that women are assumed to carry different worldviews and decision-making styles from men. The contribution of women leaders to organisational performance still remains under-researched to validate this assertion. Nevertheless, compelling evidence exists that there are barriers facing women towards upward mobility (Hill *et al,* 2016). Other academics hold the view that cultural support common in more progressive women societies offer positive influences towards organisational performance (Bissessar, 2018). Women leadership policy is likely to realise greater impact when cultural values are relevant to organizational goals and aspirations. Diehl *et al* (2016) purport that greater woman involvement in organisational outcomes leads to improved performance and economic-wide effects. A robust gender policy reform is likely to propel more women participation in the leadership race. The notion suggests that efforts are compromised with

unofficial gendered 'division of labour' in the workplace with women assuming the role, 'mothers of departments', rather than leaders carrying in the process little value in the strategic organisational hierarchy. Cultural support tends to maximise women empowerment where gender inclusive leadership contributes equitably in recognising the roles played by both genders.

These propositions tend to yield little progress and thus call for policy reviews at organisational levels focusing on fundamental aspects of leadership and organisational commitment, measurement and target setting, awareness and accountability including mentorship and training. For example, the Eswatini government promotes women equitable participation and involvement in all its operations as a deliberate move to address barriers to equitable distribution of resources for all citizens (World Report, 2018). While these initiatives are being experienced globally with significant gender policies available the world over, information is still scarce that explicitly articulates how a gender inclusive leadership policy may be implemented within Sub Saharan Africa.

These principles caution on developing policy measures that are exclusively more female-oriented which posits threats for a new type of discrimination that segregates men. It becomes apparent that a balanced gender inclusive leadership policy is desirable in which both genders are equally acceptable (Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development, 2017). However, by providing benchmarking metrics for accelerating women accessibility to leadership, these frameworks are seen to contribute essentially as demonstrated in SWIFT (Sodexo Women's International Forum for Talent), which acted as a watchdog (Sodexo, 2015; ILO, 2015). Additionally, a CEO-led initiative sought to promote an inclusive culture by improved career growth with similar initiatives that included the Hindustan Unilever Limited (Hul), Manulife Japan, PepsiCo Mexico and the National Australia Bank (ILO, 2015). It is nevertheless necessary to consider the context in which these measures apply before the policies are initiated. While these mechanisms appear intelligible, the network tends to lose sight of the crucial participation of male players whose contribution remains inevitable in supporting and complementing the phenomenon of gender inclusive leadership (Fitzsimmons, 2012). Furthermore, these efforts may not be easily implementable across a broad spectrum of where the bulk of prospective women leaders reside due to a paucity of resources. There is the likelihood that these initiatives may target women exclusively prompting a new form of discrimination.

Policy designs may be effective if developed within the legal frameworks such as the existing legislature where most effective regulatory approaches depend on (Muralidharan *et al*, 2018). The

case of women leadership may not be explicitly covered in existing legislative pieces making it difficult to design a policy that serves the interests of women seeking to be protected in their trajectory towards leadership. However, borrowing from the gender inequality legislature may require intensive modification by gender experts and feminists. This also entails involving male activists including grassroots representation. A further task would require focusing on how workplace policies could be redesigned to accommodate a gender sensitive policy likely to balance references for both male and female (Fitzsimmons, 2012). The policy redesign is meant to achieve policy sustainability for future generations likely to be influenced by the above cited irregularities. The need for policy makers to work in collaboration with activists in international spheres becomes inevitable. While these initiatives appear costly, the benefits are likely to be significant and worthwhile (Acquaah *et al,* 2017).

3.12.2 Gender inclusive leadership policy framework

In developing a policy for gender inclusive leadership focus should be directed towards examining how gender inclusion accelerates women leadership in public enterprises within Sub Saharan African. This implies a holistic approach inclusive of the right fundamental reforms suitable for gender inclusive leadership (Wilde, 2016). A pragmatic approach would be to revisit all existing structures taking into account how gender diversity has been treated. This includes variables such as employee recruitment and retention, mentoring and sponsoring high level potential women, sensitisation of both male and female managers to various styles of leadership, managing work-life balanced policies in supporting and empowering women across all corporate functions of responsibility. Leadership and organizational commitment constitute an open and deliberate buy-in from an organisation's chief executive and management team in supporting women leadership (Mousa, 2017). Little achievement seems to have been noticed in this area which requires symbolic actions visibly portrayed by the top brass. Gender issues may be included in an organisation's blue print, but do not specifically address issues of women leadership (Grant Thornton International Business Report, 2016). The Global Gender Gap Report (2014) also includes a component on measuring progress, as well as setting targets to enable measuring to take place where a disaggregated database is developed to allow the evaluation of gender imbalances with particular focus on women leadership.

The framework for policy also considers policy reviews which entail the need to extend responsibility beyond the office where leadership becomes all-inclusive, leveraging on an understanding of internal and external parameters (Mekonnen, 2017). This may not be an easy

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task to undertake for women leaders, considering their extensive involvement in societal and domestic chores. These interventions in policy reviews do not appear in isolation, thus requiring a holistic approach with long-term commitment and understanding of the particular industry within the market. The policy reviews in corporate practices and policies require family, public and private organisations to change in the short-term, followed by an expansion of opportunities for women in the long-run (Mieke, Vanderstraeten and Buyens, 2017). In terms of family involvement, the upbringing of children through enhanced education system calls for a multidimensional approach where all sections of society are involved.

The present debate about whether women are better leaders than their male counterparts seems elusive when a gender inclusive leadership policy is being considered (Crunchbase News, 2017). Both genders are viewed as possessing similar skills for leading which play an equally important part in their own right and therefore contribute to the success of organizational effectiveness. Therefore, under these conditions, the debate becomes irrelevant and may not be of any significant value in the present scenario. The fast increase in gender role congruency seems to be providing hope in removing the gender role stereotypes (Wilde, 2016). It is however highly acknowledged that a mismatch exists in gender leadership where women remain under-represented particularly in the strategic leadership positions (Ganiyu *et al*, 2018). In the design of a gender inclusive leadership policy, it is important to take into account these cultural and historical perceptions likely to influence valid conclusions. Fischer *et al* (2018) suggest taking into account the inherent biological differences in both genders which may not be altered in the design of such policies. Some of these differences may be experienced at individual level and therefore have little impact. Additionally, these policies may have varied impact in different settings and fields. Tadesse (2017) observes that there is high recognition of women in the public sector in South Africa. This may not be the case in other parts within Sub Saharan Africa. Governments continue to rely on the political influence to attract women into leadership positions although this may not be sustainable in the long-run.

3.13.3 Policy implementation gaps

The concept of women leadership seems to entail the need for change as it involves a shift from the prevailing cultural beliefs that are historically engraved in the perceptions of our society. Creating an awareness and accountability entails bringing the parties to a mutual understanding of the need for change meant to achieve accountability from senior management teams and transparency on the career paths and opportunities for prospective women leaders (Lyness and

Grotto, 2018). Organisations are likely to incorporate these functions in their strategic plans, policies, systems and tools to avoid harbouring gender-biased discrimination, with a deliberate focus on making inclusive leadership exceedingly tangible.

A further aspect of this policy implementation entails the work environment and work-life balance which often compete on women's time spent at work vis-à-vis domestic assignments. Lucifora *et al* (2016) acknowledge the major role of women globally as primarily that of nurturing, particularly children, the elderly people their spouses. Implementing the policy on gender inclusive leadership entails taking into account issues that are appropriate, relevant and comprehensive enough to allow sharing of major responsibilities such as childcare options for both male and women, with the necessary incentives, including guidelines for implementing a work-life balanced policy (Pollitt *et al,* 2018). For example, some policy measures have been adopted to promote gender parity with leave arrangements for parents, including fathers, used as a possible strategy. The same authors cite Iceland as an example that provides incentives where fathers enjoy three months' paid leave at 75% of earnings to a threshold referred to as the 'daddy months'. However, effective practices are essentially influenced by issues such as context focus, top management buy-in for transformation, periodic monitoring and evaluation within the organisation, as well as investor support (ILO, 2015). In view of women's social conditions, the absence of policy measures directed specifically towards gender inclusive leadership is likely to suffer an uneven playfield compounded by such factors as family constraints, where women work exceedingly longer hours in the family than men (OECD European Union, 2017). While these measures seem attractive at face-value, the economic element will likely hamper progress in this regard, prompting further concerted enquiry into exploring the most appropriate and sustainable mechanisms.

A further aspect of policy implementation relates to the area of focus regarding mentorship and training, both of which are aimed at promoting guidelines on the utility of a gender inclusive leadership (Al-Asfour *et al*, 2017). Berg (2015) accentuates this view by determining pertinent measures for promoting women to management positions seeking to expose them to all processes and roles, involvement in executive training, as well as engaging women to authority-based positions. However, cultural stereotypes rooted in domestic expectations contribute towards perpetuating barriers to women leadership right from an early stage. While the gender gap is slowly closing elsewhere, gender inequality in Sub-Saharan Africa still remains largely visible right from childhood girls' education is still restricted and finding early motherhood as option to

carry out the gendered division of labour (Gipson *et al*, 2017). A policy that is inclusive right across society seems advisable by investing in both girls and boys equally, with the latter being made aware of the gender issues as complementary in meeting societal goals (Black, Walker, Fernald, Andersen and DiGirolamo, 2017). It should also be noted that education alone is insufficient, as long as cultural and historical perceptions remain ingrained in society. For example, a woman who exceeds her marital age to be mother may not secure societal respect, despite excelling in professional career (Black *et al,* 2017). Thus, the involvement of opinion and traditional leaders becomes exceedingly useful, soliciting a paradigm shift. In Eswatini, women are expected to be submissive to their husbands and allow them to marry as many wives as they deem necessary to do so, especially in the rural areas. However, with widespread gender activism and other human rights organisations, these beliefs are slowly disappearing (Black *et al,* 2017). While there is evident wisdom in crafting a policy on gender inclusive leadership, there are major gaps identified in the implementation of policies, leading to these efforts turning into lip services.

Shaping women-friendly policies may appear challenging with the primary concern bent on more gender-sensitive policies that champion gender inclusive leadership to help implement such policies (Smith *et al,* 2018). This suggests the need for a collective approach that ensures long-term leadership support and involvement for women to hone their leadership capabilities through strategic discourse, associations and networks including those vocal male participations. While women leagues remain a formidable mechanism for enhancing female awareness and confidence to leadership, the involvement of male stakeholders is likely to elevate positive expectations and the requisite interface with their male counterparts. This accentuates the argument that diversity provides frequent community support for ostensibly shared values and convictions for both genders (Alexander-Scott *et al*, 2016; Edstrom, Hassink, Shahrokh and Stern, 2015). These views tend to operate within cultural embodiments, while threatening voluntary decision-making and social maturity likely to promote rationality as good cause for inextricable paradigm shift (Stephan *et al,* 2016).

Given these observations, it seems evident that there is inadequate political will and leadership commitment to effect practical implementation of these strategies. Responding to these strategies provides readily available mechanisms for addressing challenges facing women leadership. These support processes are seen as part of broader initiatives that seek to enhance 'bottom up' democracy which usually become abandoned when governments violate human rights protocols (Marcolin, Miroudot and Squicciarini, 2016). Sometimes the gender activist initiatives are

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politicised and therefore fail to achieve their purpose when political manoeuvring takes precedence and violate agreed terms of reference. More often, these policy stipulations are tied to political manoeuvre which tend to interfere with international support leading to constrained support. However, an interface with several powerful development agencies is likely to secure greater influence with bilateral agreements entered into (OECD, 2018). The sustainability of the policy designs tend to rely almost exclusively on the strengths of structures put in place to oversee the process of the policy development. More often these processes tend to be carried out on ad hoc basis creating problems of consistency and therefore implementation challenges.

3.12.4 Fundamental aspects of policy

Policy that is associated with gender inclusive leadership is complex and requires an examination of several related concepts, including taking into account the efforts that have been already made in constructing gender equality policies. A few fundamental phenomena are considered including supporting leadership inclusivity, comprehensive leader selection and resistance to gender inclusive leadership. Leadership has evolved over the years, taking up a changed outlook from the conventional perspective focusing more on engaging and managing relationships across the diverse workforce and other stakeholders around the globe (Martin, 2015). It has therefore evolved in respond to the growth of diversity characterised by a heterogeneous workforce that expects an innovative leadership style. In view of these developments, leadership has become more relational than positional, accentuating the shared leadership characteristics constructed across different people. These views thus build on the concept of inclusive leadership as holistic and tends to advance diversity and inclusivity with differences being viewed to constitute a wealth of wisdom and acting as a basis for transformation.

A policy on inclusivity tends to be fairly a new phenomenon that emphasises collective and collaborative involvement within the context of gender diversity. An inclusivity policy tends to encourage a leader's commitment, democratic and engaging leadership that is also responsive to environmental changes in occasions of transformation. Al-Asfour *et al* (2017) argues that the type of leadership inclusivity currently experienced tends to be a function of political campaigns, while the expected leadership ought to show direction and could be used as a framework for making decisions. The policy on leadership shapes it to appear as an activity that goes beyond goal setting and is bent towards garnering followers' support through inspiration. The policy stipulation should emphasise relational strategies which recognise women as strategic partners. However,

progress for inclusivity is beginning to trickle as more and more women fill the leadership positions.

Based on these views key fundamental aspects may be identified including language appropriateness, diversity in inclusion, activism and feminism, workplace harassment and incentives (Berg, 2015). Language appropriateness refers to a policy that is sensitive to the target for which such policy is intended for (Africa Human Development Report, 2016). Women in the lower echelons may need a language usage that is simplistic and therefore understood by all stakeholders. A simply language usage is likely to clear any prejudices and biases feared in the cultural contents. A further aspect for consideration in the policy design is diversity in inclusion which ensures that the policy recognizes differences in people as a vital resource in obtaining innovative ideas through synergy(Apfelbaum *et al*, 2016).

A policy on activist structures includes understanding the role of feminists in lobbying for gender parity. Activists and advocates for gender have used designed policies to frame a set of demands and challenge perceptions that discriminate women in the workplace (Adichie, 2017). Feminists are therefore seen to work towards social transformation raising debates meant to expose societal ills against women including the under-representation of women leadership in the workplace. The context in which feminists operate may be included in such a policy.

Another aspect of policy focus includes the interpretation and handling of workplace harassment. Women are often physically and verbally abused in the workplace compromising on their potential to assume leadership positions (Alexander-Scott *et al*, 2016). A policy that stipulates issues regarded harassment may be clearly articulated in such a policy stating what punitive measures are applicable in such circumstances. The cultural beliefs in the patriarchal societies have subjected women as objects to be used rendering them vulnerable in the workplace and thus losing their status in society. A policy that seeks to reverse the conceived perceptions seems inevitable. In order to facilitate women leadership, a policy that includes the different packages as incentives is necessary. Incentives may be provided in the form of quotas, targets, tax rebates and other financial pay-outs for compliance (Kogut, Colomer and Belinky, 2014). A further restructuring of the incentives may be necessary and explored in detail taking into account the context they would apply. Conversely, punitive measures may be instituted for noncompliance. These approaches require the involvement of government agencies which are directly linked to public enterprises.

3.12.5 Women leadership and policy on quota system

A further effort to increase leadership inclusivity is a policy in respect of the quota system although the use of quotas carries a new form of gender discrimination against men (Oxfam International, 2016). The differences in quotas illustrate the possibility of tension that accompanies not only countries, but also organisations in their attempt to implement the system. As part of gender inclusive leadership policy, organisations may identify a quantitative unit of measure to establish women advancement in the upper echelons.

While the quota system influences a reasonable women leadership representation in organisations, the policy tends to attract negative perceptions about its implementation as tokenism. Positions created in this manner lack the expected authority and become predominantly ceremonial with little scope for decision making. Opponents of gender quotas believe the costs for ensuring its success are far greater than the benefits, thus further causing a new type of inequality (Vasquez-Amezquita, Leongómez, Seto and Bonilla, 2017). Fewer qualifying female employees who assume directorship positions often land in sitting in in multiple boards closing opportunities for other women. Critics of the quota system provide insufficient policy scrutiny on the objectives of the quota system, given the barriers facing women leadership. Despite the drawbacks above, the quota system tends to contribute significantly towards women leadership. Perhaps a more effective system would emerge if a balance is struck between business goals for performance improvement respect conditions for justice. However, the approach tends to subordinate women who are aware of their prevailing weakness. While quota system may yield positive results, particularly in the higher echelons and in promoting a positive backdrop in the process of policy design, this approach may become a barrier if used exclusively, especially in the middle and lower leadership levels.

While the quota system has limitations, they remain a useful entry point towards constructing a gender inclusive leadership. However, the quota system should be used cautiously when applied to public enterprises to avoid women tokenism, noting that it is not an end but a means towards attaining gender inclusive leadership (Oxfam International, 2016). The quota system is widely used in political gender equity initiatives with the likelihood that it could also be applied to public enterprise leadership aimed at advancing women (OECD European Union, 2017). Lessons learnt from other countries that employed the concept are likely to provide resources for adaptation in public enterprises. The quota system is often disturbed by changes in governments due to the political pressures that they face (Barnali, 2015). The political pendulum appears to swing back

and forth when changes take place in the prevailing ideology from competing parties. These aspects also apply at individual level where office bearers with influence in authority may decide otherwise.

In addressing inequality in the workplace, quotas and targets have been introduced, Whereas quotas are viewed as 'push' methods of compliance that are legally binding, targets are a 'pull' method voluntarily set by corporate organizations (Choobineh, 2016). Quotas are therefore viewed as used for taking punitive action where organizations are noncompliant, such as dissolution of boards. On the other hand, targets typify a pull method introduced in corporate governance to increase women leadership positions on their own and has suffered criticism for being a mere a box ticking exercise (Seierstad, 2015). With targets, companies set for goals to be reached for ensuring female representation in leadership roles. Since targets are more voluntary, their effectiveness towards performance improvement depends on how they are developed and thus the need be specific, measurable and time framed. This suggests putting in place a more robust monitoring and reporting system. As the name implies, targets are more to do with measures and therefore rely more on setting goals that become challenges for motivation. The quota system has been championed by Norway where gender quota laws were established and have since been modified over the years (Heidenreich, 2015). These measures were taken after realizing that all efforts to address the gender inequality in the workplace proved futile. Quotas were broadly categorised as binding quotas, with sanctions, quotas without sanctions as well as voluntary targets. However, in this section, these measures are explicitly distinguished as either quotas or target. In terms of quotas, their effectiveness has been received with mixed reactions as this has been achieved due to the strictness of sanctions imposed (Seierstad and Opsahl, 2011). Countries that used quotas instituted sanctions to ensure compliance with certain quotas with the possibility of dissolving boards where such compliance was not evident.

Proponents of quotas argue that while these are meant to reduce the leadership disparity gap, there is an unequivocal economic benefit that accrues (Seierstad, Warner-Søderholm, Torchia and Hues, 2015). Those firms that fail to take advantage of quotas are likely to miss out on the economic and social benefits that come with quotas. Despite the positive aspects shown about quotas, several arguments against quotas are raised, with political interference being a major concern (Choobineh, 2016). The extent in which government is involved remain unclear resulting in any move taken being considered intrusion. A further argument against quotas concerns the belief that quotas are anti-meritocratic and therefore put women in a precarious position (Whelan

and Wood, 2012). There is the general view that women appointed to leadership on the basis of quotas may not possess the requisite skills thus compromising on the corporate governance strengths. Ironically, the concept of quotas tends to pose challenges for women during the selection and recruitment process and once promoted to leadership roles. The dilemma for selecting a candidate for skills or gender criteria becomes imminent. Whelan *et al* (2012) present a similar perception but taken from a different angle positing non-acceptance to quota appointments as associated to tokenism. Women tend to therefore resist quota positions and may dissociate themselves from other women believing to possess skills equal to masculinity.

As observed earlier, targets are a 'pull' technique voluntarily set by corporate organizations to improve the number of women in leadership positions and therefore focus more on individual compliance (Choobineh, 2016). However, like quotas, targets also have drawbacks where one such major one involves trying to address the individual mindset particularly around self-efficacy (Maya, 2014; Weisul, 2014). Thus, they need to observe the normative and rationale for instituting targets to realise the goal. The individualistic thinking is likely to be translated in the organizational context and is critical to promoting women leadership. Recent scholars perceive targets as enhancing conditions of 'merit or women' or 'merit and more women' in addressing the use of targets (Seierstad, 2015). These conditions determine how women may be viewed as completely different from masculinity and therefore not eligible for the same roles. Interestingly, the 'weaker' gender essentialists acknowledge gender differences, but the differences are taken to be more of opportunities than disadvantages seeking to capitalise on such differences (Whelan *et al*, 2012). The stronger gender essentialists are likely to perceive the current status quo as fair. They tend to oppose any form of targets or quotas.

Quotas and targets are more likely to be successful tools when they are supported by the business and wider society, galvanizing the utility-based rather than the merely social or individual justice arguments (Seierstad *et al*, 2015). The concepts of quotas and targets are therefore essential mechanisms for addressing the under-representation of women leadership if combined with other fundamentals in the field of gender parity.

3.12.6 Resistance to gender inclusive leadership

The introduction of a policy on gender inclusive leadership has not been met lightly particularly with men who resist any interference with the status quo (Dailey, 2016). Men fear the consequence of the change which they believe brings losses of their existing benefits. For example, in the selection process, men become the first preference. However, resisting any

changes deprives organizations to take advantage of transformational leadership likely to bring about resourcefulness in the turnaround process for meeting performance challenges (Alsubaie *et al*, 2017). Agile leaders adapt to environmental changes particularly in the difficult economic situation currently being experienced. Resisting to changes towards gender inclusive leadership denies the opportunity to redress some of the ills emerging in our society due to a lack of ethical and authentic leadership. Changes in the organizational landscape implies accommodating more women in the leadership arena to help fill in the leadership gaps experienced in the current leadership (Burns *et al*, 2017). While men are obvious resisters of the change, women are also likely to repel the change for gender inclusive leadership as this might threaten their purported security (Lyness *et al*, 2018). As a consequence, both genders show massive resistance for fear of impending economic uncertainty, loss of societal status and personal power, or increased stress.

Beckwith *et al* (2016) observes that since leaders are expected to respond to changes occurring in their organizations, it is highly unlikely that executives understand the strategies for managing the adaptive culture and change processes in an organization. This entails training executives to acquire skills for managing the change process taking into account the looming resistance. Gender inclusive leadership is often viewed with a lot of speculation particularly from male participants. Men are generally regarded the sole breadwinners and therefore enjoy the benefits that are attached to this role including the support they often receive from the workplace (Curated Research Report, 2017). Men feel threatened in promoting female leadership as their traditional power is likely to challenged and weakened. In Eswatini, for example, women are expected to be submissive to their husbands and ultimately men. Thus, the prejudices and stereotypes towards women are perpetuated resulting in resistance to any change effort.

Any change effort requires tackling resistance first before well- organised resisters highjack the change effort (Burns *et al*, 2017). In planning a programme for gender inclusive leadership, it is necessary to evaluate the process determining the merits and demerits to all stakeholders likely to be affected and avoid any offensive contestation. For instance, Alsubaie *et al* (2017) cite the need for an early identification of internal shifts before determining transformational leadership if effective change is to be realised. Understanding key parameters that impact on organizational performance in the change process is of paramount essence. Burns *et al* (2017) suggests a planned change model with action plans which allows for methodical implementation, monitoring and evaluation. This could be applied to the gender inclusive leadership programme likely to capture the possible resistance and backlash. Organizations fail to capitalize on opportunities that emerge

due to their failure adapt to the changes within their environments (Robbins *et al*, 2017). The business environment manifests in various fundamentals including the multicultural dimension, demographic changes and technological explosion.

These multifaceted demands on organizational change require innovative skills that are likely to deal with resistance to gender inclusive leadership such as the Eco Leadership approach cited earlier in this work (Sebastian, 2018). Advocates of a gender inclusive leadership suggest employing a skilfully crafted leadership paradigm that responses quickly to modernity exhaustion taking cognizance of possible backlashes. Burns *et al* (2017) introduce a slightly different dimension where resistance to collaborate and achieve gender inclusive leadership is seen where women in the lower echelons are neglected in the design of the programme. The marginalized community of women leadership aspirants is excluded from the process which is inadvertently hijacked by purportedly women elites. The effort to introduce gender inclusive leadership is therefore likely to be compromised if such resistance is insufficiently managed normally taking its toll within the lower ranks. Furthermore, diversity and inclusion are essential aspects of effective leadership where hidden female talents are unleashed creating robust solutions to organizational problems (Al-Asfour *et al*, 2017). For a successful gender inclusive leadership programme, it would be necessary mobilize both men and women in lobby groups where the various voices are heard and analysed to identify pertinent contributions.

A further aspect so useful in dealing with resistance is the concept of globalization where knowledge is shared using digitalization to access ideas used elsewhere (Sebastian, 2018). By making available a plethora of communication methods world-wide, it is highly likely that greater progressive social change may occur accompanied by the necessary support. As women victimization and harassment are common in Africa, strong activism is working towards addressing these from a personal and cultural perspectives (Alsubaie *et al*, 2017). Gender inclusive leadership may not be successful if these occasions are not addressed. A certain type of resistance may appear where women view the programme differently. Thus two related forms of backlash, institutional and personal exist that face gender inclusive leadership (Karen and Blair, 2018). Institutional or political backlash is experienced when a movement in one direction is disputed by resistance from forces that fear change. Gender inclusive leadership approach represented mainly by women tends to face brutal attack in the social change resulting in resentments and animosities heating up (Karen *et al*, 2018). Policies such as affirmative action tend to attract a backlash whose strategies are advantageous to one group at the expense of the

other. Perceived differently, conservatives and chauvinists to women leadership hold the biased view that women are incapable. The liberals and feminists argue that women are interested and capable but fail to crack the glass ceiling due largely to prejudices and stereotypes. Between these two groups lies the neutralists who tend to lean more on the liberal side.

The various types of resistance to gender inclusive leadership require thorough analysis if the paradigm shift is to be realised. The process therefore should include proper planning, determine clear action plans, provide monitoring and evaluation mechanisms to check deviations in the process. Of particular essence is the inclusion of both men and women in this planning process if positive results and sustainability are to be realised.

3.13 Chapter Summary

This chapter mapped the existing literature across the field of study drawing out what authors have found to be useful in directing women leadership to address women leadership under-representation in the public enterprises. Models and theories in relation to gender and leadership were examined to help illuminate questions around women leadership in respect of the existing barriers and strategies for achieving organizational effectiveness. The literature reviewed insights made this far on strategies and policies that have been advanced to address the under-representation of women leadership. The literature review and the theoretical framework attest for the existence of women leadership under-representation, revealing the barriers associated with women leadership from the perspectives of both men and women.

The conventional leadership theories and models were discussed focusing mainly on gender and leadership, management functions and levels, a distinction between management and leadership. The distinction between the latter concepts helped clarify women leadership within the context of the broad meaning of leadership. Significant literature included the Great Man theory, leader-follower exchange and situational leadership theories. The chapter carried out a detailed analysis of the transformational and transactional leadership theories where aspects of learning and innovation were linked to gender inclusive leadership.

Socialization as an aspect of leadership revealed the essence of networking as a means of information sharing as related to responsible, ethical, authentic leadership approaches citing their merits and demerits. The impact of change management to influence women leadership was explored within the framework for gender inclusive leadership. The literature review also examined the impact of leadership on people and production citing a mix between the two and

taking cognizance of the operational situations. These elements were scrutinised to determine bridging efforts in the gender divide within the context of leadership power and authority.

As a follow up, universal barriers were identified providing the general background to the study. These included structural, cultural perceptions, prejudices and discrimination. The literature revealed that women continue to experience profound cultural and traditional biases and prejudices that interfere with their ascendency to leadership positions in both the private and public organisations. These obstacles were regarded as belonging to either self-inflicted or externally motivated impediments with suggestive strategies for redress. Significant strategies for addressing these barriers included role models and policy specifications. There is compelling qualitative evidence in favour of a gender inclusive leadership dispensation centred around transformational leadership believed to address the leadership paucity widely experienced in public enterprises. The literature showed the existence of positive, as well as negative views prevailing in advocating for a gender inclusive leadership.

The final sections focused on the pillars for gender inclusive leadership navigating specific policy approaches to support women leadership initiatives. The discussion also examined the role of socialization with specific reference to networking and role models. The quota system was discussed at length including their implications with tokenism being considered. The evidence in respect of arguments for and against gender inclusive leadership was offered emphasising possible conflicting conclusions on women leadership. In the process, possible reasons for resistance to gender inclusive leadership were explored to create a possible solid framework.

The next chapter, research methodology discusses the methods used and how the study was undertaken.

CHAPTER 4: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

4.1 Introduction

The purpose of this study was to investigate the under-representation of women leadership in the public enterprises. In this chapter, the choices made on the research methodology are described showing how data was collected and analysed. The choice of the right method helps design an appropriate framework useful for the creation of valid knowledge (Choongwa, 2018). This chapter therefore presents the research methodology used and data collection techniques employed to help describe and interpret the study phenomena. The chapter therefore provides justification for the selected research philosophical paradigm, research method, population of the study, sampling method and data collection instrument which collectively helped address the research questions including data analysis and how ethical issues were dealt with in carrying out the study. In addition, this chapter describes data collection reliability and validity backed by the researcher's positionality to ensure the study achieves its empirical credibility.

4.1.1 The philosophical paradigm

The interpretivist philosophical paradigm appeared to be the most appropriate paradigm which was applied from an interpretivist approach where quality data was obtained from selected study participants. The interpretivist phenomenological approach aims to derive deep insights from individuals who seek to make sense out of the universe by interpreting, creating, giving meaning, defining and rationalising their lived experiences (Willig and Sainton-Rogers, 2017). The process therefore entailed building data from emerging themes as meanings as opposed to numerical are emphasised during collection and analysis. The study sought to understand and interpret the happenings from their work experiences showing how women leadership was perceived and what value was attached to such experiences. The interpretivist philosophy related well to the research questions which posited the view that knowledge of reality is largely a social construct by people, as opposed to the positivist science which exclusively strives for objectivity in reality as observed above. While the positivist philosophy is largely objective and quantifiable the interpretivist paradigm makes emphasis on a two-way human dialogue which offers an opportunity for the researcher and participants to create new reality collectively (Tribe and Tunariu, 2016). This therefore requires mutual trust and honesty between the researcher and the participants in accepting data as presented collaboratively to be used in creating reality.

FIGURE 4.1: A FRAMEWORK FOR QUALITATIVE RESEARCH
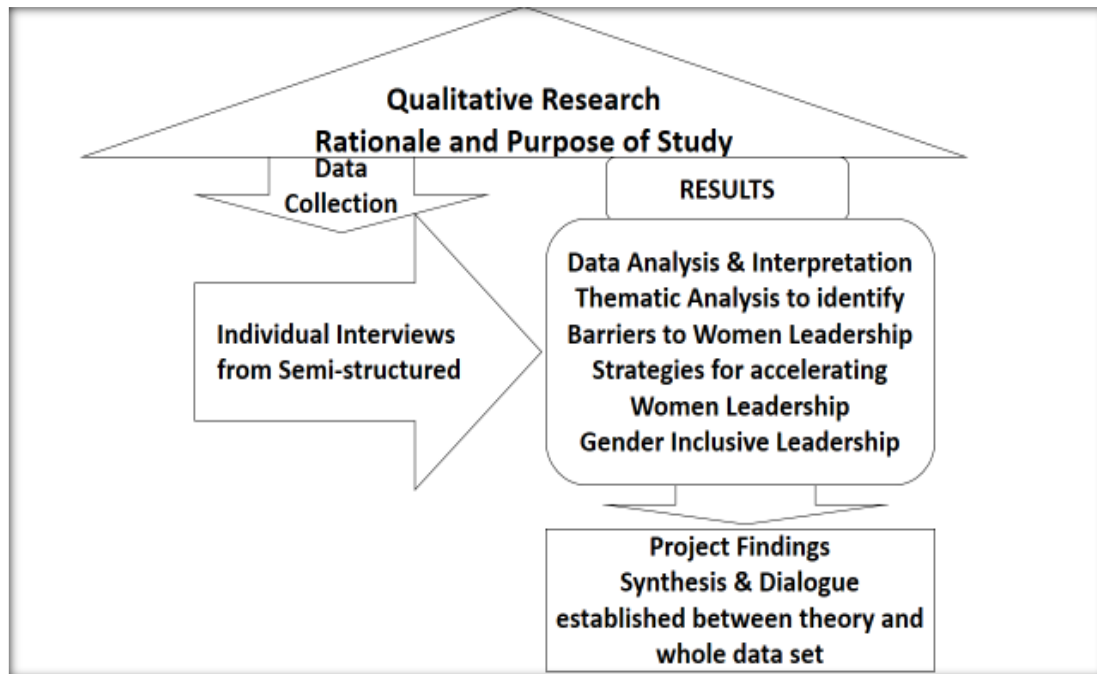
Source: Author generated

4.1.2 The research method

Since the investigation of women leadership under-representation cannot the subjected to numerical measure, the qualitative method springing from the interpretivist philosophical paradigm appeared the most likely approach to addressing the purpose and research question to the study. Through a qualitative research method the views, assumptions and thoughts held by participants solicited giving insight on women leadership within the public enterprises. A framework for the qualitative method outlining the study process is illustrated in Figure 4.1.

The rationale for the qualitative study entails collecting data through semi structured interviews to produce results. Creswell *et al* (2018) state that the qualitative method streamlines data source seeking to construct a profound understanding of participants' attitudes, behaviours, interactions, events and social activities affecting their lives. The author therefore provides a clear distinction with the quantitative method known to emphasise statistical measures based on numerical data.

Understanding the position of women leadership on attitudes, traits and behaviours cannot be conclusively derived in quantitative studies. The qualitative method therefore helped obtain deeper insights into the study objects further providing methodological stability throughout the collection of relevant data that was qualitatively analysed allowing for modification to the data collected (Creswell *et al,* 2018).

People's worldviews, interpretations and assumptions about their experiences in the public enterprises about women leadership helped the researcher uncover meaning and create new knowledge and reality from participants' perceptions not easily discerned anywhere other than a qualitative enquiry. Scholars advocating for qualitative research emphasise the need for evidence-based studies as suitable in a study involving gender inclusive leadership. Qualitative researchers should however be wary of the consequences of risks resulting from the 'taken-for-granted' assumptions that contribute to gender disparities directed at women leadership. Qualitative research facilitates the exploration and understanding of meanings attributed to social problems by different personalities or groups. The study questioned participants in the institution, but were still operating within their work environments. The method therefore allowed respondents to express their views and provide data through their lived experiences. The researcher was able to collect in-depth insights around the questions included in the study instrument and related to the research questions. The qualitative method enhanced this enquiry by setting forth the approach for designing open-ended questions.

4.1.3 Population and sampling

This section describes the population of the study as it relates to the target sample.

4.1.3.1 Population

In any study, the population of the relates to the group of people the researcher intends to draw inference in the form of universal units from which a study sample is chosen (Choongwa, 2018). This study defines its population as all the public enterprises in Eswatini active in the time of this study, included in Appendix 1, to which the researcher intends making generalizations and from which the particular target sample is constructed. The purpose of the enquiry was to investigate the under-representation of women leadership in public enterprises in Eswatini, elements in this population comprised the different levels of managers from firstline through to middle and senior managers in these enterprises. These elements as individuals formed the units of study who helped create summary descriptions and explanations to help make valid generalizations for the public

enterprises in Eswatini. The Eswatini public enterprises included the study population of twenty seven category A and ten category B entities (Appendix 1). The study participants were attending a Public Enterprises Unit (PEU) sponsored supervisory development programme at Mananga Management Centre, with the study site thus allowing easy access to the study unit.

4.1.3.2 Sampling and sample size

Since sampling aims at making deductions in respect of a particular population, the researcher sought to make explicit definition of the population in respect of the size, unit of study and the method of sampling (Knight, 2018). This inquiry follows similar studies conducted by several past scholars who interrogated women leadership through purposive sampling coupled with grounded theory to find answers to research questions (Zeh, 2016; Kassa,2015). For example, in their study of women in senior positions in the United Kingdom, Curtis, Eley Gray and Irish (2017) established that purposive sampling helped select an appropriate range of individuals. Gentles, Charles, Ploeg, and McKibbon (2015) state that convenience sampling and purposive sampling are the two nonprobability sampling techniques used by a researcher to choose a sample of the units of study from a population. In order to collect information-rich data from the population of the different managers within the public enterprises a purposive sampling technique was used to select the target sample. The researcher acknowledged limitations in nonprobability sampling as subjective in choosing samples and may therefore not be a good population representation. However, according to Etikan, Musa and Alkassim (2016), it is exceedingly useful when it is impossible to randomise, especially when the population is huge. A target sample size of twenty-one participants (n=21) was purposively selected consisting of 6 firstline (n=6), 10 middle (n=10) and 5 senior (n=5) managers. The criteria for selecting this target sample was based on the age group between 25 – 50 years with work experience ranging from more than five years in the current managerial position. The minimum qualification was a diploma up to postgraduate achieving 53% degree holders. A single participant was selected from each public enterprise in line with Alvi that a fundamental aspect of sampling is to obtain a sample that reproduces all the intended characteristics of the population. Further details are outlined in Appendix 2.

4.1.4   Data collection tool

Three main types of interviews are identified, structured, semi-structured and unstructured (Creswell *et al*, 2018). The structured interviews are where all questions are standardised to

achieve reliability of purpose, while completely open and unstructured interviews pertain to questions that are developed spontaneously during the interviews. The third type of interviews used in this research lies in between the two types and is referred to as semi-structured interviews where questions were developed in advance and not necessarily asked to all the participants. Campbell, Quincy, Osserman and Pedersen (2013) find semi-structured interviews facilitating participants' perspectives and experiences on the research topic. Studying leadership under-representation is also poised to assess, confirm, validate, refute, or elaborate on existing knowledge to help discover new knowledge. Semi-structured interviews are unique in that they fit in all types of research accommodating a multiplicity of philosophical assumptions such as sexist (McIntosh and Morse, 2015).The semi-structured interview enabled the researcher to probe further where responses tended to suggest more hidden answers still existed. An interview guide was used to direct the process of questioning until saturation of data was reached (Rahi, 2017). Since qualitative methods are better used simultaneously with data analysis, the guide was structured in such a way that it facilitated the link between data collection and data analysis ensuring that unanswered questions were located and followed through.

4.1.5 Procedure for data collection

The researcher obtained permission to conduct research from the Director of Mananga Centre on the site where the managers were attending Management Development courses in Ezulwini. A request letter was sent to the Director specifying the details of how the research was to be conducted with an attachment of the ethics committee approval to conduct the research, Protocol reference number HSS/0820/016 of 20th July 2016 indicating the supervisors involved in the study. Immediately permission was granted the field work commenced where the researcher started preparing a schedule of interviews and ad hoc meetings with the research assistant as induction to the conduct of research. The semi structured interview protocol was structured into four distinct and yet related sections which sought to solicit responses in line with the research questions to help accomplish the objectives. Each interview session took an estimated 45-50 minutes, with one-on-one interviews conducted with open-ended questions asked followed by probing until satisfactory data was availed and ready for analysis (Appendix 3).

The respondents were made to understand all the questions before they responded, and were urged to provide pertinent comments and suggestions deemed necessary for enriching the quality of

data. Before using the interview guide, a pre-test of the tool with peers was made to secure their critical feedback. The responses were recorded both manually but also captured on audio recording as backup, in case important information slipped. The use of the interview protocol was flexible to allow probing of responses where necessary. The third-person voice was employed in order to collect reliable data but also as precautionary measures against biases that were likely to surface deterring focus on facts as presented in their actual word form from respondents. The data was then immediately transcribed through a reduction process with interpretations made to ensure the text was readable and meaningful (Stuckey, 2014). Care was also observed to avoid interpreting the data arbitrarily in order to collect what was actually said. Koro-Ljungberg and Cannella (2017) acknowledge that transcribing tends to escape objectivity, impersonality and mechanization and therefore focuses on apprehending what was said to capture the meaning.

The responses were recorded using both manually written notes with audio recording used as backup. The use of the interview protocol was flexible to allow probing of responses where necessary. The third-person voice was used in view of this realist design taking precaution against personal ideas thus highlighting on the facts presented in the actual words of participants. As a result, the raw data as transcribed was sequentially coded and accordingly reported. Data was transcribed through a reduction process with interpretations provided to make the text readable and meaningful. Care was also taken to avoid interpreting data arbitrarily in order to collect what was actually said. Knight (2018) acknowledges that transcribing tends to escape objectivity, impersonality and mechanization and therefore focuses on apprehending what was said to capture the meaning.

4.1.6 Data analysis

Analysis involves classifying and reducing huge data by scaling it down to relevant categories and themes that have a bearing on the research questions (Creswell *et al*, 2018). In this research the thematic analysis was used to group and relate relevant themes under each broad category summarised in tables and carefully built to provide responses to the research questions (Appendix 8). Using Microsoft Excel, data was organized source identification and nodes contained in the spreadsheet to help sort and filter data which was further summarised into categories and themes.

Several studies that seek to address women leadership including Roth, Theriault, Clement and Worthington (2016) found the thematic analysis useful in determining inductively recurrent themes and fundamental issues thus reinforcing the grounded theory. This

process entailed first, use of open coding where codes were applied as derived from the text. The most stated themes were identifies as dominant in the interviews. Then, in axial coding, categories were related to their subcategories to form more precise and complete explanations, placed under each category as themes (Strauss and Corbin, 1990). The selective coding categorised data into a central explanatory concept where thoughts towards answering the research question were generated. The relationships revealed in the coding are illustrated in the tables in Appendix 8 showing how the grounded theory determines solution from within the data rather than imposed upon it (Strauss *et al.,* 1990).Researchers in the field of women leadership have used the thematic analysis to reveal participants' viewpoints on female leadership to construct emergent themes that answered their research questions (Zeh, 2016; Kassa, 2015).The researcher took into account the essence of critical scrutiny of outliers before conclusions were arrived at. Floersch, Longhofer, Kranke, and Townsend (2010) observe that by integrating the thematic and grounded theory techniques, different interpretative scopes help understand the meaning of women leadership in the workplace. This data formed preliminary themes that were revised several times until satisfactory conclusions to the research questions emerged. The activities followed a process that was largely iterative and recursive and therefore not linear using the grounded theory and the inductive approach (Manuell *et al,* 2017). The researcher underscored the use of the inductive reasoning process to interpret data emerging from the study as opposed to deductive study. Inductive thinking uses data to generate ideas while deductive inquiry starts with ideas and then uses data to confirm or reject its validity (Koro-Ljungberg *et al,* 2016). In this qualitative research, data collected was simultaneously analysed allowing the flow of data to be constantly classified according to the properties that characterized them (Tribe *et al*, 2017). This entailed grouping and regrouping of data until satisfactory themes emerge that correspond to the research purpose.

While the thematic theory played a significant role in the analysis of the data collected, it is evident that the grounded theory was also applied in this research. According to Manuell *et al* (2017) grounded theory allows the researcher to collect data that is useful in developing theories acceptable as social and human actions from the phenomena. The researcher steps back and critically analyses the situation acknowledging own biases and adopting flexible attributes meant to promote abstract thinking and being open to criticism (Bernard, Watch and Ryan, 2017). The combination of more than one analysis theory helped produce a rigorous critical analysis focused on gathering data meant to test its relevance as ideas became sharpened. In this way, the researcher

was able to control and expedite the process of data collection and analysis directing this toward the research purpose (Choongwa, 2018).

4.2 Ethical Considerations

A number of ethical issues were considered in this study aimed at protecting participants from negative eventualities that may arise. Some of these included possible victimisation when their identities were known including other forms of ethical attacks.

4.2.1 Participant's consent and confidentiality

Students attending the supervisory training course at the study site were issued with an information sheet regarding the study, which described the study accompanied with a consent form to be voluntarily filled as agreement to participate. Participants were informed of the options to either participate or not. The agreement to participate was therefore based on their independent acceptance of the information set out on the consent form. Participants were also reminded of their freedom to withdraw from the study at any time should they deem so. The information sheet and informed consent form contained information about the researcher's background, the purpose of the study, the risks and advantages of the study, the role of participants, and the confidentiality of both the participants and the data collected. Informed consent is considered to be the foundation of ethical behaviour, as it values the rights of participants to control their lives and to make their own decisions (Leung, 2015). This highlights the assertion that the voluntary participation of study units is an important ethical principle in social research.

To ensure confidentiality, the anonymity of participants was maintained through use of codes, which assured participants that their names and identity would not be revealed in the report or other publications. The research also kept anonymity of participants' organizations. For instance, participants were assigned codes as Participant 1, 2 and so on. Anonymity in qualitative research is critical when analysing and interpreting data to avert possible risks that may confront participants and therefore require careful management (Creswell *et al*, 2018). It is therefore unethical to identify participants by names or to provide indicators as to their origin as this may have detrimental consequences. The researcher therefore took every precautionary measure to ensure data collected and gathered was stored in a secure facility, specially protected and inaccessible to anyone except the researcher. Other individuals who were privy to such data such as the research assistant did so in the presence of the researcher and such information was

immediately kept under lock. The completed report on the results of the study was to be made accessible to participants if requested.

This research was governed by the guidelines specified in the University of KwaZulu Natal Humanities and Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee (2016). These guidelines considered the need to observe ethical issues such as gatekeeper authorisation, confidentiality, anonymity, storage protocols and informed consent. These aspects were brought to the attention of respondents in greater detail before the commencement of research and as the study progressed to ensure that not only were the guidelines complied with, but also that this research was accurate and reasonable. Ethical clearance had to be obtained from the University of KwaZulu Natal Humanities and Social Sciences Research Ethics department before any interviews commenced. Data collection therefore commenced at the end of July 2016 after approval had been secured. Furthermore, a letter of introduction to the gate keeper was obtained which acted as authorisation to carry out the research in the study site and interrogate study participants who were targeted for this research.

4.2.2 Reliability and validity

Reliability involves the possibility of repeating the findings of a study implying that if the same study was replicated elsewhere, the same results would be achieved, thus calling for open-mindedness throughout the process (Leung, 2015). The quality of any research findings is often evaluated in order to minimise biases but also to establish their practical utilisation within the field of study (Noble and Smith 2015). Based on these notions, this study endeavoured to employ credible and reliable research methods by checking with participants the accuracy of their responses establishing exactly what they meant in cases where meanings seemed general and obscure. Soliciting the views of other researchers also helped reflect on the conclusions that seemed to be outliers.

The acknowledgement of criticism levelled against qualitative research as lacking in scientific rigour and therefore limited transparency in analytical processes helped the researcher to take precautions in accepting scholar submissions (Choongwa, 2018). The notes captured were as a rule compared with the research assistant's collection relating these to respondents' responses to ensure originality of the data. For example, responses presented by respondents were repeated by the researcher and later compared with the research assistant. Where differences occurred, the audio player was listened to, to help reach consensus.

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In order to ensure consistent and transparent interpretations of data, a meticulous record keeping system was employed further backed with cloud storage to ensure important data was not lost. Comparisons and relationships from emergent themes were made as the research progressed. The views of two researchers were solicited to critically review crucial arguments but also as a means of triangulation. The easy access to participants who attended the course allowed responses to be verified when in doubt by necessitating data comparison with the phenomenon under enquiry. In this study, validity reflected the degree to which believability was assigned to the research findings, a view supported by Noble *et al* (2015). Validation therefore involves scrutinising data collection and analysis to ensure accuracy as validity and reliability in qualitative research is at times regarded sometimes less precise seeking to establish the views of other researchers on the phenomenon under investigation.

Olufemi and Migiro (2015) accentuate this exercise arguing that the findings of a study are likely to be applied in other places within the Sub Saharan Africa if due consideration is taken into account. Further replication could be noticeable in Asia where cultural values tend to hold similar patriarchal practices (Leung, 2015).

4.2.3 Dependability and transferability

The purpose of this study was to investigate the under-representation of women leadership in public enterprises, with a view to increasing women leaders. The qualitative method was used to collect data that were based on the respondents' experiential inputs likely to denote biases and opinions and therefore, not easily dependable. Establishing dependability therefore required more direct methods of scrutiny that helped determine the value of rigor, coupled with an assessment of the study process and phenomenon under enquiry (Creswell *et al,* 2018). These authors emphasise that there is no place for generalizability in qualitative research as the focus is to obtain deep and detailed data from individual participants. In examining women leadership, the collection and analysis of data were done simultaneously, allowing checking with participants for acceptable responses in relation to the research questions and the available literature that confirmed certain theories.

Participants were allowed to account for their own perspectives in this study without the researcher approving or confirming the responses expressed. The importance of accepting participants' own interpretations within the interaction was of value to the researcher's major role of ascertaining the difference between personal judgments vis-à-vis a more objective interpretation. Dependability further drew up significance from the in-depth methodological

descriptions that enhanced the possibility of study replication, addressing issues of research process consistency and outcome. Leung (2015) recognises that the goal of dependability helps ensure that findings represent the resultant experiences and views of participants, rather than the researcher's characteristics and interests. Dependability as an abstract aspect of trustworthiness points to transferability acceptance based on confirmability visible in triangulation and reflective journaling.

4.2.4 Researcher's positionality

The development of reflexivity has gained momentum over the years as an aspect of qualitative research, with several academics putting forward ideas that would improve on its credibility. The researcher is in no way suggesting guarantees in the approach's truth and accuracy. Manuell *et al.* (2017) assert that a researcher's approach is usually influenced by personal orientation, often characterised by conscious or unconscious biases. This realisation created a cautious stance in respect of the researcher's personal beliefs and values reflected in the choice of methodology and interpretation of findings. The author who is a male management lecturer has worked with a number of female mangers who influenced the desire to fill the leadership gaps as identified.

In terms of the research process, the researcher's neutrality was therefore critical in developing arguments within the data collection phase. While the researcher's personal interests were unavoidable, these were however not allowed to overshadow participants' data which constituted the exemplar for this study. Koro-Ljungberg *et al* (2017) propose a developmental model in which research progressed throughout the study by first rejecting researcher's unconscious bias and where possible, integrating strategies that militated against biases. In collecting the data, the process avoided an over-structured interview environment that would have otherwise compromised the possibility of obtaining accurate data to reflect an objective and unbiased outcome. Neutrality of thought was therefore maintained to allow participants to provide ideas free of any influences from the interviewer. Additionally, by including reflexivity, a number of complexities became clearer through the lens of the qualitative researcher. In fact, qualitative researchers strive to determine a common ground with respondents throughout the process of data collection and analysis facing an epistemological dilemma that further influences their data collection. More often, the researcher's influence seems largely overlooked as the reflection of an individual tends to be intuitive and not easily attainable (Rao, 2018). Despite these observations, individual reflection reveals valuable features such as imagination, the manifestation of intuition and heightened intellectual discourse.

In following the qualitative research, challenges are often encountered in the epistemological stance, including personal and methodological doubts showing in reflexive insights. Reflexivity allows a conscious look at the relational and interactive awareness of personal and methodological problems that confront the researcher, co-researchers and other stakeholders involved in the research process. The awareness of the contributions made to research process impacts on the construction of knowledge, as it is essentially impossible to keep out of the research purpose as the research progresses.

The questioning and probing techniques were acquired through coaching and guidance during my engagement as assistant researcher supervisor in 2010. These skills were provided by two experienced professors from Leeds Metropolitan University during the partnership on offering the MSc leadership course by research on dissertations as supervised on clinics conducted in Swaziland. The researcher-participant interaction had a bearing on methodology and findings as use of reflexivity hailed from the researcher's experience and took into account the potential risk in the connection with participants likely to impede unbiased or biased responses (Bourke, 2014). In order to instil some degree of objectivity in participants' responses, the researcher incessantly adopted self-analysis and reflection on experiences faced. Since the study involved gender inclusive leadership the researcher took particular note of how the differences in gender groups was likely to influence the interpretation of results and thus, create biases or appear to take sides or be over-empathetic about the other gender. As a result of the method used in this research, qualitative research placed the enquirer in a close relationship with the unit of study, thus putting on the limelight the researcher's philosophy, gender orientation, socio-political position and educational background in deterring any influences in the development of this study. These factors were accorded particular attention during the questioning sessions and interaction with study participants. The researcher therefore sought to ascertain objective responses that produced balanced views in addressing the research questions. The barriers facing women leadership were therefore analysed through the lens of participating informants in their trajectory towards leadership. This theoretical paradox of women leadership vis-à-vis female operational workforce disparity represented the centre of study enquiry, which motivated the researcher to delve further into this research. The dilemma of masculine over-representation in leadership roles tends to be embraced by both male and female managers, thus justifying gender inclusive leadership. The threshold for analysing barriers facing women in their thrust to achieve leadership was put to test from a psycho-social dictum.

However, there are generally acceptable cultural and spiritual philosophies that support the assumptions made in this study, that men tend to be seen significantly in the leadership roles and therefore, compromise the concept of inclusion (Al-Asfour *et al*, 2017). In other words, the proposal that leadership should be inclusive seems to attract resistance not only from male managers, but also from women who consider the status quo as socially normed.

Having worked under women leadership for some years, the researcher was motivated to gain insights into how the status quo could be evaluated, in the hope that women under-representation could be reversed. The number of women leaders was likely to increase, given the booming exhibited qualifications and capabilities from personal experience. In addition, most of the women who graduated with Master of Science (MSc) degree in leadership and change management have since moved a step or so above the positions they occupied previously before embarking on this programme. While their experiences vouchsafe solid capabilities to implement the leadership skills acquired in the courses, there has not been a significant evidence deliberately advanced to pave way for entry into strategic positions.

4.3 Chapter Summary

This chapter examined the research methods and design, paradigm, strategy and methodology aspects that informed the study research questions. The study predominantly employed the qualitative approach to establish the underlying concepts and phenomena surrounding the under-representation of women leadership in public enterprises within the context of Sub-Saharan Africa.

Alternative research methods were considered and the interpretivist theory was adopted as the study's methodology. A detailed analysis of the methodological procedures was presented showing how data gathering and data analysis was carried out to realise transparency within the research process. Measures were taken to improve the quality of the current study with ethical considerations explained detail, in line with the expectations of a doctoral thesis. In Sub Saharan Africa, relatively few qualitative studies exist in this area, with the majority found in the developed countries and therefore, may not appropriately cover the finer details of women leadership under-representation. The qualitative method was used to help explain the cultural differences of respondents based on their beliefs and convictions not normally included in the existing literature on the subject.

The process of data collection proceeded inductively through a process that started with data gathering, with questions asked and respondents supplying the data in interviews. Further aspects included an explicit account of data collection techniques, a description of the unit of study and data collection techniques. The analysis of data was carried out simultaneously, showing how the researcher developed the study as field notes were immediately re-organised and transcribed to avoid loss of pertinent data within the study process. This helped to analyse data through a process of data colour coding. The coded data were further re-organised repeatedly until categories and themes emerged, which helped identify appropriate theories for constructing study conclusions. These were used to provide interpretations in relation to the research questions.

In addition, the chapter indicated how issues of ethical considerations were used to build plausible study conclusions and recommendations. The issues of reliability and validity, dependability and transferability were presented, showing how the study was to establish reliability through repeatability, believability, replication and transferability of its findings. The validity of the study was also explored, showing the need for credibility and believability of the study findings. The chapter further examined the possible influences of the researcher and that of the respondents on possible biases that would negatively interfere with study findings. The research protocols and informants' consent were explained and fulfilled, showing how the researcher gained the mandate to proceed with the study. Thus, issues of anonymity and confidentiality were outlined to help the researcher maintain documentation and promote respondents' protection from all possible risks. The researcher's positionality was included, providing detail as to how this might have influenced the study findings and the study significance highlighted to demonstrate relevance and utility of this study within the field. The next chapter discusses the study findings that were made in response to the research questions aimed at gaining insights into the concept of women leadership under-representation.

CHAPTER 5: RESEARCH FINDINGS/RESULTS

5.1 Introduction

This research investigated the under-representation of women leadership in public enterprises in Eswatini. The theoretical framework in this study presented findings emerging from various categories and themes in the construction of new knowledge resulting from an interpretive enquiry focused mainly in understanding the under-representation of women leadership. The results are presented as fundamental barriers to women leadership, women leadership impact as leadership comparability, strategies for enhancing women leadership and gender policy impact.

5.2 Barriers to Women Leadership

The theoretical framework in this study presented findings that emerged from the various categories and themes aimed at constructing new knowledge resulting from an interpretive enquiry. The results showed that there were two broad categories identified as externally motivated and self-inflicted barriers. Qualitative data was collected and organized into key fundamental categories and themes. These barriers are shown in Figure 5.1.

FIGURE 5.1: CATEGORIES OF BARRIERS
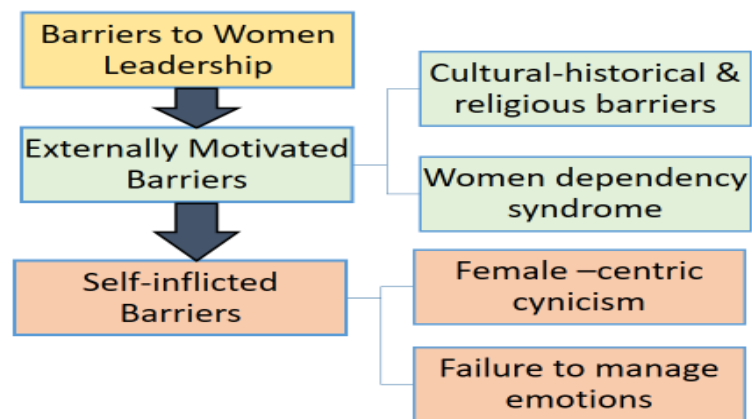
Source: Author generated

Creswell *et al.* (2018) stress the occurrence of data analysis within an organic environment resulting in the key fundamental obstacles to women leadership identified.

5.2.1 Externally motivated barriers

The study found out that, in the main, these barriers emanate from external factors that seem outside the peripherals women influence. These obstacles are largely influenced by societal perceptions often manifest in cultural beliefs, the values embraced over time as a society's history and theological dictums that shape our everyday lives. These were made up of cultural-historical and religious stereotypes and women dependence syndrome.

5.2.1.1 Cultural-historical and religious stereotypes

The cultural-historical and religious stereotypes emerged as a barrier in the workplace revealing the traditional division of labour based on gender role separation manifest in biological orientation. Participant 4 cited that:

Culturally, we believe women should be for the home (and), therefore not worth promotion and therefore top positions are for men, (who) think women are preoccupied with family issues and have no time for leadership demands. Men think women are preoccupied with family issues and have no time for leadership demands. Men find it difficult to report to women. Culturally, men think they are more superior to women and have the belief that men are always at the top: girls will be married anyway.

Men enjoy leadership dominance in patriarchal societies in most countries within Sub Saharan Africa creating the basis for stereotypes in the workplace. This view creates an increased proportion of male managers particularly in both middle and senior management levels. Including women as leaders in the workplace is perceived an intrusion in the culturally instituted order likely to attract repulsion from both male and female subordinates. Men therefore justify their resistance to women leadership as their compliance to cultural and historical including religious expectations. This view is further expanded in the Participant 2 narrative:

Men lack respect for women, think they are under them and … find it difficult to report to women due to disrespect. As a new member to a different department I was looked down by men at first sight – thinking you do not know. Male subordinates undermined my authority.

There seems to be an element of contempt exhibited by women themselves who feel men resist their leadership due to societal expectations. This behaviour tends to invoke impudence from men who believe when women lead, their role in society is undermined. In patriarchal societies, culture demands that women remain submissive to men and therefore any reversal conflicts with set societal norms. As women leaders give up being assertive, masculinity dominates becoming

synonymous with leadership. These actions are a proliferation of obstacles to women leadership as further illustrated by Participant 15:

Cultural beliefs are a source of lack of women leadership. Women want to impress even if it means breaking natural laws. I learnt leadership skills from both men and women who demonstrated firmness in meetings. However, men find it difficult to listen to women.

The narrative seems to suggest the existence of barriers to women leadership which emanate from cultural, historical and religious beliefs shared in societal influences in which leadership is exclusively patriarchal. However, women are accorded equal acknowledgement in the narrative but have to go an extra mile if their leadership is to be accepted. Their own impression combined with male perception seems to create a reinforced barrier.

5.2.1.2 Female dependency syndrome

The second barrier related to the lack of self-belief in women leading to a sense of insecurity built around medieval doctrines. Women were regarded exclusively home tenderers while men ran errands to provide household resources and needs as articulated by Participant 16:

Women lack seriousness to believe in themselves as they always seek assistance from men. Other women preferred to be in the company of men than women and copied their leadership styles. Even as a supervisor, my male boss required me to always consult with him and not make own decisions. Most men are still not ready for women leaders.

While women tend to derive warmth in masculinity and believe they complement their existence, they nevertheless unfortunately become inextricably dependent. Women therefore seem to embrace masculine dominance unquestionably. They concede that masculinity exhibits traits that are necessary for leadership. While they seem to lack self-confidence, their decision making faculty seems indeterminate as they continually seek masculine approval. As a consequence, women seem distrust their own decision making framework demanding frequent scrutiny from men as relayed in the narrative of Participant 8:

There is lack of confidence despite women having qualifications. Build women and back them up! Women should be supportive of other women and to stop looking down upon other women. Empower them to remove their inferiority complex. Men should not always be given responsibilities over women.

While more women are beginning to acquire leadership competence, they tend to falter in their decision making framework due to a lack of self-belief electing to naturally lean back on men. This therefore seems to suggest that women need empowerment and support not only from their

male counterparts, but from all relevant stakeholders who should respect their capability to lead despite cultural limitations. By involving women in decision making, women are likely to gain confidence and therefore assume leadership positions.

5.2.2 Self-inflicted barriers

The second category of barriers refers to those obstacles that find their source from women themselves. These barriers are brought about by behaviours exhibited by women either towards themselves or other women. The barriers are made up of women-centric cynicism and failure to manage emotions.

5.2.2.1 Women-centric cynicism

As women enter the leadership scene the gravity of cynicism intensifies mostly in the lower echelons as observed by Participant 20:

Other women found it difficult to submit to another woman. Lack of support from fellow women is a challenge. There is j*ealousy among women as they do not want to see other women succeed in their work and keep their promotion tricks a secret. Women need to be supportive of other women and stop looking down on other women once promoted.*

This caption demonstrates how women contribute to barriers towards women leadership attracting stark insubordination. It is therefore evident that mistrust exists among women who are overtly unprepared to subject themselves to women leadership. This barrier seems to reside in jealousy among women who prefer not to share information on their trajectory to leadership. However, there is the tendency to be sceptical in female leadership suggesting doubts in the credibility for leadership creating further self-inflicted impediments. The barrier tends to correspond with behaviour of the few promoted women who remain aloof from the rest of women subordinates provoking rancour. Participant 5 shares these views:

Other ladies asked why I was made leader and therefore looked down upon me. I talked to the boss who talked to the ladies. I always stand my ground and confront men head-on.

Unfortunately, the above narrative seems to paint a dim picture on how women subordinates evaluate the competence of their fellow female leader counterparts despite the qualifications they hold. Most women therefore continue to hold the strong conviction that leadership is largely masculine and submit their loyalty to men, more especially in Eswatini. Participant 14 accentuates this psychological view:

The thought by men that women are concerned more with detail and emotions causes men to take advantage. Views from women are therefore not taken seriously thus we resort to keeping quiet especially in meetings. We should try to air our views and be aggressive, show men that they leave us out.

Women themselves perceive and are perceived as emphasising detail and therefore become emotionally upset when logic is flouted. Men are aware of women's weakness as far as emotions are concerned and therefore often try to manipulate them. As a result, women tend to avoid conflict and choose to give way to masculine dominance thus weakening their prospects to leadership. The narrative seems to emphasise women exclusion which tends to be spontaneous. Some degree of assertiveness is therefore contemplated in the narrative for women to be included in the leadership.

5.2.2.2 Failure to managing emotions

Women tend to experience challenges in managing emotions, be it their own or those of others as reported by Participant 15:

Men show disrespect and raise my temper… could not control my emotions when dealing with insubordinate male. However, as women we have good listening skills, decision making and empathy.

Women tend to get easily swayed away from their focus especially when challenged by their male reports. As a result they become emotionally disturbed. As men are aware of the cultural expectations from women their actions may seem resistant to female authority further raising women emotions. The narrative seems to play on trade-offs between women weaknesses on emotions and their nurturing aspect. Women themselves seem to be aware of their own weakness in managing their own emotions. It is evident however that women tend to manifest more of the nurturing aspect they believe is likely to improve relations as witnessed by Participant 16:

Women are patient, if beaten by husbands, they will persist with life. Women leadership is still underutilised as women value people's lives as strength. Women with good background underrate female leaders… Men have physical advantage, with women having the intelligence probably needed in leadership.

These behaviours seem common in the household rather than the workplace implying that women hold a strong visibility in domestic affairs. Women are perceived to value humanity, an aspect which resonates with work ethics. While women subordinates exhibit insolence to women leaders the impact may not be significant. However, if women possess the intelligence and are naturally

caring and nurturing, it is most probable that they are likely to be adaptive to emotional intelligence. Sadly, women tend to acknowledge their deficits in emotional intelligence as revealed in the comments cited by Participant 3:

Find ways of making them control their natural feelings, emotions. Women overdo things, abuse power- rule through emotions. Women can be leaders through training to change their attitude.

The narrative seems to show women as challenged when it comes to managing their emotions a condition that could be rectified through capacity building interventions. Women are shown as emotionally overwhelmed resulting in self-inflicted obstacles which characterise mismanaged emotions. These actions tend to attract insubordination as their leadership is viewed above board resulting fundamentally in the loss of loyalty from both male and female subjects.

5.3 Women Leadership Impact

A further theme that emerged from the study was as a result of an evaluation on women leadership towards contributing to effectiveness in public enterprises. Invariably, women leadership was analysed in relation to leadership in masculinity to ascertain their suitability. The emerging subthemes included women respect for mankind, woman leader as team builder, competence in management and administration, women commitment and attention to detail, women resilience and the degree of women informality in the workplace.

5.3.1 Women respect for mankind

Based on the data collected, the contents of the debate on 'nature versus nurture' seem to offer intriguing insights into women natural unique characteristics perceived in their biological endowment (men cannot give birth) but also in their upbringing human beings (generally from age 0 to 5 years). Participant 7 stated that:

As mothers, women are good at caring as in-borne, have a sense of nurturing, listening and serving. They feel for others and are honest. They have the nature of serving and therefore do respect human life which they were involved in bringing about right from the beginning. They also like to provide services as noted in funerals and when people are sick. They therefore feel for others and honest. Women respect individual value, 'Ubuntu' and men are not comparable. As mothers, they are good at caring for the family and show a sense of nurturing and listening. They also have the nature of serving others and keep people together in society.

Women naturally value life and are therefore compelled to promote the welfare of people, a necessary precondition for ethical leadership. The biological endowment and social expectations make it obligatory for women to respect the human dignity as they facilitate human birth as well

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as nurture individuals. These qualities generally appeal to women propensity towards valuing human welfare. Women therefore adopt a strong feeling for those they are attached to and would of necessity uphold 'Ubuntu'. The narrative also reveals women as having the capability to serve others while they embrace integrity. Women are likely to bring to the workplace aspects of their natural traits which compel them to spontaneously respect humanity and develop their subordinates. The assertion that women possess unique traits not found in men seems to accumulate greater expression in the 'nature versus nurture' dichotomy articulated in the findings above. The narrative tends to reveal that men place lesser values to people than their female counterparts. Such value system creates the type of ethical leadership that disregards the interests of others. Women demonstrate the quality of respect and service to others through interactive processes and communality. The aspect of social ties is promoted further perpetuating societal cohesion. However, it would appear their emphasis on nurturing tendencies seems to dilute a firm grip on subordinates as leaders. In effect, the concept of 'Ubuntu' can be equally applied to both masculinity and femininity but the degree of application seems variable. However, women seem to be limited in certain circumstances when the physical disposition seems befitting. Participant 12 outlines this notion:

Women were made a weaker species as their bodies are different from those of men. Women are cleverer than men – examples seen in church. However, women can use only their brains while as leaders their bodies are needed. Because their bodies are not as strong as that of men, they are less effective leaders in situations where the leader's physical body makes a difference.

The role of physical posture in leadership is emphasized in the narrative as authority is, in the majority of cases, accompanied by the appearance of the leader. While the intellectual faculty plays a major role in developing effective leaders, body posture provides a communicative utility, further acknowledging the leader's physical appearance in certain situations. The narrative seems to recognize the need for the intellectual capacity and the physical disposition in balanced leadership. This aspect seems lacking in women thus creating obstacles to their leadership potential. This view appears to be contested by Participant 6:

Women possess similar traits found in both men and women as 50:50. I learnt from both men and women leaders who demonstrated firmness in meetings. I worked under a tolerant male boss. Female boss was serious and did things in time. My mother also inspired me.

The above narrative seems to suggest that women are able to compete favourably with their male counterparts in respect of their physical appearance making the body differences a non-event. In

addition, strong bodies may not be entirely fundamental as leadership tends to focus more on influencing, where teams are likely to fill those deficiencies, leaving the component of intellectual capability highly impactful. Most traits are therefore equally possessed by both male and female and are viewed as not dissimilar and therefore likely to be comparable to masculinity. Participant 5 emphasises challenges met by women as they recognise the human aspect:

Women have the nature of serving in the family but lack the confidence to lead encountering men who undermine them. Because they have good listening skills, they cooperate very well at work showing their ability to work with others. They often show empathy towards colleagues.

While women may display acceptable behavioural traits that advance personal welfare, the absence of self-assurance tends to weaken their leadership expectations. Men take advantage of this weakness making it difficult for women to secure allegiance. In addition, their lack of self-assertiveness tends to be compensated by their ability to communicate effectively with team members. Robust leadership influences tend to be built on sound interpersonal relationships as revealed in the above narrative.

5.3.2 Woman leader as team builder

In evaluating the impact of women leadership some views were expressed which portrayed women as strong relationship builders. Participant 4 revealed some unique skills identified with women which enables them to build exceptional relationships:

Most women socialize as seen in their participation in church, community clubs and development and domestic work. They show leadership qualities in the home as they control finances and upbring children. They like to provide benefits especially in funerals. They are good at small details in leadership style.

The visibility of women in social events is clear evidence that they play an important role in creating relationships. Their involvement in social activities presents an edge over men in creating societal connections. This aspect tends to fit well with their natural propensity to promote the welfare of human beings towards sound relationships. The narrative underpins women as ostensibly religious and embrace spirituality which advocates harmonious interactions. The capability of women to manage family finances places them in an advantageous position to use resources effectively in the workplace. However, the validity of these qualities for leadership tends to fall short of leadership expectations given the complexity of what constitutes leadership. However, Participant 15 insists that women carry unique team building skills revealed in the following narrative:

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Women have good interpersonal skills, good listening skills, decision making and empathy. Women are patient, tolerant and free to come for advice and respect individual value. Thus men take advantage of this. But women have the passion to lead.

The above narrative shows aspects that are necessary in promoting team work derived from their biological qualities revealed in their nurturing endowment. The narrative further demonstrates women's due regard for others expressed as a willingness to receive feedback. Some quality of consultative attitude are further revealed which can be interpreted as taking collective risks before decisions are taken. Women are aware of the need to empathise when making decisions further demonstrating aspects of chemistry and intimacy in the leader-follower dual relationship. The ability to consult, lending an ear are all likely to generate improved relationships which help develop virtuous leadership. These views are reinforced by Participant 6:

Most women are religious. They outnumber men in places of worship and take part in most activities required in church, for example in singing and ululating and yet leave the leading of prayers to men. They like to live in communal structures with others rather than being left alone.

The above extract seems to suggest that women assign great value to working with others as spiritually enshrined in society. Women are particularly aware of the central role people play and as guided through the divine order which emphasises the existence of communal coexistence.

5.3.3 Competence in management and administration

Management and administration seem to share similarities and these concepts are generally apparent in all spheres within the workplace. Leadership tends to gravitate between management and administration implying a common triangular relationship between them. The performance of women leadership is evaluated from the demonstrated competence in managerial and administrative functions reinforced by the nurturing endowment specifically applicable to women as revealed by Participant 6:

Women are supported by their male counterparts to serve in administrative functions. Thus women are good at multiskilling, communication and have empathy which is not seen in men. Women are thus good at small details that make things happen like organizing the office, receiving visitors and general management functions.

While certain leadership elements are noticeable in the above narrative, it is clear that women carry out managerial and administrative functions. The nurturing trait seems deeply encroached in women implying some willingness to develop relationships through trust. As a result, the

leadership qualities remain submerged behind scenes revealing little impact on female leadership and therefore discrediting their potential to assume leadership positions. The narrative tends to interpret leadership and management as synonymous. A clear role analysis seems necessary to demonstrate leadership involvement for accompanying outcomes. Cultural influences appear to discredit women in their search for leadership as noted in the narrative of Participant 21:

Religious beliefs contribute to the lack of women leadership. Women therefore turn to trying to impress even if it means breaking natural laws. They are hard workers, make people value their jobs, but are emotionally weakened.

While the qualities to leadership are within reach of women, they seem to be placed under unnecessary pressure to prove their mettle and therefore gain acceptance as leaders. In the process, women use every possible effort to compete with their male counterparts leading to emotional challenges likely to be met with dissent. The evaluations tend to be unfavourable causing further barriers to women leadership. Participant 2 tends to challenge this notion:

I was inspired by a female pharmacist in my previous job who was down to earth. She reported accurately the status of her department. She also communicated effectively in meetings. The reporting style was therefore well structured.

The narrative seems to reveal the capability of women to lead their departments successfully with an open mind. The importance of communication, recognized in effective leadership, is emphasized in the narrative implying that women have the ability to put across ideas to the workforce. These functions are necessary in leadership though they tend to lean more on management. However, as noted above, there is a fine line separating leadership from management and these concepts tend to be complementary. A further revelation for striving to lead is revealed in the narrative made by Participant 8:

Women are known to be open-minded at home where they interact with community leaders. I have seen successful women challenging men at home. My female boss was firm and decisive, strong and straightforward.

These views as expressed by a female respondent seem to reveal the inner feelings women adopt as a certain degree of audacity when attending to their household chores which they attempt to apply when confronted with workplace pressures. The narrative suggests that effective leadership requires some degree of firmness. The narrative seems to show women potential to lead as they can also be determinant. The parallel in firmness seems differentiate the genders by suggesting

that men are more inclined to leadership while women emphasise managerial aspects. Participant 15 accentuates this perception:

Women are church leaders who plan church activities well. They learnt how to organize things in church and are creative in putting things in order. They often like to do things that will benefit a group such as sweeping the church, getting members sing in choir and support in agenda setting in funerals, and places of worship and weddings making sure the resources are available.

This narrative shows the propensity in women to serve others and demonstrate a high degree of organizing especially in the social circles. They seem to excel in getting things put in order and structured in such a way that the proceedings flow quite naturally. These actions which go beyond personal satisfaction indicate female emphasis on serving others through communal involvement which are more administrative than leading. Women therefore tend to feel for others thus exhibiting the quality of 'Ubuntu', reflecting the value that '*I am because, you are*' and which respects integrity, moral values and personality as essential qualities in leadership. The narrative also shows that women are capable of serving others and demonstrate the ability to embrace integrity. In addition, leadership tends to be encompassed in the broad concept of management viewed along with the functions of management such as planning, organizing and controlling.

5.3.4 Women commitment and attention to detail

The findings revealed that women demonstrate commitment to work and give their attention to detail in the workplace. Work output that focuses on organizational effectiveness can only be realizable if procedures are taken into account as commented by Participant 9:

Women are often particular about small issues such as perfecting task given and making sure they do the right things to the book. For example, as a supervisor I had to do the job myself when my subordinates failed to do it. I ignored men's behaviour in the hope they would change and therefore did the job on their behalf.

The above assertion seems to suggest that women pay particular attention to issues of policy and like to follow structured processes that prescribe particular courses of action. This notion corresponds favourably to the aspects of management strive to maintain the status quo as well as focus on predictable actions. Commitment to work appears over-emphasised when a leader performs the subordinate's task thus violating a leader's role of coaching and guiding. Female perfectionism to resolve irregularities tends to blur the leadership aspect for supporting subordinates to learn the job. It is therefore uncertain whether these actions could be useful in

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determining their leadership eligibility. Nonetheless, women still exhibit a greater degree of accuracy in managerial issues as compared to their male counterparts which could work favourably towards their becoming effective leaders. These functions tend to claim greater attention from women particularly in the household pausing challenges in providing a fair distribution of their effort as noted by Participant 11:

Women should sacrifice and balance the issues of work and home. They often give excuses to be off duty to attend to family issues letting work suffer. If you are working with a woman, you do the bulk of the work as they are attending to family problems.

The above observation appeals to the dual demands women face causing them to be overburdened with workplace and domestic loads. A huge burden is heaved on women thus compromising their leadership prospects. This pressure is consciously observed by women in the workplace as Participant 7 articulates:

Women are normally sensitive and you would like to come down to their levels when it comes to performance. Men are good although they have a tendency of being greedy and not submissive. Male subordinates are lazy and often complain.

The narrative suggests differences in the manner both genders handle their perceptions towards work with women being apprehensive. In other words women manifest behaviours in the home which they struggle to introduce in the workplace. However, while men demonstrate a level of understanding in the workplace, they seem to place their attention towards self-interests. The attitude of men towards work signals less comparability to that of women. This perception places women in a superior position when authentic leadership is considered.

5.3.5 Women resilience

In pursuit of evaluating women leadership, the level of women adaptability was scrutinised in the light of masculinity. The study found that women demonstrate some degree of flexibility in their social life as outlined by Participant 1:

Women are patient and strong because if beaten by their husbands they will persist with life and try to hide the ordeal. Women deliver, yet men desert offices, and women are there despite family commitments. Women are seen in perseverance in times of family disputes yet continue to be positive in life.

These behavioural features demonstrate a robust resilience likely to be applied in the workplace as relevant in terms of the economic difficulties confronting most public enterprises in Sub Saharan Africa. There is, however no guarantee that these behavioural features an be applied in

the workplace. Experiences in the workplace seem to relate well to the domestic landscape placing women in a better position to influence the workforce. Additionally, the narrative shows that women are duty-bound demonstrating their commitment to work and their ability to handle the dual responsibility in the household and workplace. However, it seems that the feature of resilience is more pronounced in domestic rather than the workplace. It would appear the workplace presents a hostile environment evidenced in the comments of Participant 18:

Women lack confidence because they are undermined by men. They are also underutilised in leadership opportunities while some women show jealousy. They think women become promoted through corrupt practices such as infidelity.

Women seem to be demoralised in their desire to occupy leadership positions for fear of negative evaluations and therefore result in men considering them to be household champions with no leadership favour in the workplace. Women therefore lose their self-esteem and further experience unfavourable evaluation from fellow female employees who speculate inconsistency in their appointments. Both the domestic and female perceptions combine to in weakening their confidence to effectively lead. The lack of confidence in women creates their inability to take bold decisions as commented by Participant 12:

We still have few women leaders because women cannot take harsh decisions. However, there are also other women who can behave like men. For example, my former headmistress spoke with strong voice and composure. She was a lady who had a strong body with a strong voice. She inspired me.

The findings show mixed views about the drive in women leadership for being decisive. Women also share similar traits and are likely to demonstrate these when situations demand that they do so. The narrative shows lack of role models for women in the workplace as the cited case relates to the participant's old school days implying that there are few female models that can compellingly motivate other women to leadership. Such inspirational qualities impact on women performance but also act as a source of role models to prospective women who aspire to leadership positions. Similar convictions are shared in the comments of Participant 10:

I worked with a female leader who had a fearless stature. She tried to treat everyone fairly as she was steady and able to convince other people. So, some women are also firm and decisive, strong and straightforward. They possess traits found in men as 50:50. However, there is still hate from both sexes, but I believe in myself and remain persevere.

The results further reveal the notion that although women assume quantum domestic responsibilities, their involvement in the workplace remains phenomenally low and therefore largely inactive throughout. The findings also reveal that despite women facing challenges domestically, they do persevere. These qualities seem to be desirable for today's leadership which demands some degree of resilience and persistence to address the many challenges facing public enterprises.

5.3.6 Degree of women informality in the workplace

The use of informality in the business circles was explored to establish the relationship between women and male leadership as basis for comparing women contribution towards public enterprise effectiveness. There seems to be less informal connectedness for women as demonstrated in the narrative of participant 20:

My boss who is male knows me more than his wife which is not the case with women bosses. Women cannot be as open as men. They are always reserved ... So it is important that you create a relationship that is more than work itself, but must keep some professional distance.

The influence of informal relationship is exhibited where men, as opposed to women show some degree of openness which creates dual trust and therefore improved working rapport. This is likely to boost the leader-follower relationship where the leader is accepted by the follower making it easier to influence results positively. By constructing enabling work environment through networks that promote free association opinions and innovative views become a reality. However, participant 18 cites challenges that characterise women as they fulfil this perspective:

In my department most women are reluctant to take part in activities outside the scope of their work. They come to work on time, leave the company after work hours and rarely have time for outside work activities electing to go home after work. If forced to attend other programmes organized in the company, they will stay with the people they are familiar with and protect their territory.

Women therefore lack the enthusiasm to informally participate in extra-work activities which could impact on their decision making capability. While they observe the requirements of work ethics and expectations, they nevertheless fail to capitalise on informal opportunities which are likely to offer useful information. In this regard women become dismally less comparable to men with little influence on organizational effectiveness. By nature, women tend to be reserved preferring to protect their personal space as revealed by participant 17:

Women like to work on jobs that encourage individual concentration like finance and technical work where there is little disturbance from others. They work better when left alone. Women are mostly not willing to initiate social activities especially those that are married preferring to remain in the background. It is therefore difficult to tell them where and when they go wrong or appreciate what they are doing.

The isolation by women from participating in networks which are a major feature in informal arrangements suggests that women omit great opportunity in obtaining information necessary for leadership potential. Women tend to prefer jobs suitable for introverts and view networks as disruption to their work involvement. The reservation from networks inhibits the possibility of receiving feedback which helps improve performance. Women are pressured with domestic assignments they desire to accomplish as they also undertake to fulfil this function. Their involvement in activities that are not directly related to their work is minimal due to family commitments which they highly regard.

5.4 Strategies for Enhancing Women Leadership

In this section the study identifies strategies for enhancing women leadership for bridging the under-representation of female leadership in public enterprises. The interrogation developed into themes and subthemes assumed necessary for enhancing female leadership which are summarised in Figure 5.2.

FIGURE 5.2: STRATEGIES FOR ENHANCING WOMEN LEADERSHIP

Source: Author generated

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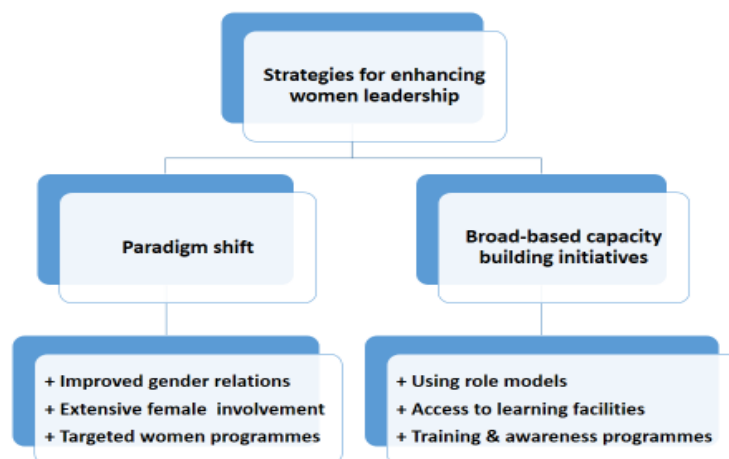
The strategies for enhancing women leadership emerged in two-fold, the paradigm shift and the broad-based capacity building initiatives. These were broken down into subthemes described in the paragraphs that follow.

5.4.1 Paradigm shift

The study set out to find out strategies that help enhance women leadership in public enterprises prompting the need for a paradigm shift focused specifically on improved gender relations, extensive women involvement and targeted women programmes.

5.4.1.1 Improved gender relations

In establishing improved gender relations the results reinforce the importance of increased dialogue between women and men in order to boost gender parity outlined by Participant 1:

We need to have boards that are composed of a 50:50 membership representation so that the population will motivate other women. Encourage women to be brave so that the women group achieves a common goal. It is necessary to recognize that people are not the same and that diversity is important and provides wide advantages.

The ideas raised in the above account indicate that leadership is constructed around relationships which entail robust chemistry in leader-follower. The narrative seems to suggest that an equal representation of gender in top governing entities is likely to influence decisions that result in the flow of more female leaders in the hierarchical echelons. The narrative further suggests that women should also play their own part in pressing for a greater representation in leadership positions as dual effort. Women in the low ranking positions are likely to be inspired by the visibility of female in the governing structures and would most probably gain the requisite confidence to inspire other women to leadership positions. The assumption is that once the population of women in governing structures increases, an equitably gender leadership distribution would as a consequence follow as women feel supported. The results also highlight the crucial role diversity plays in promoting synergy as an increased source of information. This notion is supported by other motives that seek to instil a culture of equality in society as revealed by Participant 2:

Find fair ways of treating all equally starting with the upbringing of children in the family to instil a spirit of fairness in gender. Enforce gender equality policy which requires men and women to consider equality of both when decisions are made. The concept of gender equality needs to be mainstreamed.

Due to the prevailing circumstances on gender imbalances the perceptions in society regard leadership as masculine thus providing little scope to accommodate women. A shift in the mindset to accommodate more women in leadership positions becomes crucial where a shift towards involving families would help to reshape role interchangeability. Furthermore, the narrative suggests focusing on gender congruence generated through a process of socialisation to accommodate both the girl and boy child in appreciating shared leadership roles.   This view is only effective if both genders are willing to improve relations as established by Participant 9:

The relationship among women is not sound while those between men and women are equally unfavourable in the workplace as women are treated as belonging to a lower status group. Women are therefore ignored when decisions are made.

Improving relations between women and men provides the impetus for both parties to engage in conversations where trust becomes the driving force. The results suggest that if women are accepted as partners, their contributions are likely to improve the quality of decisions meant to promote organizational effectiveness within the public enterprises. It is evident from the findings that there are massive benefits in bringing women to equal footing as strategic partners in leadership. The narrative seems to reveal unfavourable relationships prevailing between the genders.

5.4.1.2 Extensive women involvement

A further view that emerged from the theme paradigm shift relates to the need for an extensive involvement of women in the decision making structures within organizations. The visibility of women in the decision making echelons is exasperatingly low as expressed in the comments of Participant 20:

Change male attitude to accept women as leaders. We need to secure trust starting with management. Encourage women to willingly enter the management positions. Women generally find it difficult to listen to other women making men to follow suit. Women are capable of performing as evidenced by my female boss who was serious and did things in time. Yet we are not given the opportunity to make our own decisions.
The above citation focuses on the perpetual masculine leadership dominance common in patriarchal societies. A call is made for a cultural transformation in the practices and approach to gender. Men resist change electing to maintain the status quo. The narrative advocates accommodating women participation in the decision making processes and view leadership as a shared responsibility. However, women themselves encouraged to demonstrate an aggressive desire to join the leadership race. The results further propose that women support other women

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leaders to set precedence for men to be loyal to women. Given appropriate and relevant backing women are likely to deliver and make a huge difference. As the findings show, once support is secured, women are likely to be accepted in positions of authority as revealed by Participant 4:

Include women in decision making and give them responsibilities to build them. Allow them to co-manage with men in teams as counterparts in mentorship. Include women in decision making. Give women some strategic assignments to carry out rather than mere social activities.

The results show that women occupy ceremonial positions with little impact on authority thus denying women the leadership experience to make decision. The narrative shows that by allowing women to experience leadership in action, they are accorded the opportunity to master certain skills thus building their confident to exercise the decision making task. It would appear the findings consider collaborative engagement where teams are seen to play an overriding role. Mentorship entails the mentee being shown how functions are carried out and learning from mistakes. The collaborative approach presents a facility where all players are included thus advancing the value of gender inclusive leadership. The narrative seems to suggest that women should receive the necessary enabling environment which stimulates spontaneous decision making from women. While management is expected to facilitate the participation of women in decision making, women may create self-inflicted barriers as noted by Participant 19:

In school, I was confined to a girls' environment and had little interaction with men thus fought to be a leader. Other women preferred to be in the company of men than women and copied their leadership styles. I had to be competitive to lead others despite other women's thoughts.

The findings seem to show that the type of socialisation women receive tends to be a limiting factor to the extent that women fail to associate with men professionally in the workplace. The results further reveal that women tend to feel more secure in the company of other women than with the opposite sex. They scuffle to undertake their leadership roles and are similarly aware of other women's perceptions towards them which makes their leadership involvement difficult to attain.

5.4.1.3 Targeted women programmes

The last subtheme that emerged under the paradigm shift relates to public programmes targeted on women to consider taking up leadership roles. The findings established that while compliance was expected from women to comply with cultural demands, there was the need to reconcile both the workplace and household by balancing women involvement as revealed by Participant 19:

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Leaders should be considerate - weigh the situations by looking at both sides – learn how to be humanitarian; show integrity and interpersonal skills. Communication skills and information gathering are equally important. We can change their perception by creating awareness programmes.

The narrative points to the need for leaders to view situations objectively and make seasoned decisions. This view earmarks programmes that empower women by valuing humanity while at the same time focusing on work-life balance which respects both milieus. Such women initiatives are meant to equip women with strategies for information sharing as a new dimension for building leadership and changing the mindset. In keeping with these propositions, the findings reveal the need for initiating awareness programmes that target both the boy and girl child expressed as Participant 21 observes:

Introduce leadership programmes for girls' right from primary schools through tertiary to ensure early awareness of the concept. The education system should incorporate issues of gender and leadership emphasising that the position of leadership applies to both female and male stressing that mothers can also be leaders with fathers under them.

These results emphasise the value of socialisation for both girls and boys to accept that leadership is an interchangeable role is likely to instil acceptance in both genders. This implies a review of the education system where children in primary schools learn to accept a shared approach to leadership. The narrative also reveals that these perceptions may be demonstrated in the family, way through tertiary and other learning institutions to change culturally held practices that inhibit women from proceeding to leadership in the workplace.

5.4.2 Broad-based capacity building

The broad-based capacity building initiative was another strategy found to a theme that enhanced women leadership in public enterprises. To allow conceptualisation, the theme was further broken down to sub-themes that included use of role models, accessing learning facilities and training and awareness programmes.

5.4.2.1 Use of role models

In line with the broad theme, this subtheme focused on the use of role models which provided insight into how women were inspired by those women in leadership positions. Participant 12 outlined the following narrative:

Encourage subordinates to work hard by setting examples; get some role models to be used for promoting women leadership. Appear professional and be exemplary. Provide role models for

women and involve women in decision-making and providing examples of works from successful women leaders. Promote women according to qualification to remove the thought that it is through intimacy.

The above assertion highlights the notion of role models as likely to influence aspiring women into leadership through the behaviours of those women who seem to be successful in their leadership. The narrative specifically makes reference to 'successful women' who are capable of inspiring others into becoming leaders. Women leaders who demonstrate exceptional leadership qualities and have the requisite qualifications were regarded to be robust role models with the impetus to motivate aspiring women. The findings seem underpin the importance of a transparent selection method based on merit gain credibility and an atmosphere of trust in other women. By relating to role models the results establish that women feel a sense of legitimacy based on genuine leadership. Participant 6 punctuates the impact of role models:

I was inspired by a woman leader through her hard work and involvement which, I must confess, helped me learn her way of doing things. She showed boldness, intelligence and was knowledgeable. My sister who was Director of finance rose to be Permanent Secretary. She was a hard worker who showed commitment in her work. This made me feel, oh, we women can also do it!

The fundamental point in the narrative centres on how women are influenced by the actions of effective female leaders who demonstrate not only commitment to work, but skills attached to a particular job. These results show that leaders to-be gain experiential learning and identify traits that are likely to have the greater impact. The findings revealed the power of role models as poised to create confidence in women as they recognize forces likely to trigger their capability. Participant 13 shares similar observations about role models revealed in the following comments:

I worked with a woman leader who talked fairly without showing favouritism to anyone. She was a hard female leader who through her hard work rose to CEO. Also, my uncle who was head of wildlife in the UK demonstrated unique technical skills for dealing with wildlife problems.

The narrative seems to show preference for credible women leaders whose behaviours are free from biases and prejudices. The narrative also reveals that role models may not necessary be feminine. However, the narrative is not confined to leadership skills, but demonstrates the need for leaders to be technically savvy if they are to be effective. Participant 16 seems to support the notion of role models from a different perspective:

My former headmistress spoke with strong voice and composure. She was a lady with a strong body and a strong voice. Although being a female leader she had a fearless stature. She tried to treat everyone fairly. She was steady and was able to convince other people.

This narrative emphasises the power of role models linked to a child's socialization as girls observe the actions of their mentors. The cited studentship seems to provide a robust learning experience likely to shape their future leadership behaviours. The above narrative seems to reveal sustainable perceptions about leadership that it is not only restricted to masculinity, but is shared equitably between the genders.

5.4.2.2 Accessing learning facilities

One further limitation facing women in acquiring leadership roles pertains to the difficulty in accessing learning facilities, revealed in the comments of Participant 21:

Failed to enroll at our local university, UNISWA (University of Swaziland). I enrolled for part-time studies at a private college and obtained a diploma at level 5 and got a job in town. I am now pursuing diploma level 6 in Business Administration which I attend during weekends. Distance education enabled me to carry out other family commitments and assignments. I was able to continue with my work but at the same time study while taking care of my husband and children.

The narrative points to the effect of limited space in universities, making it difficult for most women to receive formal education. However, the existence of private colleges provides options for accessing the learning where leadership may be acquired. The findings show that these alternative learning resources provide convenience for working students who are breadwinners and wish to keep their jobs. The narrative provides an excellent informal learning facility for women who wish to balance both domestic and workplace demands. Participant 10 echoes the same view by citing further advantages through this form of learning:

Women cannot travel to training venues away from homes as husbands cannot allow them to do that. In the workplace women are restricted to attend training that is in line with their job. We should therefore come up with the type of short courses that can be convenient to allow women to be released by their husbands.

The results reveal choices available to women that can be made without necessarily seeking permission from spouses or superiors to attend leadership skills development courses. Women therefore make independent decisions about what courses they wish to attend and in what format. Participant 9 also makes similar observation:

Provide training programmes that are up to say two weeks for fear of husbands' sanctions and provide short courses to allow women be released by their husbands. In addition, women fail to

justify why they want to attend leadership training in the workplace as they cannot convince their bosses. The courses should be blended so as to attract women who cannot travel for various reasons. Women should have the ability to have open minds and continue learning.

The narrative seems to encourage women to balance their leaning schedules with household demands in terms of the timing of such courses. The respondent seems to suggest short term course of possibly conducted during weekends. Furthermore, the narrative reveals that superiors are often unwilling to release women who wish to attend leadership course as this may not be relevant to their job. Both the workplace and the household may impose restrictions on women not to develop their leadership skills. In view of these limiting factors, Participant 2 attempts to offer options for addressing these:

Structure courses for leadership to be for at least two weeks. Courses could be attended on staggered ways with attendance breaks to allow women to attend to their family chores. As you introduce leadership programmes also train women not to feel as tokens by being always on the receiving end. Have girls adopt the idea that leadership is also for female right from primary schools through to tertiary.

The narrative seems to focus on three major aspects; course duration, the rigor in course content and early adoption of the concept of leadership. The duration should strive to strike a balance between times spent learning and taking up family responsibilities. The content on the other hand should endeavour to take cognizance of the condition of women as marginalised population but also appeal to their ability to conceptualise leadership. Furthermore, the narrative emphasises socialisation from early childhood to instil a culture of shared leadership for the genders.

5.4.2.3 Training and awareness programmes

The theme, broad-based capacity building also included training and awareness programmes to advance women leadership as viewed by Participant 6:

*T*rain *women through different awareness programmes. Use a consultative approach which includes symposiums or group discussion forum. Women must pursue degrees and diplomas in leadership and provide stimulating courses. Have trainings within organizations and have as many discussion forums to create the awareness. Provide courses in communication skills and information gathering. We can change their perceptions by creating huge awareness programmes.*

The narrative speaks to extensive awareness campaigns through targeted training programmes, organized conversations and dialogues and courses that incorporate information dissemination. Thus through a wide range of platforms, women embark on awareness campaigns that foster women leadership. The narrative further suggests mounting repeated conversations and dialogues

as information dissemination tools for promoting women leadership. These programmes could be initiated in public circles and internally within organizations. The findings further encourage women to perceptions that leadership is largely masculine. All these are likely to raise the awareness for women participation and may also offer advantages unique to particular individuals as evidenced in the narrative of Participant 20:

I had no stress of having to look for a job after school. By attending courses simultaneously with my work this gave me the security to fend for myself while developing my career. Today, I am currently the head of the business development department in the bank, a position I was assigned to as soon as I completed my degree which I believe could have been lost had I left work to attend university.

The results in this narrative reveal that the presence of informal education through colleges is a strong instrument for developing workers' skills while retaining their careers. Students maintain their employment status quo and continue to support their families while financing their education without causing breaks to their career. Intriguingly, the narrative reveals that students are able to achieve their personal goals through workplace recognitions for improved performance. Students are likely to use skills gained through study in improving their performance. However, apart from developing the specific leadership skills Participant 3 believes that such training courses should also develop their attitudinal personalities:

Women are generally timid, always fearing and are quiet in meetings. We need to provide learning that helps them to deal with subordinates. The training could include helping them how they could take part in decision making and this training could be made available for both women and men.

It would appear the narrative suggests what content would be relevant to include in their training programmes. The content would include improvement on the quality of decision making in the workplace as a result of collaboration. The narrative also stresses on the interaction between men and women which is likely to increase women confidence as they get more women involved in addressing own weaknesses, further explained by Participant 8:

Train women to help other women, like having patrons or mentors and shun greediness avoiding taking instruction from outside. Allow women to co-manage with their male counterparts in teams and undertake mentorship. Ask women themselves to take part in the mechanism to be recognised.

These findings seem to suggest that some of the barriers facing women in their trajectory towards leadership positions are self-inflicted proposing on how women should treat each other. A gender balanced programme that appeals to collaborative leadership is likely to boost women awareness and self-respect. The findings seem to urge women to shape their own destiny. In these

endeavours, the narrative seems to advocate the participation of male counterparts to help address the leadership challenges. In other words, an all-inclusive approach is highly desirable.

5.4.2.4 Budgets and incentives

In pursuit of narrowing the women leadership under-representation gap, the findings established that budgets and incentives played a critical role in increasing women leadership as revealed in the account of Participant 11:

Organizations should consider setting aside a budget for women leadership development policy. The funds could be used to help mobilise leadership programmes for promoting awareness campaigns for women particularly in the low level posts and operations. Women empowerment, women rights, traditional beliefs all need to be relevant to the dictates of the new environment and be revisited.

The narrative proposes the creation of a fund in organizations aimed at promoting women leadership targeting low level employees. This implies routing some funds in retained profits to be used in funding these initiatives. It seems the findings point to realizing the efforts of under-utilized women resources particularly in the low ranking echelons. This entails instituting robust programmes that target women leadership cutting across all sectors of employment. Apart from financing this initiative, Participant 19 considers providing a stimulus for compliance:

Create incentives such as tax concessions for compliance in gender equality. In so doing organizations will take serious actions to consider mounting well-structured women leadership promotion programmes. The increase on gender equality programmes will influence the participation of more women in leadership in the public enterprises.

The above findings propose an increased attention to the role of incentives as a tool towards encouraging organizations to increase women leadership representation. The government's role in setting aside incentives for organizations that are in compliance with gender parity seems well placed to compel organizations to consider initiating women leadership programmes. It would appear that the narrative seems biased towards policies developed at institutional levels where leadership buy-in becomes crucial. Policy triggers in the form of incentivised programmes such as tax rebates tend to boost company motives in creating an atmosphere for women leadership enhancement.

5.5 Gender Policy Impact

This section evaluated the impact of gender policy in accelerating women leadership in public enterprises. the following results were revealed.

5.5.1 Slow gender policy impact

The findings reveal that a policy on women leadership has not generated sufficient outcomes to enhance women leadership as outlined by Participant 13:

Not many benefits were achieved from the policies although we are beginning to see women taking up leadership positions slowly. Policy talks on female leadership, although sufficiently articulated, are not implemented adequately. There are many policies beautifully designed and prepared on gender equity including women participation in the workplace yet their implementation is not felt. There are no tangible results to show whether these policies are yielding their intentions.

The above narrative shows that the impact of gender policy remains frustratingly slow. Although women are entering the leadership arena visibly, this is happening at a snail's pace. The narrative shows that policies are well designed with useful aims, but the majority still remain excluded. It is doubtful as to whether the gender policies are understood by the workforce in the lower echelons. Attempts have been made to involve a larger proportion of women through their lobby groups whose focus has largely been on the gender equality campaigns than women leadership as narrated by Participant 8:

Organizations supporting gender equality such as 'Women and the Law' do not get adequate support and are not known to a large population of women. There is also a lack of monitoring mechanism to ascertain their impact. The policy therefore appears more on paper than in action. Instead, women who are highly connected are those being supported by ministerial policies. Women in the low level ranks do not know the existence of these legal statutes.

The narrative reveals the exclusive reliance on women organizations to lobby society on policy designs for women leadership has not been successful. These activists tend to focus almost exclusively on the broader gender parity with little attention to the issues of leadership particularly in the public enterprise. These programmes tend to concentrate on high profiled influential women leaders who use these policies to enhance their personal interests. Low ranked women are likely to be technically excluded thus creating a different type of the 'glass ceiling'. In response to these inconsistencies, Participant 20 makes the following remarks:

Allow regional groupings to provide plans that act as model blueprints for countries to ensure parity on women leadership in public enterprises is achieved. Isolate the policy that speaks to women leadership from the broader gender equality policy to allow visibility of women leadership and specify that the policy intends boosting women leadership in the public sector. We require a policy that encourages both men and women to consider joint decision making in all activities within the public enterprise. These should be specifically included in the agendas of regional blocs where low ranking women are included to ensure transparency. Women should be

encouraged to read some developed handbooks on gender equality to understand their mandate in improving gender equality.

This narrative tends to advocate for a robust involvement of regional consortiums focusing on women leadership to help design common policies that would be used in the region rather than confine within national boundaries. In addition, the findings suggest that the policy designs would be effective if both sexes participated. The findings also suggested including the programmes in the agendas of regional groups targeting low level women leaders. The study also established the need for transparency to accommodate the views of women in the low ranking positions. The findings also established that policies that focused on women leadership approaches beyond national peripherals had the greatest impact.

5.5.2 Challenges in monitoring and evaluating the policy

The evaluation gender policy impact revealed challenges that emerge as inadequacy in policy monitoring and evaluation mechanism advanced by Participant 8 as follow:

We have all policies on gender but there is little effort to monitor their impact - these tend to appear only on paper. In our country, there is ineffective monitoring mechanism that shows the status of women as leaders but we can tell that they are missing in the ranks. We don't have clear ways of informing women about this issue. We just see the number in the organizations without substantive well shared reports.

The narrative states that, while extensive documentation on gender equality policies is available in Sub Saharan Africa, its implementation and monitoring remain ostensibly non-existent. The results reveal a lack of properly planned strategies that focus towards accelerating women leadership. A mere observation of women leaders in public enterprises indicates the dire paucity of women leadership with little documented cases to substantiate the leadership deficit. Women in the low hierarchical echelons are often excluded from accessing information on women leadership. Participant 10 proposes use of relevant action plans that focus on women leadership in public enterprises:

Policy talks on female leadership, although these are sufficiently articulated, they cannot be measured accurately as there are no monitoring and evaluation mechanisms to check implementation and ascertain progress made in this area. This can be made easier by providing roadmaps that can be checked from time to time to measure their progress and impact at low levels in our public enterprises.

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The narrative suggests using appropriate plans with clearly stated goals that could help create mechanisms for measuring the progress of programmes that focus on women leadership. A clear reporting system to inform progress made is likely to impact on enhancing women leadership. Such action plans are then used to measure progress made in reducing the gap on women leadership under-representation. These measures seem absent particularly in the low levels of the workforce. The findings reveal that there is little impact deriving from the existing policy to address the gap on women leadership under-representation.

5.5.3 Accessibility to gender information

The accessibility to gender information was a further policy aspect which showed little impact in addressing women leadership under-representation as highlighted by Participant 9:

Women do not read literature on gender equality as they are either unaware of its availability since several documents have been written but are not accessed by a larger population of women. Sometimes those accessed are written in difficult language not easily understood by women. Women should be encouraged to visit women organizations that advocate for women rights and become members.

It would appear the narrative acknowledges the availability a massive collection of literature aimed at promoting gender equality in the region but these are inadequately accessed by women particularly in the low levels in operations. In some instances where these documents exist these are vaguely understood due to the legal language that may be employed in drafting such policies. Furthermore, the results establish that no strategies are in place to encourage use of these documents to help women develop strategies to ascend to leadership. The results show the need to support women affiliation to activism by providing funding likely to propel their interest to women leadership as observed by Participant 11:

Organizations should set a budget for developing a women leadership policy including at national level that helps in the dissemination of information. A policy should be developed that aims to support women lobby groups that focus on more women leadership in government run organizations. Gender empowerment should be the topical issue in parliament, the academia and local platforms that draw the participation of ordinary women to express their views on women leadership in our organizations.

The findings advocate for the mobilisation of finances in the design of policies that focus specifically on women leadership aimed at reaching out to a wide clientele. The narrative recognizes the use of discourse, dialogue and public presentations on women leaderships focused on advancing women leadership. The findings suggest that these activities should be targeted at

women in operations and firstline managers within public enterprises. A supported policy development initiative is likely to provide more information to be within reach by aspirant women leaders and creates a huge awareness of women leadership possibilities in the public enterprises.

5.6 Chapter Summary

In this chapter the results of the study were presented with barriers to women leadership being outlined first. These barriers emerged as self-inflicted and externally motivated barriers. Those that fell under externally motivated obstacles included cultural-historical and religious stereotypes and female dependency. Self-inflicted barriers encompassed women cynicism and failure to manage emotions. These impediments combine to create strong barriers to women leadership.

Next, the impact of women leadership in driving organizational effectiveness was evaluated. Subthemes that emerged included women respect for mankind, women leadership as team builder, competence in management and administration, women commitment and attention to detail, women resilience and the degree of women informality. The rich existing talents in women appeared underutilised as women remained under-representation in leadership positions in public enterprises. The evaluation of women leadership impact was enhanced the comparability of female leadership to their male counterparts which revealed a number of traits and endowments. These subthemes demonstrated potentials identified in women leaders but also revealed challenges women were confronted with.

The strategies for enhancing women leadership were outlined manifest in the broad themes of the paradigm shift and the broad-based capacity building. From the theme of paradigm shift emerged subthemes in the form of improved gender relations, extensive women involvement and targeted women programmes. On the other hand the broad based capacity building theme encompassed the use of role models, accessing learning facilities and training and awareness programmes. These concepts offered deeper insights into understanding factors that influence women leadership.

The final section of this chapter evaluated the impact of gender policy on women leadership in the public enterprise. The results showed the slow frustrating gender policy impact, challenges in monitoring and evaluating the policy and the problem of accessibility to gender information.. The next chapter carries out a discussion of the findings presented in this chapter deriving insight by linking these to the existing literature.

CHAPTER 6: DISCUSSION

6.1 Introduction

This chapter discusses in depth the findings made on the under-representation of women leadership in public enterprises within Eswatini. The discussion centres fundamentally on the results made in this study bringing together theories and models as relevant literature in this field. The chapter opens with a discussion on key obstacles facing women on their trajectory to leadership, which is followed by a discussion on the results of women leadership impact in relation to the comparability to masculinity. The discussion then proceeds to outline strategies that enhance women leadership followed, in closing, by a discussion on the impact of policy in promoting women leadership.

6.2 Fundamental Obstacles to Women Leadership

Findings made under this section of the study identified two broad categories made up of externally motivated and self-inflicted barriers to women leadership. Externally motivated obstacles included cultural-historical and religious stereotypes and female dependency syndrome while self-inflicted barriers consisted women-centric cynicism and female failure to manage emotions.

6.2.1 Externally motivated barriers

Several factors emerged in the study which influence women in their trajectory to leadership. This section discusses the fundamental obstacles that hinder women from assuming leadership positions from a cultural-historical and religious stereotype perspective.

6.2.1.1 Cultural-historical and religious stereotypes

The findings revealed that leadership positions in the public enterprise in Eswatini were overwhelmingly occupied by male managers who felt that it was normal practice for masculinity to dominate in leadership positions. Cultural, historical and religious stereotypes reinforce each other to form a solidified barrier difficult to overcome. Pollitt *et al* (2018) illustrate the effects of culture from a marital perspective where polygamous relationships seem to be legitimised with masculinity having supreme dominance over masculinity. Polygamous practices continue to grow unabated with men determining the volumes in marital relationships. The cultural influences encompass complex beliefs, knowledge and morals acquired by society over time and unanimously acceptable (Bissessar, 2018). These values tend to be blindly embraced

unequivocally even if their relevance may seem obsolete and are therefore difficult to alter (Black *et al*, 2017). Since the prejudices are shared by groups considered more powerful in society further supported by religious doctrines, these values become so deeply rooted and therefore anchored. As a result, cultural values create a major barriers to female aspiring to become leaders exacerbated in male resistance (Hill *et al,* 2016). Akram (2017) observes similar organizational experiences influenced by value sets, norms and guiding principles regarded acceptable in the way society conducts its business despite their insignificance with the passage of times. The historical convictions remain fixed as organizational values that govern policy stipulations often perpetuating male supremacy.

While the obstacle of cultural-historical and religious stereotypes perseveres, increased recognition of women leadership is slowly becoming recognised (Martin *et al*, 2016; Hill *et al*, 2016). Women themselves are becoming conscious of their involvement in the workplace and challenge the status quo. Alsubhi *et al* (2018) point out the significance of women leadership perceived highly in certain leadership precincts. Contemporary scholars claim that conformity to cultural-historical and religious stereotypes tend to unfairly legitimize authority distribution between the genders further viewing nonconformity as a violation of the divinely constituted order equivalent to anarchy (Pollitt *et al*, 2018). Catholicism, for instance restricts priesthood to masculinity implying that women may not assume leadership from a divine perspective ((Nugent, 2017). However, the existence of different denominations suggests that these views are being contested considering the rise in numerous cults (Kassa, 2015). Given the different views expressed above, there is still room for women to find their way into leadership. The aspect of confidence building through emotional intelligence becomes paramount in building feminine assertiveness. However, as the results establish, masculinity seems to have a predominant advantage over femininity. Consequently, male subordinates feel justified to resist female leadership in the workplace, as they perceive it conformity to both cultural norms and divine order. Similarly, the cultural-historical and religious stereotypes prescribe women to be actively involved in the household by committing a greater portion of their time on domestic chores as a noble undertaking.

The contemporary developments seem to usher a totally different perspective evident in the emergence of lesbian, gay and bisexual relationships likely to transform certain traditional practices in the household towards role congruence (Pollitt *et al*, 2018; Alsubhi *et al*, 2018). The male perceptions towards women have unfortunately become a barometer to evaluate women

leadership performance. The cultural values and beliefs are a strong force in strengthening perceptions held in Sub Saharan Africa transmitted to the workplace as prejudices and biases. Occasionally, women often find themselves instinctively excluded from participation in the decision making framework mainly due to the overwhelming perceptions (refer to Appendix 7). The values and beliefs form the philosophical fabrics that bind society together and spontaneously endorse perceptions held by a society, with women leadership carrying the negative burden (Hill *et al*, 2016). As the results reveal, men attempt to respond to cultural dynamics by considering to merely appease women as they place them in those ceremonial positions with little decision making authority. These are often included in crafted policy ramifications and machination. These limitations and pronouncements about women leadership create huge uncertainty in the broader masculine workforce about the credibility as leaders (Hill *et al*, 2016; Li *et al,* 2016; Oguntoyinbo, 2014). Male subordinates, with some female followers, become outrageously disloyal to female leadership as a result of the cultural, historical and religious influences.

6.2.1.2 Female dependency syndrome

A major finding made in this study referred to the lack of self-belief and self-reliance in women as a result of their insecurity. This condition is further reinforced by cultural and spiritual factors which often lead to female dependence on masculinity. Women were perceived as frequently seeking masculine support and assistance when making decisions as leaders. The study established that in the absence of self-confidence, women attempted to imitate masculine leadership. As a result of cultural expectations, women respected masculine traits they have lived to bear with over time as essential for effective leadership. Because women felt sheltered in the company of men right from historical times, their decisions are therefore largely dependent on masculine sanctioning. While little empirical evidence exists to support this argument, it is widely acknowledged that women lack self-esteem triggered by the general belief that leadership requires some assertiveness and the need to produce results (Beckwith *et al*, 2016). It is further noted that the over-reliance of women on masculinity is widely witnessed especially in unpredictable situations resulting in the creation of self-inflicted barriers. Women solicit male endorsement to authenticate their decisions even if their decision are valid and relevant (Feldt, 2012). The results further articulate the economic dependence of women on men with the latter being the known breadwinner, making it difficult for women to lead. This implies a carefully negotiated relationship that acknowledges the contributions of both genders within the parameters of cultural beliefs and values.

Furthermore, the findings determined that women are likely to gain the requisite experience if actively allowed to participate and be involved in the decision making processes which would allow them to be confident and assertive. On the other hand, men who are economically dependent on their spouses would naturally elect to perform more household chores in spite of the dictates of cultural values (Liu, Shair-Rosenfield, Vancy and Zsombor, 2018). The lack of self-belief and dependence in women therefore compels them to replicate masculine leadership styles, which attracts negative evaluations from both female and male subordinates. Rayyan (2017) accentuates the perception that masculinity characterises the value of assertiveness and therefore well placed to undertake out-of-home assignments leaving the domestic responsibilities to femininity.

Women tend to sporadically submit to masculine dependency they believe will offer them masculine support (Pollitt *et al*, 2018; Nikkila, 2017). The findings established that women were subjected to traditional communal structures dating back to archaic times where women were comfortable in masculine protection within domestic milieus. The reminiscence of communal comfort women enjoyed then has been adopted over time and thus perpetuates their social dependence on masculinity despite occupying positions of authority. Liu *et al* (2018), and supported by O'Neil *et al* (2016) perceive that these assumptions are viewed as reinforcing impediments women leadership experiences and provide pressure to transform the status quo in order to allow increased women participation. The results also showed that due to cultural pressures, women exhibited low self-esteem and a lack of self-respect, low assertiveness and decreased determination. These traits are usefully traced in the selection process in which women are viewed as less competitive than their male counterparts (Akram *et al,* 2017). These views suggest that some degree of determination and assertiveness are necessary in leadership. The fact that these traits are not overtly noticeable in most female leaders is the reason why women face challenges when confronted by subordinates.

The study also found that women sought to fulfil societal expectations by demonstrating feminine behaviours that were socially accepted. Women therefore avoided leadership positions that subjected them to appear disloyal to their spouses and therefore act rather unwomanly (Ganiyu *et al*, 2018). As a result, they had to be submissive to their spouses and implying allegiance to all men, thus further compromising on their self-esteem. Consequently, it is highly uncommon to find brave women who are likely to ignore this evaluation and bravely embrace leadership (Hyllegard *et al,* 2017). However, Ebrahimi *et al* (2017) observe that leadership that adopts both transformational and transactional approaches is likely to absorb these perceptions through the

advancement of diversity. Eagly *et al* (2016) believe that these perceptions depend on how the immediate setting is structured to influence gender equalities. Diermeier *et al* (2017) further argue that the location of these perceptions often determine varied interpretation of the beliefs at hand with women leadership receiving different levels of acceptability. For example, the degree of press coverage tolerance in a particular geopolitical space may have varying perceptions on the role of women in leadership.

Despite these observation, Newcomb (2017) asserts that both genders have an equally paramount role to play in promoting effective leadership, with the leadership roles being interchangeably performed. McKinsey and Company (2018) advocate a leadership approach that encourages collaborative work that neutralises the weaknesses of each gender and reinforcing their different strengths noticeable in both masculinity and femininity. Al-Asfour *et al* (2017) observes that high masculinity exalts male leadership to cultural heroism, compelling women in leadership to admire and imitate masculine characteristics. Conversely, femininity seeks to promote social relationships and harmony and therefore receives less attention in the short-run (Hill *et al,* 2016). Both perceptions are essential as posited by Itulua-Abumere (2013) who states that geographical locations play a major role in determining the degree of impact for either masculinity or femininity.

6.2.2 Self-inflicted obstacles

The second category discusses the obstacles that emanate from women themselves as revealed in the findings. These include women-centric cynicism and failure to manage emotions by women.

6.2.2.1 Women-centric cynicism

The search for factors that hinder women from advancing to leadership positions revealed that cynicism among women existed caused by widespread jealousy. Women leaders and subordinates are perceived the source of women-centric cynicism in a number of ways. Women leaders tend to detach themselves from subordinates once promoted to positions of authority, adopting a rather authoritarian leadership style and hoping they become as competitive as their male counterparts to prove their mettle (Bednar and Gicheva, 2014). Women were revealed as demonstrating some unique behaviour manifest in top ranking women managers who create barriers to those women in the grassroot levels. Rancour manifested in poor woman-to-woman relationship where a barrier appeared between the led and leaders. In the recent literature, female senior managers were cited as unwilling to share information with other women and instead chose to relate to senior male

executives described as the 'Queen Bee Syndrome' (Jiang *et al,* 2017). As a result, female subordinates perceive women managers as tokens and therefore professionally ineligible (Jiang *et al,* 2017). Consistent with this argument, Oxfam International (2016) reports that aspiring female leaders tend to abandon their ambitions when they establish that the positions are merely ceremonious and therefore garnered little authority. A double-bladed sword therefore confront women further characterising self-inflicted barriers (Mwando, Mamimine, Kanokaga and Chimutingiza, 2014).

A further related aspect that emerged from the study was women cynicism that resulted in mistrust among women. As female leaders distanced themselves from interacting with their female subordinates, they unconsciously downplayed their leadership opportunities. When women cynicism combines with cultural influences, negative attitudes form against women leadership reinforcing the impediments (Mousa, 2018). Women become precarious under uncertain conditions likely to embellish negative evaluations towards their leadership potential. Leicht *et al* (2017) accentuate the argument stating that women acknowledge the existence of mistrust among themselves. The barriers are further compounded by the cultural stereotypes that limit their participation in leadership such as prejudiced performance assessments designed fundamentally to favour masculinity (Einarsdottir *et al,* 2018).

Additionally, the findings established that women often lack self-confidence manifest in their uncertain decision making, which generates insubordination from their subjects. As observed by Ganiyu *et al* (2018), women fear to make decisions for cultural reasons as they may be considered unwomanly in society. It is therefore rare to come across women brave enough to neglect this perception (Hyllegard *et al,* 2017). Unfortunately, unlike men, women have to surmount these obstacles before any consideration for leadership. These views indicate that when women advance within their leadership trajectory, they neglect their peers in the low ranks, prompting some degree of cynicism and mistrust. This behaviour is compounded by a feeling of jealousy which is often directed towards fellow women leaders who inadvertently suffer insubordination from both female and male followers. This creates another major self-inflicted barrier for women.

6.2.2.2 Failure to manage emotions

Further results revealed that women had challenges in managing their emotions when dealing with insubordination and often unfortunately resort to taking over followers' work. Alsubhi *et al* (2018) find emotional intelligence as relatively necessary for effective leadership if high

productivity is to be achieved through people. Lyness *et al* (2018) argue that both men and women experience emotional challenges though at varied levels. The female professional growth of leaders and subordinates is often inhibited by the former's inability to manage emotions (Brescoll *et al*, 2018). Naturally, women avoid taking risks and would of necessity act emotionally when faced with non-performing subordinates (Beckwith *et al*, 2016). Agbim (2018) maintains that the assumptions 'doing-good' and 'avoiding-harm' are essential facets of ethical leadership currently missing in most leaders within public enterprises where either of the two is emphasised. Bissessar (2018) perceives that some cultural complexities are cause for misinterpretations and therefore compel women to act differently. Furthermore, as the study established, Robbins *et al* (2017) claim that emotional intelligence can be learnt and therefore provides leadership skills for aspirant women leaders. Additionally, women with an internal locus of control are likely to use emotional intelligence positively and those with a high cognitive ability are likely to conceptualise requisite leadership skills through various training offerings.

The study established that women leaders tend to avoid risk of entering into conflict arising from emotions and therefore defy leadership principles by performing subordinates' task. The leadership competence is place in dispute as little coaching and mentoring takes place. Latu *et al* (2018) affirm that leadership constitutes developing subordinates to improve job efficiency. Coaching employees to do their work better provides sustainable skills for improving employee performance often through deliberate support and at times enhanced by informal relationships (Jack *et al*, 2018). Women leaders may therefore find it difficult to coach given the gender difference, thus resorting to correcting any performance irregularities themselves. This may also apply to women subordinates under male leadership, a common denominator currently experienced in patriarch societies (Curated Research Report, 2017). The role of training to provide leadership skills including emotional intelligence cannot be under-estimated if women leadership is to realised. The influence of emotional intelligence suggests that women are more sensitive to perceived subtle administrative issues linked to erratic emotional cues differently experienced in their male counterparts (Lyness *et al*, 2018). On first impression, women seem to possess psycho-emotional negative state of mind characterised by their manifestation of worry and nervousness which is ultimately connected directly to the arousal and cognitive components (Fischer *et al*, 2018). This state of arousal can be expressed in both negative and positive terms likely to influence the perception of subordinates when assessing their leadership influence. Women leaders tend to be inclined to the negative arousal which often attracts incongruity in leader-

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follower relationship. A further related analysis of the results revealed that men are physically and emotionally gifted while women seem to be intellectually privileged but fail to manage emotions. Their emotions seem to be more visible when dealing with aspects of affection and valuing the human dignity more than their male counterparts. As a result, men tend to take advantage of this temperament, further diluting female authority and a loss of subordinate loyalty.

Jones and Barrett (2016) describe the role of emotions in communication where messages are recognized through emotional facial expressions that reveal the leader's behaviour as pronounced more in women than men. Alsubhi *et al* (2018) echoes the same sentiments stating that women tend to essentially focus more on socio-emotional tendencies such as childcare and romanticism implying a direct antithesis to workplace emotional savvy. The biological traits possessed by women seem to influence their emotional faculty manifest in the desire to think and decide with feelings and empathy (Lucifora *et al*, 2016). The arguments seem to suggest that women are deeply encroached in environments that recognize emotional understanding. Leadership entails the ability to feel empathetic for others as well as being sensitive to people's emotional state. Kannaiah *et al* (2015) acknowledge the essence of emotional intelligence where leaders draw up the ability to adapt to changing situations in respect of employee differentiated emotions. Dailey (2016) accentuates the impact of this view observing that where the ego is stimulated, intrinsic motivation tends to be generated increasing personal growth and organizational performance. The paucity of emotional management could be addressed through skills training in emotional intelligence but also through attitudinal and personality development gained as women interact with peers at all levels in the workplace. Furthermore, as alluded to earlier, emotions tend to be often influenced by cultural perceptions which make it even more difficult for women to align these within patriarchal societies in Sub Saharan Africa.

6.3 The Impact of Women Leadership

This section discussed the unique women talents and their impact on women leadership aimed at improving organizational effectiveness in public enterprises. Areas of focus include leadership value for human dignity, forging male-female partnership, propensity for managerial skills, female adaptability level and informal structure and utilizing women leadership potential.

6.3.1 Leadership value for human dignity

The results show that women value the dignity of human beings as expressed in 'nature versus nurture' dictum which underpins the contribution of women improved leadership. These unique

female endowments translate into 'Ubuntu', which is the basis for ethical leadership experienced relatively quite differently from men. Lyness *et al* (2018) point to the biological distinction between the genders showing that women give birth and raise mankind from infancy to adulthood. This tends to inject some degree of ethical temperament likely to improve the leadership required to address the many scandals experienced in public enterprises. The notion of Ubuntu demonstrates a greater sense of ethical savvy with femininity manifesting aspects of caring and the need to uplift peoples' lives, while masculinity exhibits assertiveness and tough personality necessary in some spheres of work (Murugiah *et al*, 2017). Lantara (2015) seems to contest this separation observing that women are gradually adopting masculine traits and now enter the once male dominated space in society. In fact women are now demonstrating the ability to be stiff, tough and resolute in decision making. Bahiru *et al* (2018) concur adding that women are likely to contribute towards improved organizational effectiveness if the work-life imbalances are levelled. However, as long as the domestic demands persist, women are not likely to use their strength in valuing the human race towards positively influencing effective leadership (Helgesen, 2017). Diehl *et al* (2016) seem to offer a valid observation that women leadership could be advanced by approaching the process at micro first, then at meso and finally at macro levels. Ebrahimi *et al* (2017) attest that ethical considerations play a vital role in fostering long-term moral and virtuous leadership. The assumption is that ethical behaviour trickles down the hierarchical structure with the likelihood that organizational effectiveness improves. This view implies that leadership involves putting the interests of others first. McCormack (2018) states that leadership entails influencing others to achieve common group goals. It is evident from the above argument that leadership is centred on achieving common organisational goals, while exhibiting concern for the welfare of others in that organisation. Nevertheless, Chen *et al* (2016) seem to share a different view noting that leadership effectiveness varies between men and women in different milieus. In view of the numerous leadership irregularities in the contemporary business environment, a reconsideration of responsive leadership becomes inevitable (European Union, 2017). Women tend to demonstrate low self-esteem and self-assertiveness, but possess rigorous interpersonal skills. Helgesen (2017) highlights this view proposing a more compassionate and gender inclusive leadership approach in which both genders work collaboratively. However, Akram *et al* (2017) hasten to point out the existence of a contrasting argument which seems to limit the freedom for women to confidently make independent decisions.

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Furthermore, the strength from a nurturing perspective tends to identify women with particular job fits that entail occupying positions in secretarial, educational and health fields. These fields often characterise more female in middle rather than at the upper managerial levels. Mekonnen (2017) states that women occupy high positions of authority in business circles and demonstrate the capability to lead. The contribution of women to work-life balance demonstrates the capability of women to carry out leadership roles in the workplace given the unique skills they possess which appear to be still under-utilized (Bahiru *et al,* 2018). This implies that women are therefore able to compete equally as effective as their male counterparts in all spheres of employment. What seems different however, is the degree of involvement in those different roles. The findings found that people generally control a limited amount of energy, time and attention to the extent that if involved in several roles they are likely to have their efficiency reduced. Involvement in numerous roles may lead to role ambiguity and if mismanaged will likely trigger role conflict even in the household.

The study also found that women participate quite effectively in the household as exhibited in their biological roles. However, Dresden and Ridge (2018) cite women performance problems experienced in the workplace as retarded by male dominated atmosphere which seems to be female-unfriendly. A hostile male-dominated environment surrounds women who appear to be a threat to masculinity thus further producing an unreceptive environment for women leadership (Michniewicz, Vandello and Bosson, 2014). The scenario presents a social construction which places men on alert when their leadership prospects seem threatened. Additionally, Taylor (2016) believes men react behaviourally to reinvest their efforts when confronted with feminine threats. These arguments present barriers that prevent women from undertaking leadership roles in such an environment and may affect their productivity. Given these arguments, women are cautious and therefore tend to communicate useful messages to their subordinates in a variety of communication channels. Wong *et al* (2017) acknowledge women leadership that focuses more on the concern for people reflecting on the levels of warmth, nurturing and collaboration while their concern for productivity seems questionable. Oni (2017) thinks differently arguing that women possess the propensity for detail and are therefore results-oriented. Noland *et al* (2016) assert believing that a leader's concern for people tends to create an atmosphere of motivation which breeds commitment and the ultimate increase in productivity. These arguments seem to share the contents of the transformational leadership approach which advocates an enabling supportive environment which engenders a motivated workforce likely to produce organizational

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effectiveness. Women therefore exhibit the capacity to contribute to an organization's competitive advantage if allowed to utilize their unique endowment.

A further revelation of the study seems to indicate that women value humanity more than their male counterparts. From a social perspective, women often uphold the desire to serve others and therefore subordinate their self-interests. To promote recognition of these values, Agbim (2018) proposes training interventions on ethics that instil such values right from early childhood and that reaffirm organisational expectations for all employees to behave ethically. Corruption practices hamper service delivery leading to limited access to services such as electricity, decent housing and clean water (Lannegren *et al,* 2017). Poor governance and leadership have been at the centre of the controversy compounded by the dominance of masculinity. Leadership distribution seems to be biased towards masculinity with high cases of discrimination in the workplace as gender inequalities escalates on the ground of sexual orientation (Helgesen, 2017). Paradoxically, as the World Bank (2017) observes, women form the majority of vulnerable victims to irresponsible masculine leadership. Sustainable economic growth is therefore likely to be attainable using a broad-based approach in which all sectors of society are represented, with inclusion being the kingpin (Murray, 2016). Ebrahimi *et al* (2017) put forward a similar observation on ethical leadership believing that moral values in leadership are likely to bring positive organizational outcomes. Some abuse of office continue unabated and have been cited in recent literature as actions of self-gratification (Merkle *et al*, 2018). Additionally, the role of media reporting has been phenomenal in exposing scandals and operates as a watchdog that puts in place checks and balances (Diermeier *et al*, 2017). The technological advancement provides an excellent resource for supporting ethical, responsible and transparent leadership through social media which gives immediate web information for exposing ethical malpractices (Anderson *et al,* 2017). Due to limited interaction for women in society, women may take advantage of the technological explosion to exploit social media to promote networking and follow human rights abuses ((Nugent, 2017). Women however, tend to show different career interests and have antecedents shaped in relevant socialisation processes (Tellhed, Bäckström and Björklund, 2018).

6.3.2 Forging male-female partnership

Numerous public or state owned enterprises continue to experience leadership paucity within Sub Saharan Africa. As the study found out, women leaders possess exceptional cohesive qualities of chemistry that accelerate healthy interpersonal relationships. These were found to be expressed in good listening skills and empathy which are essential ingredients for successful leadership.

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Aspects of empathy and emotions were reported as promoting connectivity and intimacy useful in the leader-follower relationship conditions for facilitate feedback (Diehl *et al,* 2017). The transformational theories characterise and harness collaboration and inclusive approaches in order to achieve organizational effectiveness particularly in the public enterprises (Kato *et al,* 2015; Jondle *et al,* 2014). However, some researchers believe increased efficiency derives from transactional leadership approach where the leader-follower exchanges produce results (Berry *et al,* 2016). The essence of exchange is only made equitable if both parties engage in good faith where the interaction is inclusive and likely to boost self-confidence and therefore improve the quality of players' bargaining power to transact. However, this view tends to be less likely to occur given the dominance of masculinity in the workplace and the lesser availability of literature in this field specifically in the low levels. Given the above view, workplace relationships are likely to be improved if a culture that seeks to support and advance women is encouraged and is constructed upon a common understanding where male and female develop robust relationships to work as colleagues with a common goal (Lyness *et al,* 2018). Working on the biases and prejudices in the workplace paves way for creating sound relationships wherein men are viewed as allies rather than antagonists. Men are therefore expected to act rationally respecting the need for equity and thus actively engaging them to commit towards finding gender inclusive leadership strategies through a paradigm shift in the workplace (The Centre for Women and Business Report, 2017). The gender relationships are further forged by articulating the benefits that accrue to men when the gender equality goals are met which include shared freedom in financial responsibilities, more involvement in child care and a better psychological and physical health (Murray, 2016). The literature emphasises the importance of gender involvement in both social circles and the workforce for meaningful decision making in an inclusive work environment. The workplace, religious and domestic settings manifest their own philosophies that seem to perpetuate some kind of barriers to women leadership.

A further finding on the impact of women leadership was demonstrated in women intellectual capacity and their physical appearance as influencing the type of leadership used by women. The leader-follower relationship seems to require some degree of trust in the capability of leaders to influence from a physical and intellectual point of departure (World Report, 2018). A number of African leaders seem to be losing the trust due to a violation of issues of justice, fairness, individual rights and respect for human dignity all of which are influenced by an intellectual capability. Fischer *et al* (2018) perceive trust as a psychological process demanding follower-

leader reciprocity based on emotional perceptions. Trust is therefore achieved when both parties psychologically agree to remain vulnerable to each other hoping that their positive or negative expectations are likely to be met in that relationship. Kezar *et al* (2017) established that leaders who garner trust from their subordinates seem to command a high degree of respect around them. Shafique *et al* (2018) recognize these features as characterising transformational leadership where trust yields a supportive environment for both subordinate and leader. The notion seems to suggest that a healthy relationship built around trust promotes creativity as the players are able to venture into the world of uncertainty together. Rao (2018) affirms, citing some empirical evidence that recognizes the presence of integrity, benevolence and ability which are jointly perceived as conditions for the trust likely to stimulate productivity in the workplace. This concept can be viewed in micro perspective as leader-follower relationship but can also be extended broadly to represents partnerships between men and women from a dimension of gender on one hand, and a partnership between industry and tertiary institutions focusing on supporting young women's talents. Leicht *et al* (2017) observe the movement by most organizations towards flatter structures that accommodate collaborative team work. Hyllegard *et al* (2017) augment stating that tertiary institutions are likely to strengthen the skills of would-be women leaders in logical reasoning, problem definition and establishing causality to determine options for quality solutions. Agbim (2018) extends beyond the intellectual peripheral to incorporate ethics training focusing on behavioural and attitudinal fine-tuning to realize ethical endorsement in leadership. While both informal and formal training are equally useful in improving performance in the workplace the former approach tends to be more effective as it provides tangible experiences likely to be emulated by the learner (Neher, 2018). However, a careful selection of the appropriate approach to training seems necessary if benefits from this exercise are to be realised. Broadly speaking, these arguments show perceptions held by followers that motivation towards specific goals is achievable through calculated relational strategies which recognise women as strategic partners. It is imperative to note however that most traits possessed by both women and men are not dissimilar and are therefore likely to produce the same leadership outcomes.

The results further reveal that women tend to possess good communication skills, a crucial component of leadership which also improves male-female relationship. Leadership, a component of management relies on the production of knowledge, information and aptitude essential for making high quality decisions (Mekonnen, 2017). Lantara (2015) in harmony with these findings observes that decisions are often taken when tasks are performed using interpersonal relations and

communication skills to promote improved effectiveness. As a result, contemporary organisations are increasingly considering the role of teams, information sharing and coaching subordinates through skills transfer. In terms of the technological advancement, the workplace has become highly sophisticated, positioned to meet both the industrial and global challenges, especially in the least developed countries (Black *et al*, 2017). Women tend to promote their group identity which is reinforced by effective communication where feedback is believed to remove hindrances that undermine progress towards women leadership. Robbins *et al* (2017) perceive that in their role of leadership, both genders are expected to understand effective performance reviews enhanced by giving and receiving feedback. Improved male-female relations are likely to accelerate the contribution of women leadership through a properly designed gender inclusive leadership.

6.3.3 Propensity for managerial skills

One further important finding to this study established that certain skills are present in women which are more inclined to managerial and administrative functions. The findings tend to interpret leadership and management as synonyms compelling the need for clarity. The results seem to suggest that the cultural influence tends to discredit women leadership on the assumption that it leans more on managerial than leadership. Women are pressured to prove their mettle resulting in their over-subscription of leadership role and thus largely bent towards addressing the doubts. The managerial functions tend to exert negligible impact on female leadership focusing more on maintenance tasks rather than decisional which is predominantly masculine (O'Neill *et al,* 2016). From these assertions, it would appear the focus of leadership is directed more on realizing organizational outcomes in contrast to management which tends to accentuates member relationships. As observed earlier, women are perceived as more inclined towards managerial and administrative roles thus exhibiting an insignificant measure of leadership. The results reveal that women tend to value policies and procedures which provide not only guidelines for their decision making, but a predictable structure in which their plans of action are implemented. Muralidharan *et al* (2018) argue that women tend to favour ethical leadership which seeks to influence subordinates towards acceptable behaviour exhibited in commitment to work. Women tend to exercise some transactional leadership where resource exchanges are deemed central to improved performance (Berry *et al,* 2016). The focus on policy and systems becomes essential where productivity becomes the focus, rather than promoting improving people's welfare. Bahiru *et al* (2018) accentuate this notion adding that the theory of leadership is highly complex and therefore

susceptible to contrasting interpretation. Ndalamba *et al* (2018) state that because women give their attention to detail, they emphasise managerial aspects believing that these are essential ingredients to leadership fundamentals. Some degree of risk-taking and the ability to manage uncertainty is crucial in a leader's role. Fitzsimmons *et al* (2016) therefore conclude that utilising both transformational and transactional leadership theories is a rewarding idea for achieving effective leadership.

The results further reveal that women demonstrate the capability to lead successfully and are able to communicate effectively. The findings imply that effective leadership entails the ability to clearly put across ideas to the workforce. It is however questionable if these qualities relate more specifically to leadership than management. However, as noted in the preceding discussion, it is abundantly clear that a thin line divides leadership and management implying the general complementarity of these concepts. While women seem to perform their managerial and administrative functions diligently, the challenges they face seeking to balance work-life tend to hamper these efforts sometimes doing less of leadership to satisfy household responsibilities (Abalkhail, 2017). Women are heavily burdened with family demands which compromise their ability to accomplishment workplace and administrative duties. The leadership aspect is often neglected in the belief that managerial functions are perfected. Given these seemingly demanding administrative pressures in both the workplace and the domestic setting, the stereotype perception tends to gain momentum to the extent that women find it difficult to balance these with leadership roles resulting in these better directed to masculinity (Alexander *et al,* 2016). The prevailing social attitudes, the negative perceptions focused on women and the lack of accommodating behaviours by men all play a major role in creating barriers. These notions inhibit women involvement in meaningful leadership resulting in their merely occupying ceremonial leadership positions (Almaki *et al,* 2016). The work overload noticeable in women to carry out workplace roles and domestic chores are likely to create role ambiguity which later tends to compromise their leadership and managerial efficiency (Bahiru *et al*, 2018). A strategy that seeks to harmonise men and women to meet societal factors and workplace demands becomes necessary. There is the likelihood that essential human capital is lost if the societal factors are not taken into account (Mekonnen, 2017).

While the concept of leadership may appear divorced from management, a closer look reveals that they are intrinsically related showing the degree of complementarity. Management describes the leader's ability to administer and maintain functions formally structured (Hughes *et al,* 2015).

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Fitzsimmons (2012) argues that leadership is generic and is applicable to all situations where women are eligible to carry out these functions. However, in some respect the distinction between management and leadership seem inevitable to explore further its implications to women leadership. Berry *et al* (2016) provide a useful distinction that links management to aspects of control and formalised positions in contrast to leadership which entails visioning and the ability to inspire, innovate and motivate others. Leadership provides room to act flexibly, while management tends to be rigid. Braveman (2016) insists on the compatibility of both management and leadership highlighting how the former emphasises formality while leadership attaches some degree of informality. Lyness *et al* (2018) tend to evaluate women leadership more in leader than managerial terms. In line with the findings of the study, leadership encompasses a host of both soft and hard skills with the latter normally associated with management as observed by O'Neill *et al* (2016). Dailey (2016) adds observing that soft skills manifest in the form of intangible leadership aspects and hard skills are typified in management as configurations, structures and a business framework. Since these concepts are fundamentally related, women's ability to carry out managerial functions sets them in a better place to assume leadership roles. Related to the findings women were viewed as more accurate than their male counterparts, making it easier to attain the desired goals. Al-Asfour *et al* (2017) believes that women are smart enough to create a breakthrough in reshaping sound leadership in public enterprises as demonstrated by women leaders globally. The general belief is that most female leaders commit themselves to good conduct in business (Rao, 2018). However, this argument is challenged by Newcomb (2017) who claims that good business conduct can be traced equally in both male and female leaders. The degree of ethical practice tends to determine differences in ethical leadership. Top managers, whether female or male tend to possess exceptional discretion about how their decisions are made which makes it easy to fall prey to some corrupt practices (Bahiru *et al*, 2018). The individual's frame of ethical considerations is therefore essential to reflect upon when one rises to high echelons. This has led to the shareholder primacy concluding that management decisions should always consider maximizing shareholder value (Brescoll *et al*, 2018).

The study further revealed that the propensity for managerial skills also implied women exhibiting sound attitude likely to be used to gain positive experience from possible mentors and sponsors to realise authentic leadership. Role models may provide attitudes and latitudes exhibited, for example in leaders such as Germany Chancellor Angela Merkel (Helms *et al,* 2018), Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala of Nigeria (Power Women, 2015) and Liberia's Ellen Johnston Sirleaf (Grant

Thornton International Business Report, 2016). These leaders demonstrate admirable qualities that include resilience, motivation and self-confidence (Shafique *et al,* 2018). However, the success stories have not made significant influence to change the misconceptions of society towards women particularly in Sub Saharan Africa (Leicht *et al,* 2017). Rao (2018) cites global pressures and cultural beliefs which influence the ethical decisions of managers to act normatively. As the study established earlier, women tend to value perfectionism to the extent of execution their work when performance inadequacies and inconsistences are spotted. Men generally do not often do their subjects' jobs but normally call them to order by pointing to their performance shortfalls. This is the basis for distinguishing feminine leadership from masculinity. Banchefsky *et al* (2018) have maintained that differences between men and women in accomplishing workplace tasks seem normal reasoning from a gender awareness perspective. This view tends to derive from the segregationist approach which acknowledges the separate spheres pronounced in the traditional division of labour. However, Danbold and Huo (2017) argue that there is the natural difference between men and women in the way they perform their jobs. In view of the cultural influences, women tend to emulate masculinity to get their leadership task done modifying in the process their preferred way of doing things. A gender blind approach seems to believe that men and women perform the leadership role similarly and therefore stand against gender categorisation.

6.3.4 Female adaptability level and informal structure

In this section the results reveal women who are portrayed as results-oriented and therefore take particular attention to detail in their work. Consequently, women tend to modify their work approach to correspond with workplace demands to produce the desired results through demonstrated perfectionist attitude. Women are therefore seen to be become duty-bound, investing additional effort in their endeavours. Women show some degree of adaptability to unpleasant situations although they lack qualities evident in masculinity (Ebrahimi *et al,* 2017). An important observation in the study relates to the fact that, despite the prevalence of domestic violence in the household, women show perseverance and continue to conduct their daily chores as usual. This studious disposition exhibits the ability for women to adapt and commit to the family needs even if situations are difficult (Al-Asfour *et al,* 2017). The heavily loaded domestic demands and the additional workplace load tends to create a burden for women which is likely to affect the efficiency to carry out leadership roles, let alone important strategic decisions. In the workplace women are expected to perform equally as men and their attempt to reconcile both the

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workplace roles and domestic chores undermines their ability to carry out the leadership functions as efficiently and effectively as their male counterparts (Bahiru *et al,* 2018). Men are not faced with this dilemma and have therefore ample time to perfect their leadership deficiencies in the workplace while reflecting on it in the home. The findings further reveal an intriguing aspect that, although women champion the household, there is an attempt to transfer these domestic skills to the workplace as administrative organizing functions. They demonstrate a sense of responsibility for the family well-being which compels them to equally translate these in the workplace (Tadesse, 2017). The effects of a constrained environment in which women often struggle to balance between the workplace and family demands result in an increased exodus of women from the workplace and may turn down promotion prospects (Helgesen, 2017). Furthermore, women attempt to adapt to the male dominated workplace to achieve organizational fit in light of the espoused male norms where organizational cultures seem to be pro-masculine in their design (Mekonnen*,* 2017). Recent scholars establish that organizational fit seems to favour those individuals that closely align with the philosophy of the organization as they demonstrate self-reported satisfaction with the dominating gender climate (Longman *et al,* 2018). Women are therefore compelled to adopt masculine behaviours and traits to ensure organizational fit but may also seek to secure leadership acceptability. However, the work-life balance tends to curtail their desire to effectively comply with most of the workplace masculine norms resulting in their prioritising family matters at the expense of leadership demands.

The results further reveal women preference to forego promotions and have ample time with their family. They experience mounting pressure from family members such as spouses, children and other relatives who demand their full involvement in family affairs. Women are therefore caught in between responding to family demands and meeting organizational fit and often settling for the former. A study conducted by Mousa and Abdelgaffar (2017) revealed that Egyptian women managers tend to be influenced by the type of attitude perceived by individuals and therefore often rely on the organizational support to reconcile their domestic obligations. Individual perceptions in the workplace on women pressures play a major role in responding to challenges in the work-life balance. The work-life balance therefore seems to attract widespread attention and interest in gender pedagogy with the intent to support gender parity (Bahiru *et al,* 2018). While women are faced with family demands, little attention is given to the informal structure to influence their decision making faculty. Smith *et al* (2018) outline the present policies that are in favour of men and prohibit women from interacting with other executives as information sharing

at a more personal level than formally. A paradigm shift that attempts to negotiate the sharing of domestic responsibilities and treating women as equals would provide useful measures towards women exploitation of the informal structure. The move would be strengthened by modifying societal perceptions towards women. Ebrahimi *et al* (2017) highlight the importance of team mobilization as a facet of effective leadership. Women therefore play a critical role in promoting inclusive leadership. However, they fail to exploit the informal structure which forms an integral component of leadership when facilitating innovative aspect (Braveman, 2016). By not exploiting the informal structures, women are set apart from men leaving them at a disadvantage. However, a gender inclusive leadership is likely to cover up for these deficiencies.

One other related aspect revealed in the study involved the low utilization of networking opportunities occurring outside the workplace. According to Lantara (2015) networking promotes career development significantly strengthening connectedness of players in the process. Networking tends to be gendered failing in the process to exploit the benefits of interaction between male and female. As Fitzsimmons (2012) observes, male players seem to isolate their female counterparts by promoting the 'old boys' club, making it difficult for women to participate. In addition, women are also viewed as failing to utilise this opportunity for personal feedback likely to promote socialisation and networking. Hamzah *et al* (2016) articulate the importance of feedback in improving one's performance when the informal structure is used. The workforce is likely to modify their behaviour when positive feedback is offered in good faith. Robbins *et al* (2017) concur observing that sustainable outcomes are achieved when appropriate and equitable feedback is provided in respect of an employee's performance. However, due to cultural and domestic restrictions, are unable to garner the requisite feedback available from socially available informal structures that may employ open asking and telling (Braveman, 2016). Sharing information through team work is enhanced when employees adopt informal structures using the networking approach. Women are likely to benefit from self-disclosure which helps in reflecting on desirable behaviours and actions. While giving and receiving feedback promotes sound decision making, some shortcomings exist which need to be considered quite carefully (Robbins *et al*, 2016). Each situation demands a certain type of feedback and often dictates the manner in which such feedback is offered. The findings also established that the influence of informal relationship is exhibited when men, as opposed to women show some degree of openness which creates dual trust and therefore improved working rapport. This is likely to boost the leader-follower relationship where the leader is accepted by the follower making it easier to positively

influence results. Danbold *et al* (2017) describe the gender ideologies that prescribe socio-political beliefs to be followed in approaching gender differentials designed to avoid intergroup conflicts and hostility. Women may not find it easy to enter male-dominated workplaces through networking as they are likely to consider segregationist approach choosing to maintain their traditional social roles and preserve cultural expectations (Helgesen, 2017).

6.3.5 Utilizing women leadership potential

The results on utilizing women special talents and leadership potential revealed that women leadership qualities were inadequately utilised for improving organizational effectiveness. The presence of these talents in women suggests that collaborative facets are driven by a sense of empathy to feel for others in achieving perceptual congruence in how they view the world (Selzer *et al,* 2017). The environment where women regard themselves in low self-esteem perpetuates the overall workplace perceptions reinforced further by male-normed work policies. Because policy designs, procedures and structures are biased towards male supremacy, female talent utilization tends to deteriorate (Itulua-Abumere, 2017). Under the circumstances, it is highly unlikely that the workplace would offer a shared leadership dispensation that contributes to organizational effectiveness. Contemporary scholars express similar reservations noting that structures, systems, the environment, and traditions are all developed to sustain predominantly male interests thus advancing cultural biases. These fundamental factors seem to impact negatively on women leadership as they are immensely affected by organizational structures and practices, women personal low self-esteem and family commitments which prevent their opportunity to demonstrate their potential to utilise female unique skills (Longman *et al,* 2018; Alotaibi, Cutting and Morgan, 2017).

Given the above limitations, the findings establish that women are likely to replicate masculine traits thus abandoning their own valued qualities in order to adapt to those purported fundamental to leadership. Unfortunately, imitating masculine traits tends to trigger conflict from a cultural perspective when perceived to be noncompliant with prevalent societal norms where women, for example, may be regarded to be acting unwomanly (Neher, 2018). In the process, women lose their identity as they indiscriminately transcend beyond known female peripheral. Additionally, women may encounter structural and technical challenges likely to obstruct their physical ability to perform leadership roles in certain situations. The challenges obtain in the mechanistic school of thought where leadership is largely bureaucratic and therefore insensitive and rigid (Alsubhi *et al,* 2018). Theorists at the Ohio State University and the University of Michigan published studies

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that sought to establish the leadership style that had the greater impact between task and relationship approaches and concluded that no single leadership theory was the best (Mohammadkhani *et al,* 2016). The theorists established that the situation determined which leadership approach was appropriate. The need to take into account the situation which constitutes the environment marred with biases is perceived either as benevolent, where men tend to be reasonably supportive or hostile, demonstrating a strong dislike for women in leadership positions (Smith *et al,* 2018). Women are therefore placed in a precarious position likely to compromise their ability to pursue their leadership appetite spontaneously. While women exhibit some willingness to participate in leadership gender differences and social roles play a major part in selecting an appropriate leadership approach. In line with the study findings, women tend to dedicate a greater proportion of their time on domestic chores as opposed to men who are predominantly engaged with workplace leadership demands (Alghamdi, Topp and AIYami, 2017). In other words, men have ample time to rest, while women are expected after work to carry out household chores and other family needs. By focusing on sound relationships between men and women, work-life balance is likely to be improved as the gap gets narrowed through shared responsibilities in both the workplace and the household (Martin *et al*, 2016).

The findings also reveal workplace sexual harassment that occurs in the household and the workplace as a result of conflict in social values and cultural dynamics. Leicht *et al* (2017) contend adding that workplace sexual harassment tends to be treated differently depending on the situation the concept is being considered within cultural influences. Therefore, in some instances it becomes exceedingly difficult to conclude that sexual harassment did occur creating further uncertainty on the position of women aspiring leaders. The different power distribution particularly in patriarch societies influence the degree of sexual harassment tolerance in the workplace (Jiang *et al*, 2017). Women are likely to conceal any incidents of sexual harassment if this shows negative consequences on their employability or promotional prospects (Agbim, 2018). Sexual harassment may appear to be a barrier compelling careful scrutiny to determine its influence on women competence levels. Failure to evaluate sexual harassment correctly may have devastating consequences on the effectiveness of public enterprises. Women demonstrate the behavioural features of resilience experienced in the household and are likely to apply it in the workplace as the economic difficulties haunt most public enterprises. Furthermore, the assertion that women possess unique traits absent in masculinity seems to imply that women still possess

talents not yet unlocked and which can be unleashed through a process of giving and receiving feedback.

6.4 Stimulating Female Leadership

Having examined the results on a few factors that influence women leadership, the study revealed possible strategies that would promote women leadership which included improved gender relations, the impact of role models, increased learning platforms and incentives for promoting women leadership. These findings are discussed in relation to the relevant literature in the field of gender equality and women leadership.

6.4.1 Improved gender relations

The study showed that in order to stimulate female leadership, relations needed to improve between men and women through a number of strategies some of which involved engaging in protracted dialogues, conversations and discourse. Equality and diversity formed a broader framework as strategy for promoting women leadership in public enterprises. Women remain marginalised as strategic decisions continue to reside in male leaders further jeopardising socio-economic development (Olusola, 2016). Salvioni *et al* (2016) supported by Murray (2016) concur that both genders can improve relations when they enter into dialogue and achieve inclusive gender leadership where differences are mutually settled. Public enterprises face the pressure to exploit inclusive leadership likely to promote relations between the genders to address the leadership paucity currently being experienced. In order to promote the relations and encourage women involvement, incentives such as the quota system are introduced to improve relationships with the view to increasing the representation of women leadership (Choobineh, 2016). Additionally, several corporate businesses have adopted similar approaches where investors have raised their curiosity to check levels of governance as precondition to increased profitability. Rayyan (2017) observes that both genders would benefit from this collaboration where masculinity exhibits traits such as assertiveness and firmness, with femininity emphasising relationship building in gender inclusive leadership. This argument tends to suggest that women are better situated to initiate improvement of these relations for the genders. However, Newcomb (2017) offers a slightly divergent viewpoint that perceives both male and female as equally positioned to improve relations in their different orientations. McKinsey and Company (2018) share similar sentiments arguing that collaborative effort between the genders is likely to neutralise inconsistences and bolster male and female aptitudes. The realization that both genders have something unique to offer provides impetus to utilise the impending potential to unlock

useful messages for improving these relations. Putting the argument into perspective, Centre for Women Business Report (2017) cites the detrimental effect of an approach that seeks to promote gender relations by exclusively targeting women to address the gender divide. This tends to create a wider gap between men and women where women are perceived distancing themselves from their male counterparts. Furthermore, relationships may not be improved by isolating key players directly affected by the intended solution including their contributions. Kalysh *et al* (2016) highlight this notion warning that any attempt to deal with gender issues in isolation yields futile outcomes. As a result, improving gender relations entails not only involving masculinity, but the need to secure buy-in from top management by developing policies and mechanisms that enhance increased female representation at board level. The assumption is that improved relations created at top level may trickle downward to management teams stimulating the multiplier effect in the whole organization.

These findings also establish that improving gender relations is likely to be realised through a paradigm shift where a reconsideration of cultural dynamics focuses on role interchangeability within the household. A paradigm shift on cultural transformation is complex and presupposes modifying existing beliefs and values that were acquired by society over time (Bissessar, 2018). Hill *et al* (2016) acknowledge the tension that exists in altering the mindset as often marred with resistance. However, Akram (2017) insists that paradigm shift is likely to be possible where members share common cultural beliefs which are then transferable to new entrants in the organization. Al-Asfour *et al* (2017) contend that while modifying cultural beliefs may be a daunting task, it may be possible to alter certain features that appear alien considering the societal integration in the global space. For example, the present cultural practices that over-burden women in the household present an unnecessary misdemeanour in the contemporary world where both genders are economic participants emerging as equal breadwinners. While Pollitt *et al* (2018) argue that women are economically dependent on their spouses, this perception is gradually losing ground as more women are entering the labour market and the informal sector. The political changes taking place in Europe where women are significantly included in decision making positions provide excellent learning resources for Sub Saharan Africa (OECD European Union, 2017). Kalysh *et al* (2016) believe that the dictating cultural prejudices and biases have been so internalised that masculinity finds all reason to perpetuate the status quo and pausing challenges in the transformation. An understanding of the resistance to the paradigm shift helps the players to approach the process diligently using carefully thought out strategies that negotiate

a fair deal for both parties. The dialogue, conversations and discourse should therefore aim to achieve a win-win outcome that benefits both genders. As more women gain entry into the labour market previously the male domain, the biological differences tend to be narrowing giving way to societal transformation (Martin *et al*, 2016). While women leadership under-representation is still predominantly visible, it seems highly possible that by improving gender relations, the role interchangeability in the household would be acceptable to men. Alsubhi *et al* (2018) acknowledge the prevailing leadership challenges that are likely to emerge and propose approaching this exercise in piecemeal where the changes are further qualified within identified peripherals. For instance, discrimination on the ground of cultural beliefs tends to be bidirectional with women unequivocally resisting to relinquish their domestic roles such as the custodian of their off-springs in divorce situations (Bahiru *et al*, 2018). The gender divide tends to breed costly prejudices likely to affect the effectiveness of public enterprises if unchecked. Einarsdottir *et al* (2018) describe the notion as cause for societal disintegration where men and women discriminate each other as either in-groups or out-groups. However, Kalysh *et al* (2016) believe that the phenomenon of gender divide is based on preconceived individual rationality as opposed to in-groups. Thus, prejudices and biases are perceived along personalised terms evident particularly in Sub Saharan African societies.

The above discussion highlights the importance of approaching gender relations from an all-inclusive perspective. However, while acknowledging the involvement of men in a number of initiatives, women remain the key protagonist. Hyllegard *et al* (2017) argue that women need to remain persistent in enduring the evaluations normally levelled against them. In embracing improved gender relations, incorporated transformational and transactional leadership approaches tend to accelerate the perception of diversity at the centre of good corporate governance (Ebrahimi *et al,* 2017). However, the concept of diversity tends to be undermined when the 'think-manager, think-male' stereotype tends to compel women executives to perceive leadership effectiveness in masculine terms (Beckwith *et al,* 2016). Mekonnen (2017) views the argument from a different perspective observing that women are reduced as less effective leaders when they exhibit feminine traits such as nurturing and caring. In these circumstances, robust pressure is placed on women leaders whose willingness to improve gender relations becomes compromised. Pollitt *et al* (2018) establish that women who command greater societal influence have little burden in dealing with compliance issues to cultural stereotypes. The argument seems to imply that handling stereotypes is better dealt with at individual rather than group levels. These results emphasise the need to

articulate benefits accruing if both women and men treat each other as strategic partners. Newcomb (2017) concurs with this view stating that both male and female equally play a paramount role in promoting effective leadership when both parties agree to perform household roles interchangeably. However, O'Neil *et al* (2016) believes these roles are compromised by female activists who focus on sensitive issues that trigger anger from male participants, driving away any potential for concerted dialogue. Men therefore tend to view activists as troublemakers who choose to approach the gender inequality problem single-handed.

6.4.2 Impact of role models

In discussing stimulants to women leadership, the impact of role models demonstrated the persuasive means in bringing about women leaders as useful examples of successful leadership. For instance, role models helped identify the behaviours of those leaders that appeared ethical. The results revealed that the concept of role models was considered both a useful model in developing women leadership and a learning resource within the workplace. Mentors demonstrated leadership qualities for would-be women leaders fulfilling the expression 'leading by example'. White *et al* (2018) perceive that role models inspire the aspirant female leaders by providing appropriate leadership behaviours likely to improve organizational effectiveness. This is the basis for role models who work closely with their mentees seeking to transfer their knowledge, attitude and skills. The availability of female role models seems exceedingly below expectation in light of the under-representation of women leadership. Few role models are identified especially for women to learn from (Jack *et al,* 2018). Nevertheless, male role models are abundantly available and are always equally willing to assist despite their unwillingness to accept the assistance from male leaders. The findings also establish that women behaviours and actions exhibited by role models play a significant role in transferring practical leadership skills to the aspirant female leaders. In a recent study by Latu *et al* (2018) the use of visible female leader role models inspired greater women aspirants whose influence appealed to their ability to mimic nonverbal cues displayed in their dispositions. The relational aspect of role models tended to be equally important in influencing would-be leaders by supporting their leadership growth process, inspirational opportunities and the belief to exploit the potential of would-be female leaders (White *et al,* 2018). These views are accentuated in the characteristics of some known famous figures whose behaviours portray excellent leadership qualities that are likely to benefit aspiring women leaders. The success story of Germany Chancellor Angela Merkel which sought to broaden company coalitions pointed towards fostering collective effort that included male

participation towards gender equality as demonstrated in the *Chefsache* initiative (McKinsey and Company, 2018). Industry captains from different disciplines were expected to explore ways for promoting gender equality in senior management positions.

The results also reported that women role models from leadership ranks who demonstrate exceptional leadership qualities offer the most effective impact when further supported by legitimate entry mechanism to leadership positions. Contemporary researchers assert that women leaders who are rightfully appointed attract the greatest trust and respect in their role model functions (Jack *et al,* 2018; Ganiyu *et al,* 2018). The experiences presented by women role models tend to develop empowering effects on the performance of their protégé, for instance, by portraying they are expected to behave in challenging situations (Dennehy and Dasgupta, 2017). The resources derived from role models were viewed as presenting transfer of leadership skills to would-be leaders and learning from the successful experiences of female leaders. White *et al* (2018) perceive role models in twofold; being able to inspire subordinates or being injurious whereupon the model reprobates leading to performance degeneration. A careful selection of successful women role models becomes imperative if attractive outcomes are to be realizable. For example, citing popular female leaders' profiles offers the opportunity to select admirable role models with acceptable qualities and behaviours worth delivering the type of leadership that required in public enterprises within Sub Saharan Africa. The study further establishes that women aspiring to become leaders benefited more by being exposed to managers in top leadership positions. These managers mentored the mentees by offering them psychological support in their career growth as they moved in their leadership trajectory (Kalysh *et al,* 2016). Mentees are also likely to obtain job satisfaction which translates into increased commitment to work, further opening prospects for professional advancement. White *et al* (2018) clarify the effects of mentoring which utilizes both objective and subjective perceptions to bring about job satisfaction and commitment. However, effective mentoring tends to be unstructured, using a variety of techniques and some degree of creativity. Neher (2018) observes that while mentorship entails creating informal relationships, it is highly unlikely that female mentees may prefer mentors of the opposite gender (Neher, 2018). However, Kalysh *et al* (2016) observe that some women feel comfortable when placed under male mentorship with female mentor. The study accentuates socialising both the girl and boy child quite early in their childhood so as to internalize inclusive and shared leadership. Agbim (2018) concurs with this notion citing the significance of an ethics training in girls and boys introduced in their early childhood to achieve employee ethical

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behaviour in organizations. The use of both informal and formal training ushers useful ways of improving performance with the former focusing mainly on socialising learners to become effective leaders (Neher, 2018). These ideas are reaffirmed in the works of Black *et al* (2017) whose report re-affirms an inclusive policy that invest equally in the education of both girls and boys where a firm awareness of shared leadership between the genders is present. This notion seeks to reinforce the collective involvement of traditional leaders to also act as models, but adapting their approach through a paradigm shift aimed at transforming existing cultural practices to accommodate cultural dynamics. In these circumstances, gender activists are expected to play a paramount role as catalysts and change agents (Black *et al*, 2017).

6.4.3 Increase in learning platforms

The under-representation of women leadership seems widely visible in public enterprises where women support to address the barriers is not considerably forthcoming. The findings noted that quite fewer women than men were admitted into university to gain leadership skills prompting the desire to expand the scope for learning platforms. McKinsey and Company (2018) propose state sponsored initiatives that seek to equip women with leadership skills likely to increased women involvement in the workplace. Examples of such initiatives include the United Nations effort to increase women participation in leadership through its programmes in training and development (Deloitte, 2016). The Inter-Agency Talent Program for Female Leaders in the United Nations System is one such specific initiative which focuses on accelerating female leadership within the programme (Union, 2014). Ebrahimi *et al* (2017) accentuate this notion observing that leadership skills are likely to be acquired expeditiously through training in workshops. The approach tends to be more ideal for working prospective women leaders than through the formal convention university long-term programmes. Murray (2016) considers challenges met by women in attempting to attend university and their demanding roles in the household and the workplace demands. University attendance may conflict with the need to fulfil these demands both as mothers and employees as sanction for attending these may apply from spouses and employers respectively. Kezar *et al* (2017) identify the paramount role played by institutions of open learning in augmenting the efforts made by universities to offer leadership skills to meet some of the challenges associated with accessing learning and development. Similarly, Tadros (2014b) provides a scenario in which Afghani women legislators attend night schools to improve their academic and career progression where leadership skills are gained helping to counteract the gender divide perpetrated by cultural practices.

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These actions are an effective approach towards building stimulants to enhance women leadership from own initiative. While women have generally made noticeable strides in education, few are still equipped with leadership skills and therefore continue to remain extensively underutilised (McKinsey and Company, 2017). Chen *et al* (2016) add to this notion observing that such gains are differently experienced at local, national and regional levels as well as within hierarchical structures. In line with the results, Moorley *et al* (2016) celebrate the achievements made in in increasing the learning platforms during the 21st century in through such other channels as increased digitalisation and open educational systems. Msomi *et al* (2016) also note the explosion in several learning options including workshops, public seminars, blended learning, on-the-job and off-the-job training, online courses or e-learning, teleconferencing as among the most popular learning platforms. The findings were also supported by Black *et al* (2017) who report on the technological advancement that results in a more sophisticated workforce that creates additional demands on women who are expected to acquire certain aptitudes for understanding simple mathematical formulae to solve business challenges especially in less developed countries. Women are therefore confronted with a further barrier to acquire essential maintenance skills in the workplace. As the results established, Bannier (2016) argues that digitalization is not a panacea to business challenges citing the connectivity and automation infrastructural support problems that accompany it. In rural and peri-urban Sub Saharan Africa, these challenges are a common phenomenon, often making digitalization almost impossible. There is however an expansion of training institutions which seem to cover the leadership skills paucity although their relevance in the industry still remains uncertain (Alfonso *et al*, 2015). However, these institutions have contributed dramatically to the leadership awareness. As also established in Robbins *et al* (2017) the study found that the impact of each training option is determined by the support it offers to leadership. Training plans are designed in consideration of the type of content that benefits women leadership. In most cases, training interventions that have practical bias and relate well to what happens in the workplace are often preferred. Where organizations carry out succession planning programmes, women are likely to benefit as changes in leadership may be based on participants in the programme in which women are often active players (Mohammadkhani *et al*, 2016). As the results revealed, women leader aspirants tend to be well positioned if they possess a wide spectrum of abilities which are obtained through their participation in different training programmes.

The results reveal women are barred from attending leadership programmes as these are often regarded irrelevant to what they do in their work. As a consequence, they are only allowed to attend programmes that are mostly technical and those that have direct relevance to their work. As Leicht *et al* (2017) observe, several organizations emphasise technical skills training with little regard for leadership and management. The training in leadership and management has been exclusively targeted on Human resources managers who are thought to be using these skills extensively in the workplace. Hyllegard *et al* (2017) establish that the technical training exclude content that involves sharpening logical reasoning, problem definition and the ability to decipher causality to determine alternatives for addressing leadership challenges. Additionally, Agbim (2018) seems to emphasise ethics training especially in developing countries where issues of corruption have become a commonplace in the workplace, prompting a robust redress. In congruence with the findings of the study, Neher (2018) notes that, to achieve organizational ethical standards, both formal and informal approaches to training were likely to be useful in improving the performance of both leaders and employees. The situation in which employees work, determines the type of training approach necessary under identified conditions. Gaffney *et al* (2018) reaffirms that whatever learning platform is selected is construed to guarantee improved leadership as a number of factors need to be considered. The findings also revealed that most women preferred approaches that sought to see learning and employment running parallel and therefore concurrently. Moorley *et al* (2016) point to the development of appropriate knowledge through open educational systems while at the same time supporting family and societal needs. Msomi *et al* (2016) cite the availability of training options that provide learning platforms that keep women working as they attend the leadership training programmes, without therefore having to exit their employ to attend conventional institutions. These arguments, together with the study results seem to favour learning structures that do not disrupt workflow by putting their re-employability at risks. Women would naturally experience difficult recruitment and selection processes that follow after their employment is terminated when they attend conventional universities (Robbins *et al,* 2017). Thus, Kezar *et al* (2017) advocate for increasing learning platforms and allow accessibility to training, thus encouraging simultaneous career and learning development.

6.4.4 Resourcing for women leadership

An intriguing aspect the results reveal as strategy to stimulating women leadership involved financing women programmes for addressing the under-representation of women leadership. The

findings established that organizational budgets needed to be created to incorporate initiatives for accelerating gender inclusive leadership to allow women particularly in the lower levels to be involved. In line with the view, Acquaah *et al* (2017) suggest the funding broad programmes that encourage women leader involvement in decision-making. The findings further establish the role of incentives as reinforcing budgets to boost women leadership. Related to the above notion as outlined in the findings, government involvement becomes to substantially necessary to help stimulate social and economic inclusion of women in the workplace thereby achieving balanced participation of the genders (Smith *et al,* 2018). In order to ensure success in the paradigm shift Aloulou (2018) suggests instituting a shared distribution of domestic labour incentivised through programmes such as paid male maternity leave to promote active participation of men in baby nurturing and care. For instance, these measures offered positive results in Iceland where the popular concept of 'daddy months' where organizations offered men 75% of their earnings as paid leave to men who chose to look after their babies in the household and complement the role of mothers in the household (ILO, 2015). Pollitt *et al* (2018), however, warns against the indiscriminate use of incentives as likely to retard responsibility sharing in the household especially where certain roles may not be completely given up by women. In keeping with these findings, Choobineh (2016) again cites the rise in popularity of gender quotas for corporate boards where Norway implemented the first quota system in 2003 where remarkable economic benefits for organizations were realized in increased return on assets and equity. The quota system appeared to generally improve social wellbeing by providing whose impact was widely significant when applied with other methods. However, in Sub Saharan Africa, the system was used extensively in 2012 by 22 countries in their election campaign (Oxfam International, 2016). Abalkhail (2017) reinforces the notion stating that these tactics tend to be effective when backed by professional training in which recipient women leaders command some degree of leadership proficiency to justify their selection. These initiatives therefore suggest mounting well-structured programmes which are properly planned with budget allocation and adequate finances to cover any consideration of incentives. The approach compels a review of all other activities specific to women which may need to be shared between the genders thus reducing work-life imbalance (OECD, 2017). It is highly burdensome for organizations to consider developing budgets and incentives under current economic instability, but such investment is likely to produce long-term financial benefits accompanied with social and psychological results towards women leadership acceleration. However, in considering budgets and incentives, the role of good corporate

governance and accountability become exceedingly necessary to take into consideration (Smith *et al*, 2018). The findings show that in considering gender issues associated with who is accountable and for what and to who need to be clearly articulated including their proper documentation. The government involves playing a major role in mobilizing the human resources for public enterprises where corporate boards may influence the service beneficiaries to contribute towards organizational initiatives (Black *et al*, 2017). The process for institutionalising budgets and incentives require conceptualising key gender inclusive leadership terms in public enterprises.

As the results point out, apart from government involvement, allow all stakeholders to take part in promoting gender inclusive leadership. The UN Women (2018) considers an all-inclusive approach that involves multi-lateral organisations and an array of government structures at national and local levels. Bodies such as NGOs concerned with the welfare of marginalised groups including corporate companies are vital in influencing resource mobilization and support for public enterprises. These initiatives are meant to develop a resourcing strategy that incorporates gender mainstreaming and gender budgets to address gender inequality by distributing the resources within structures equitably (Smith *et al*, 2018). Public enterprise plans, legislation, policies and budgets require review to ensure accountability from local through to national levels where comprehensive budgets are developed including appropriate incentives. For example, some US organizations provide unique incentives meant to advance gender parity by recognizing gender proponents who exhibit gender integration through job sharing between genders and action plans within the organization (DFID, 2016). In congruence with the findings, Black *et al* (2017) suggest a more equitable governance structure which is likely to influence more women representation in senior and middle level management (DFID, 2016). For instance, to further accelerate this initiative, the Inter Parliamentary Union (2017) considers providing inclusive structures that seek to ensure equal numbers of gender representation within organizations. To accelerate women leadership in the public enterprises, diversity committees as revealed in the study are an essential instrument in specifically developing the processes for promoting women leadership. In order to promote women leadership in public enterprises, the diversity committees would endeavour to answer a number of pertinent questions to drive such programmes (Gates Foundation, 2017). These questions would include:

- Which NGO's can represent the views of women managers on one hand and that of women in general on the other?

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- What does the picture look like in large public enterprises such as Swaziland Electricity Company, Mbabane Municipal Council, Swaziland Posts and Telecommunications and Eswatini Aviation Authority?

- What processes exist that can enhance the participation and connection between genders in various structures and forms of service delivery?

These questions help review a range of processes and structures to ascertain the most effective way to influence women leadership in public enterprises. These approached which entail resource utilisation materially and otherwise are likely to attract resistance from stakeholders who may consider the exercise a drain of the already depleted resources (Martin, 2015). Gender inclusive leadership is complex and requires an examination of several related concepts, including taking into account the efforts that have been already made in constructing gender equality policies (Black *et al*, 2017). A few fundamental phenomena are considered including supporting leadership inclusivity, comprehensive leader selection and the type of resistance that is likely to emerge as a result of embarking on gender inclusive leadership (DFAT, 2015). Resourcing for women leadership also implies identifying the right leadership capable of coordinating not only the activities within organizational systems and processes but also providing the strategic direction of public enterprises. Leadership has evolved over years, taking up a changed outlook from the conventional perspectives focusing more on engaging and managing relationships across the diverse workforce and other stakeholders around the globe (DFID, 2016). Leadership inclusivity tends to be fairly a new phenomenon that emphasises collective and collaborative involvement within the context of gender diversity. Inclusivity tends to characterise leader commitment, democracy, supportive and engaging leadership responsive to environmental changes for transformational leadership. Ahmad (2017) however, introduces a different dimension which views leadership inclusivity as a function of political manoeuvring, where leadership is expected to show direction and a framework for exercising decision-making. The results show that leadership is an activity beyond goal setting and is bent towards garnering followers' support through inspiration. Cumulatively, these views lend the perception that followers are motivated towards specific goals through relational strategies which recognise women as strategic partners. However, progress for inclusivity is beginning to trickle slowly as more women begin to fill the leadership positions.

6.5 Evaluating the Impact of Gender Policy

This section discusses the results of evaluating the impact of gender policy in promoting women leadership in public enterprises as they relate to the available literature on the subject. The themes that emerged in the findings included ineffective gender policy, inconsistent monitoring and evaluation mechanism, difficulty in accessing gender information and unbalanced gender policy design.

6.5.1 Ineffective gender policy

The results revealed that, while a number of policies and conventions have been developed, there is still limited impact on women leadership suggesting that the gender policy has not sufficiently covered what needs to be done in the workplace. Longman *et al* (2018) observe the exclusion of women in the low levels when policies are designed with inadequate consultation on the on the views of women in the grassroot levels. Most policies are either written in language not easily comprehensible to women in low levels and sometimes use the jargon that is not easily understood in those levels or may be politically excluded. The SADC (2017) report adds on the findings stating that gender policies have been developed to articulate broad plans on aspects of gender parity which fail to provide focused attention to the specific issues with women leadership in the workplace not conclusively covered. While these policies are well documented at national and regional conventions, their implementation may seem impractical and therefore farfetched for the low level women employees. As a result, Abalkhail (2017) proposes the adoption of a more extensive model that addresses the development of women leadership aimed at influencing such design from a multi-dimensional perspective. Gender policy reforms that are specific to a phenomenon should seek to inject several resources to allow practical implementation of plans that recognize involvement of the marginalised. Attempts to accelerate women leadership have been made through policy designs such as the quota system particularly for political positions as the results established. Oxfam International (2016) notes that a policy based on the quota system seems to create a new form of discrimination against men. Opponents of gender quotas argue that the costs of implementing this model seem to exceed the benefits that are expected to be derived rendering it futile to undertake (Longman *et al*, 2018). These views seem to downplay the essence of the quota system implying that the policy on quotas may not be effective from a public sector perspective. Furthermore, Kogut *et al* (2014) assert that quotas were meant to break the structural inequalities at board level and therefore still remained ineffective as far as its impact is concerned at managerial levels. However, the effect of quotas still plays a major role in addressing women

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under-representation when viewed from the multiplier effect. The quota policy also faces challenges where male directors prefer recruiting other male directors on boards using the social identity theory as good fit (Barnali, 2015). In fact, simply adopting to quotas systems may not necessarily alter the beliefs and attitudes that prevail through the structural appearance that may not be easy to alter (Kogut *et al*, 2014). The political use of quotas for leadership positions seems to derive more positive results than in the executive position. An Indian study which employed political quotas confirmed this by revealing that women who were placed in political leadership roles exhibited positive opinions about the changes in their capabilities (Beaman, Chattopadhyay, Duflo, Pande and Topalova, 2009). O'Brien and Rickne (2016) accentuate stating that quotas showed a positive impact on the selection of women to political positions raising much uncertainty about its influence on managerial leadership.

The results on policy show that policy is ineffective as witnessed in Sub Saharan Africa where policy implementation still remains insignificant. However, lessons learnt from other countries that employed the concept of quotas provide intriguing basis from which quotas may be adopted in public enterprises (Smith *et al*, 2018). Shaping women-friendly policies may appear challenging with the primary concern bent more on gender-sensitive policies that champion gender inclusive leadership to help implement such policies. This entails the need for a collective approach that ensures long-term leadership support and involvement for women to hone their leadership capabilities through strategic discourse, presentations and networking including with those vocal male participants. While women leagues remain a formidable mechanism for enhancing female awareness and confidence to leadership, the involvement of male stakeholders is likely to accelerate more outcomes and the requisite interface. The argument that diversity provides frequent community support for ostensibly shared values and convictions for both genders is accentuated (Alexander-Scott *et al*, 2016; Edstrom, Hassink, Shahrokh and Stern, 2015). These views tend to operate within cultural embodiments, while threatening voluntary decision-making and social maturity likely to promote rationality as good cause for inextricable paradigm shift (Stephan *et al*, 2016). The findings also determine that women in leadership positions, particularly those within managerial hierarchical structures tend to isolate themselves from the quota system for fear of being labelled tokens. While women leadership faces barriers in the form of cultural norms and value prejudices, women seem to set their own obstacles by forming distanced elite groups when promoted to leadership positions (Alsubhi *et al*, 2018). Their promotion schemes may seem based upon male-female unscrupulous relationships designed to

manipulate their female counterparts to accept their self-interests, and thus appear not to be properly qualified (McKinsey and Company, 2017). Women become aware of the surrounding environment and therefore take every possible move to conceal the events least they become tokens in the eyes of their female subordinates. In the process, women leaders are likely to disassociate themselves with other women and instead become attached to male executives. Almaki *et al* (2016) refers to the 'Queen Bee Syndrome' a phenomenon which illustrates how promoted women become isolated by distancing themselves from low level employees.

The results also revealed the effects of positions that were offered through policies that made women to become susceptible to tokenism. By distancing themselves from the rest of the other women meant that their identity was lost and therefore were viewed to act unwomanly thus creating a further form of discrimination. Reilly *et al* (2016) observe that further barriers emerge when other women notice scandals associated with the fake promotions and therefore become unwilling to assume leadership positions for fear of being associated with such practice. Women thus tend to exhibit the 'ambition gap' by avoiding leadership positions that may be available (Sassler *et al,* 2017). It is noteworthy that the use of quotas appears amenable to bidirectional gender manipulation rendering its impact ineffective. Additionally, the introduction of a policy on gender has not been received positively within masculine circles. Dailey (2016) points out the usual fear of the unknown encountered in any change initiative where players choose to maintain the status quo. Surprisingly, as Lyness (2018) observed, both women and men are likely to resist the policy on gender emotionally for varied reasons. Consequently, men tend to show greater resistance as they fear economic uncertainty, being considered obsolete, loss of personal power, or increased stress. Women, on the other hand may feel uncomfortable with the accompanying perceptions. Curated Research Report (2017) acknowledges the existence of fear in men citing the imminent female revolution in leadership likely to overturn the present status quo. Burnes *et al* (2017) advocate addressing the under-representation of women leadership policy from a properly planned change process in which resistance is properly managed to cushion policy design and planning. Women in low level positions seem neglected in the design of the gender inequality policy as female executives often hijacked the process to fulfil their personal agendas.

6.5.2 Inconsistent monitoring and evaluation mechanism

 A policy that is frequently monitored and evaluated is normally effective. The findings in this study established that while sufficient documentation on gender equality policies exists in Sub Saharan Africa, the monitoring and evaluation mechanism of such policy remains limited with

women at grassroot level being left out. As Brescoll *et al* (2018) observe, supported by American Association of University Women- AAUW (2016) there is significant involvement of senior personnel but little participation in the lower echelons. Gaffney *et al* (2018) seem to share similar thoughts perceiving instead that although these few women are noticeable in the middle and senior manager levels, their strategic placements are rarely commensurate with expected authority. Additionally, women tend to be spontaneously excluded from the old boys' networking clubs, missing out crucial information likely to shape their decision making framework (Leicht *et al*, 2017). Because of this exclusion, women may consider this structure as natural and therefore may proceed to provide feedback to existing policy without making adequate consultation of those women in the grassroot level. The monitoring and evaluation apparatus for gender policy tends to be skewed. In addition, cultural compliance and traditional leadership supremacy are barriers to socially and professionally interact between the genders and between leader and follower respectively (Ganiyu *et al*, 2018). The results found that a monitoring and evaluation system with clear lines of reporting was ideal. Ghanea (2006) believes that a strategy that mainstreams gender equality and women leadership is critical if a monitoring and evaluation mechanism that cuts across all issues of gender is to be implemented successfully. Progress is therefore easily checked where an effective monitoring and evaluation mechanism is put in place strengthening the reporting channels to realise any policy impact. McKinsey and Company (2018) challenge this argument stating that an objective mechanism for measuring progress is almost impracticable given the precarious nature of gender inequality existing in various social settings within the household and the workplace. In fact most feedback measures on the condition of women leadership are often hidden in the broad gender report with minute attention to the major issues affecting women leadership. ILO (2015) shares the wisdom of a multidimensional approach with policy reviews assigned to particular office bearers who are expected to leverage an understanding of both internal and external factors. Mousa (2017) considers the concept of 'watchdog mechanism' which adopts a multi-disciplinary approach but employs specialists in particular areas of focus in gender issue who collaborate at some stage to ensure consistency. A clearly structured gender policy specific to women leadership is likely to be ideal for monitoring and evaluating the policy if aggregated by areas of focus. The report suggests use of plans with clearly stated goals and well-defined reporting systems as useful elements in structuring a programme on female leadership which tends to be a condition for effective monitoring and evaluation.

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According to the Global Center for Corporate Governance (2018) stakeholders and shareholders are not a monolith and are therefore privy to any developments that directly or indirectly link and value on the competitive outlook of their organizations influenced by a spectrum of strategies and approaches. A transparent monitoring and evaluation system is likely to expose loopholes in the gender policy that focuses on women leadership. Murray (2016) reports that a monitoring and evaluation mechanism that charts out a clear reporting system with indicative matrices provides an opportunity for all stakeholders to communicate effectively through an integrated strategy on how issues of women leadership may be approached. The problems of hijacking the policy design and process by a few elites are put on hold if transparency and continuous monitoring and evaluation mechanisms are put in place. Beyond the monitoring and evaluation strategy, most stakeholders including grassroot women employees may not understand the essence of their participation and the ultimate business value implying the need for capacity building initiatives (Mousa, 2017). This approach therefore calls for resources to meet the economic and social implications of a programme of this magnitude. It is necessary to note that such an undertaking has exceedingly greater and sustainable benefits.

While the study reveals inconsistences in policy monitoring and evaluation mechanism, challenges are often brought about by the lack of a clearly conducted stakeholder analysis to ascertain the identity and influence of players in that exercise. The social identities in gender reports are likely to influence the results implying differences in adopting or repelling recommendations (Tellhed and Jansson, 2018). In the majority of cases, women in male dominated environments are on the receiving end and are likely to withdraw should results turn against their expectations. The prejudices and biases seem to be experienced differently and should be taken into account in designing a framework for monitoring and evaluation measure in the policy (European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE), 2017). From the preceding paragraphs, the study seems to suggest that the present horizontal gender segregation in the workplace experience different identity evaluation as a result of the prevalent discrimination in the workplace. A clear reporting system that informs progress is likely to be desirable and able to deliver on women leadership. The monitoring and evaluation mechanism as shown in the findings derive from a properly structured strategy with action plans that are developed to help implement initiatives and measure made to reducing the gap on women leadership under-representation. Plans, monitoring and evaluation are intrinsically dependent and interconnected and should therefore be thought out comprehensively. It is therefore imperative to develop a policy that

incorporates a clear system of monitoring and evaluation for women leadership centred on building a robust checking mechanism. This precisely entails modifying existing structures to creatively frame a meaningful monitoring system that facilitates a paradigm shift in cultural and organizational changes. The results are therefore in harmony with several other studies which outline benchmarking and planning frameworks for advancing women leadership such as those experienced in SWIFT (Sodexo Women's International Forum for Talent).

6.5.3 Difficulty in accessing gender information

The findings established that there is a massive collection of literature aimed at promoting gender equality in Sub Saharan Africa but these are often serving those few women in middle and senior position who have access to these documents in terms of reading comprehension. The under-representation of women in leadership positions in Sub Saharan Africa means women sources of information for decision making are quite limited as compared to their male counterparts. Women are therefore disadvantaged when accessing information and therefore efforts to reach a collaborated endeavour to gender inclusive leadership may not be easy. Beckwith *et al* (2016) reports similar challenges encountered by women in their attempt to implement the paradigm shift and are confronted with resistance when organizational internal restructuring takes precedence over the demands that require the contribution of both parties. According to Heard *et al* (2018) an individual's traits including one's philosophy and preferences have a bearing in influencing leadership styles and any disagreements are likely to result in the degeneration of relationships putting the idea of paradigm shift at risk. Under the prevalent cultural biases, women tend to struggle to re-gain their reputation in leadership when trying to put forward their arguments leading to frustration when their desires are not met. The results also show that when women pursue information, learning becomes an essential tool for understanding the fundamentals to women leadership. Learning is perceived to be relational suggesting that the male-female encounter requires an understanding of existing differences which brings both genders closer to mutual agreement. However, Alsubhi *et al* (2018) view the prevailing discrimination and prejudices in the workplace as a limiting factor for femininity involvement further perpetuating the barriers. The study also established that where relationships between genders improve there is the likelihood that these biases and prejudices will varnish. Alghamdi *et al* (2018) argue that for any meaningful paradigm shift to be successful, relationships should be improved, first where information flow is accelerated providing the needed transparency in which a situation of win-win is achieved. These ideas tend to foster the adoption of a transformational leadership approach

which seeks to promote relations and information sharing as pre-requisite to enhanced transformation towards a paradigm shift. Smith *et al* (2018) suggest a cultural transformation driven by a paradigm shift that modifies and leverages certain traditional and religious practices including sharing household responsibilities to achieve work-life balance. A gender inclusive leadership seems successful when there is a seemingly equal distribution of responsibilities both in the household and the workplace, thus moving away from the traditional division of labour.

In line with the above observation, Muralidharan *et al* (2018) supported by Shafique *et al* (2018) claim that transformational leadership draws the capacity to combine both holistic and individualistic approaches to facilitate tangible changes towards collective goal realization by further appealing to the ambitions of both women and men in stimulating creativity and innovation. Accessing information on gender issues may be difficult in a highly prejudiced workplace due largely to its male-dominance where most female leaders exhibit traditionally held perceptions that masculinity is supreme. Therefore, influencing top management buy-in to achieve male involvement in the domestic chores may appear laborious and difficult to realise. Alsubhi *et al* (2018) admit that top management are perceived to execute fundamental roles in encouraging an enabling environment in which relationships and exchange of information flourish thereby compelling the facilitation of the paradigm shift. Cultural pressure obliges women to comply with societal norms and values that contribute towards retarding a paradigm shift. One such cultural malpractice is cited by Pollitt *et al* (2018) who lambast the unfair societal loss of dignity for women who outlive their spinster age as noncompliant with cultural norms. In order to bridge the women leadership under-representation gap, communication flow of information seems crucial in ensuring the paradigm shift eliminates prejudices and biases to allow men and women to work collaboratively as strategic allies.

Furthermore, the results revealed the lack of known strategies that encourage women to help in the development of policies particularly in the low operational levels. McKinsey and Company (2018) consider emphasizing the value of diversity and inclusivity which instils a high degree of commitment, democracy and supportive attitude in both genders thus creating an effective leadership that is responsive to an inclusive transformational leadership approach. Providing a communication strategy to these initiatives addresses the perceived weaknesses in women leadership from an attitudinal point of view. Chen *et al* (2016) share the above conviction stating that, in a strategy, the desirable objectives are identified with philosophies describing the values that need to be espoused and shared. These arguments point to the need for harmonising collective

goals between women and men in realising gender inclusive leadership policy. Effective communication that takes cognizance of deficiencies in the different status of women makes it possible for the information to be understood by all stakeholders. Smith *et al* (2018) accentuate an informal structure that promotes information sharing as a form of socialising the players in the policy design process by being sensitive to biases that favour male dominance and prohibit women from interacting with other male executives in certain settings. The more the concept of inclusion is emphasised, the better the genders understand each other through dialogue. In order to improve performance in the communication strategy, Robbins *et al* (2017) propose instituting continuous feedback where participants engage in open dialogue where giving and receiving both positive and negative feedback through interaction is encouraged. The communication strategy highlights possible limitations in implementing such as strategy while benefits are achieved. The need for trust as articulated in preceding paragraphs becomes extremely vital where both the leader and subordinate feel secure and professionally protected. However, constructive feedback tends to improve interpersonal relationship which ultimately impacts on the bottom-line (Velema, 2015). Hamzah *et al* (2016) advocate a communication strategy in which feedback is central and facilitates the leader in guiding, motivating and reinforcing employee behaviour. In promoting access to information, Ebrahimi *et al* (2017) acknowledge the value of teams which promotes information sharing to support effective leadership. Women therefore play a critical role in promoting inclusive leadership which is likely to be a useful contribution in promoting collaboration. Braveman (2016) adds that the informal structure is an integral component of leadership and tends to facilitate attitudinal communication to stimulate innovation in their organizations. The findings also established that the socialisation process makes use of communication which provides a crucial foundation in the leader's decision making framework. Communication also serves as a learning resource where both men and women express their emotions and ideas reaching consensus as well as complementing their unique strengths. Effective communication therefore offers the basis for accessing gender information needed to package skills for leadership.

6.5.4 Unbalanced gender policy design

The findings showed that inconsistences existed in the gender policy design where major key players were left out while those included were not allowed to make meaningful decisions that represented the interests of all women. Bahiru *et al* (2018) single out the nature of women inclusion as still restricted as women are often barred from entering the culturally perceived 'no-

go-areas' considered the domain of masculinity. Huber *et al* (2017) view inclusion as a situation in which one facilitates the other to take part in a diverse environment. These observations seem to reinforce the findings in the study showing that women are not adequately included in the gender policy design process when the limitations imposed are considered. Most of the interests of women are therefore not brought on board implying the need for the re-design of the existing policy. As a consequence, women are susceptible to the independent individual behaviours of their immediate superiors who are likely to sanction their involvement. As Bahiru *et al* (2018) observes, the concept of involvement does not imply a perfect theory, but rather encourages a pendulum towards conscious engagement aimed at establishing desirable transformation in women leadership within public enterprises. Where women obtain strategic leadership, their decisions are often scrutinised further undergoing masculine screening for authenticity. For example, the policy being used is designed by men and is therefore constructed to favour masculine interests with little regard for femininity. Female leaders are therefore evaluated on basis of how their performance meets the criteria set by men or risk being treated as tokens, making it difficult for masculinity to accept the validity of their leadership (Choobineh, 2016). Cultural stereotypes seem strongly engrossed in masculine perceptions leaving no room for flexibility. In line with the concept of inclusion as revealed in the results, Helgesen (2017) describes a more benevolent approach used by male executives to appear as though they comply with the demands of inclusion in work settings believed to empower women. As the results revealed, most women in strategic positions occupy ceremonial leadership positions whose authority and power are less influential. Women therefore continue to occupy the lesser authority-attached positions where decision making is curtailed.

Based on the study findings, the absence of a balanced gender policy implies lack of adequate stimulants to trigger awareness in women towards leadership. Itulua-Abumere (2013) cite the extent to which discrimination is used to perpetuate women marginalisation with little regard to raise their status to leadership. On the other hand, Muralidharan *et al* (2018) believe that lack of research to explore the position of marginalised women may present challenges likely to exacerbate the under-representation of women leadership. A women leadership policy that seeks to target the marginalised women particularly those in the grassroots tends to have sustainable effects in raising the awareness of many women to leadership. For example, such a policy may encourage the participation of women in conversations and dialogues within organizations and the public fora. On the other hand, organizations are likely to understand the economic benefits

attached to these policies that seek to empower women at all levels within the hierarchical structures, with particular emphasis on operational employees and firstline managers. Additionally, ILO (2015) views these benefits as promoting shared gender leadership which results in collaboration and increased organizational effectiveness. A balances policy is therefore inevitable designed to incorporate all women in leadership positions, as well as those vocal men who have impact on the cultural transformation. Fitzsimmons (2012) attests the devastating effect of existing gender inequality policy in the workplace which tends to be pro-male generally authored and expressed in masculine terms. While most women in the lower ranks do not understand the content of these policies, they nevertheless blindly adopt such policy documents without question. The traditional division of labour is therefore reinforced as the major content of the existing policy recognize women in spending most of their time in household and social assignments. Organizational practice tends to mirror societal norms where masculinity is accorded supremacy thus reproducing a similar family structures in the workplace. Furthermore, the findings focused on a policy that aimed at resourcing to strengthen the notion of initiatives. Acquaah *et al* (2017) propose the creation of budgets in organizations to finance such initiatives. Smith *et al* (2018) reinforce the argument further suggesting government involvement to promote women inclusion in economic development from a leadership perspective. Incentives are considered a powerful tool for promoting women leadership by encouraging organizations to take an active part in the process. For example, this entails instituting tax incentives and other monetary measures likely to encourage women leadership particularly in public enterprises. Choobineh (2016) seems to suggest that internally structured motives are also vital where, for instance executives are rewarded for promoting women leadership, thus complementing external approaches. These ideas have been implemented in other European counties such as Norway and could be introduced in public enterprises to inject a sense of discipline in leadership. To ensure these programmes are successful, these policies are often supported by professional training and development that instil a sense of confidence in women and the ability to achieve a balanced leadership towards organizational effectiveness (Abalkhail, 2017).

As the results established, women groups appear to be well placed in spearheading the process of mobilising and coordinating the activities of designing a balanced policy, but are often handicapped due to financial constraints. For example, in Sub Saharan Africa, a policy which focuses on parental paid leave for both parents would entail the need for major resource mobilisation to secure funds from different sources (Olusola, 2016). On the other hand, a balanced

policy on women leadership is likely to be accelerated if education and training are infused to create widespread awareness on issues involving gender and women leadership in particular. In tandem with this view and the research findings, Norand *et al* (2016) advocate for strategies that target marginalised women to understand policy formulation and gender with specific reference to women leadership. Fitzsimmons *et al* (2016) reinforce the importance of making organizational members understand the available strategies as useful and appropriate resources for addressing the unbalanced policy to articulate a policy specific to women leadership. These arguments emphasise the fluidity of a policy that tends to use a 'one-size-fits-all' phenomenon suggesting the need for employing differentiated approaches for different scenarios. A balanced gender policy design is likely to incorporate women leadership expressly constructed to stimulate women towards leadership.

6.6 Chapter Summary

This chapter discussed findings made on the under-representation of women leadership in public enterprises in Eswatini. Broad themes were identified and discussed with the aid of existing literature. The key obstacles were discussed first where the cultural-historical and religious stereotypes revealed issues of conformity which tend to legitimize unequal power-authority distribution. Female dependency represented behaviours where a lack self-esteem and low assertiveness created a high degree of dependence on masculinity. On the other hand, women-centric cynicism propelled by jealousy affected women leadership progression as relations collapsed leading to widespread insubordination from both male and female. Female managers failed to manage their emotions, though this seem a controversial argument. Nevertheless, the results emphasised that women had difficulty in controlling their emotions, affecting their ability to lead.

The second broad theme referred an evaluation on the impact of women leadership focusing on how their unique talents were used to improve organizational effectiveness. The discussion centred on the 'nature versus nurture' phenomenon which enhanced their connection to women leadership. Forging male-female partnership appeared to ameliorate on issues such as the burdensome work overload. Women therefore seemed to emphasizing managerial aspects which they decided to perfect prompting the need for making distinction between leadership and management. A scrutiny of women adaptability levels in matching masculinity revealed that women tend to be duty-bound and therefore invest most of their energy towards improving both the household and the workplace. The discussion showed that women, unlike men, were faced

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with the dilemma to dividing time to fulfil workplace demands while attending to household chores. Women leadership potential was therefore inadequately utilized. Attempts to imitate masculine traits triggered conflict with cultural expectations as nonconformity to societal norms.

A further broad theme focused on strategies for promoting women leadership where a number of factors were discussed. The existing cultural perceptions in society needed transforming where healthy relationships were to be a prerequisite. The desire by women to tackle the gender inequality single-handed created catastrophic tension in meeting gender parity. Furthermore, realistic women leadership involvement was considered insignificant, particularly in respect of decision making. The discussion further revealed that improved attitudes and relations facilitated the paradigm shift where diversity enhanced gender inclusive leadership. Use of mentors and role models became exceedingly vital tools. Leadership skills in women were to be developed. This implied expanding learning platforms for women to accommodate the option for continuing in the workplace and fulfilling household demands. A key example included the role model in Merkel and the *Chefsache* initiative. In light of these arguments, women contained the capacity to lead effectively if the household burden was removed.

In terms the strategies identified to enhance women leadership, the discussion emphasised the need to harmonise the efforts of both men and women to meet collaboratively the demands of the workplace and domestic needs. While the biological differences were acknowledged, a paradigm shift was therefore necessary. The need to consider cultural dynamics meant changing the mindset only possible where relationships were improved. Such changes would necessitate role interchangeability where some of the roles in the household would be shared as discrimination by both genders is removed. These strategies were to be introduced right from childhood where appropriate socialisation was emphasise shared gender leadership with women lobby groups including male activists. The technological advancement were viewed a useful technique in the implementation of the paradigm shift where cultural limitations became weakened.

Finally, the impact of women leadership policy was discussed focusing on ineffective policy, inconsistent monitoring and evaluation mechanism, difficulty to access gender information and unbalanced gender policy design. A negative policy impact was found, characterising slow progress in gender equality with inconsistent monitoring and evaluation. The policy generally lacked the interface for involving men in the design of the policy on gender equality with grassroot women mostly excluded. A comprehensive approach was therefore ideal which proffered a policy design that was all-inclusive which also took into account internal and external incentives to

enhance women leadership. Little progress was therefore noted in the policy that specifically sought to address women leadership in public enterprises.

The next chapter crowns it all by presenting the conclusions made from the study building from the existing literature, the methodology employed to construct the theories, the findings made and discussion. The chapter ends by raising recommendations and noting the study limitations.

CHAPTER 7: CONCLUSIONS & RECOMMENDATIONS

7.1 Introduction

The preceding chapters provided the framework within which this study revolved culminating the interpretation of the results presented as conclusions and recommendations based on the research questions and objectives. While the conclusions summarise the fundamental findings in this study, the recommendations form the practical and theoretical implications further making suggestions for future research. The study limitations are highlighted to help inform the future research.

7.2 Conclusions

This research aimed at investigating reasons for the under-representation of women leadership in public enterprises in Eswatini aimed at promoting gender inclusive leadership. The conclusions indicate how the study objectives were accomplished as driven by the research questions.

7.2.1 Fundamental impediments to women leadership

Two categories of barriers to women leadership emerged as externally motivated and self-inflicted obstacles. Externally motivated barriers emanate from forces outside the control of women and included cultural-historical and religious stereotypes and female dependency syndrome. Cultural-historical and religious stereotypes place societal pressure on women to comply with set norms and values that are culturally and historically embraced. Cultural norms in Sub Saharan Africa were perceived as major determinants that perpetuated barriers to women leadership. Additionally, the religious stereotypes that reinforce masculine supremacy as divine order result in protracted insubordination. Efforts to institute cultural dynamics in a male unfriendly environment become futile with tension degenerating into domestic violence. This cluster reveals the historical female dependency manifest in low assertiveness to determine independent decisions, leading to reduced authority. The involvement of women in meaningful leadership remains predominantly neglected. On the other hand, self-inflicted barriers which originate from within women, include women-centric cynicism and failure to manage emotions. Women-centric cynicism revolves around jealousy between female leaders and female subordinates. A sense of mistrust and dissent emerges, deteriorating into insubordination and placing women leadership potential into jeopardy. Women also demonstrate emotional mismanagement breeding ground for insubordination and mistrust. Therefore, lack of involvement, insubordination and loss of trust combine to fortify these obstacles resulting in threatened women leadership.

7.2.2 Women leadership impact

A further component of the study involved the evaluation on the impact of women leadership as distinguished from masculinity in light of improved organizational effectiveness. The research established that women, unlike men, were endowed with the nurturing constituent which fosters the ability to apply interpersonal relations and team cohesion successfully. The aspect was viewed as playing a pivotal role in forging male-female professional partnerships. Through inclusivity and synergy, competitive advantage and organizational effectiveness are likely to be achieved when used to counteract their emotional weakness. Furthermore, the study found that women, in direct contrast to men, possess the dexterity to manage and administer workplace functions for developing effective systems and processes that help propel organizational effectiveness. This is evident in the choice of jobs such as financial, health, educational and secretarial sectors. The study established that women adapt easily to demanding and stifling economic conditions that impact on ethical leadership. These views are evident in women's unique regard for 'Ubuntu' as connected directly to their maternal endowment which triggers responsible leadership. A further revelation pertained to the value women place to ethical behaviour in business practices as opposed to masculinity. These aspects of women ability to promote interpersonal relationships, the dexterity to perform administrative roles and ethical determination could be exploited to counteract identified barriers and promote women leadership through gender inclusivity.

7.2.3 Strategies for enhancing women leadership

The study further sought to identify and elucidate strategies for enhancing women leadership in public enterprises within Swaziland. The study found that a paradigm shift that occurred within healthy gender relations was likely to increase women participation in leadership in public enterprises. This entails reversing existing societal perceptions in the form of biases and prejudices directed against women. The strategy points to an unpretentious female involvement in leadership accompanied by a high degree of strategic decision making. This also entails transforming the household towards equitable distribution of responsibilities to release domestic pressures that mount on women to cope with workplace demands. The study further determined the technological development as driver for stimulating the paradigm shift by recognizing that diversity expedites gender inclusive leadership. Increased networking improved collaboration and capacity building initiatives for women leadership through the provision of appropriate technology platforms. By transforming the human resources in public enterprises the selection and recruitment process would be set to deliberately increase women representation in leadership.

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An intriguing link was therefore created with the paradigm shift aimed at ameliorating cultural pressures on women and therefore creating more time for leadership demands. The assumption is that, changing the mindset would promote commonly shared cultural beliefs and values that necessitate the alterations of existing practices to achieve role interchangeability in the household. The stereotypes and prejudices were considered to be more individualistic than in-group based.

7.2.4 Gender policy impact on women leadership

The study established that the existing gender policy produced unsatisfactory results on women leadership particularly for women in the operational levels within public enterprises.

7.2.4.1 Insignificant progress

The study established that there was insignificant improvement on the impact of gender policy that focused on addressing women leadership in public enterprises. The larger population of women in the operational levels continue to trail behind masculinity making efforts towards women leadership exceedingly frustrating and overshadowed by the broad gender equality policy. The study mirrors a policy that is weakened by an exclusive focus on gender equality issues bent towards fulfilling political vendettas of those women in high echelons.

7.2.4.2 Ineffective monitoring and evaluation

The monitoring and evaluation mechanism on the current gender equality policy is limited towards reporting issues confined almost exclusively to the fewer female elites with the broader female population in operations not adequately catered for. Again, the study showed that the existing gender policy served to inform mostly those few well-placed women leaders. For instance, feminist-activist groups measure the gender equality policy progress in ad hoc terms, thus making the evaluation less effective. The mechanism is ostensibly female-oriented playing down the role of masculine involvement. An all-inclusive approach is therefore desirable under the circumstances.

7.3 Study Recommendations

This study makes several recommendations presented as practical and theoretical implications for women leadership within the gender equity processes for public enterprises in Sub Saharan Africa.

7.3.1 Research implications

The research focused on addressing the under-representation of women leadership in public enterprises setting out to add new knowledge in the field of gender equality within the context of

leadership in public enterprises. Consequently, a number of recommendations were made as practical and theoretical implications.

7.3.1.1 Practical implications

The theoretical framework as developed in chapter two culminated in several practical implications for implementing gender inclusive leadership. The study proposes a paradigm shift meant to transform traditional cultural-historical and religious stereotypes to attune to modern practices. The education system requires review to offer appropriate socialisation to high school and tertiary scholars that recognizes leadership as a joint function. Public enterprises should invest substantially in education and training to accelerate women leadership through, for example, Public-Private Partnership (PPP) aimed at, inter alia, promoting young women internships and scholarships.

The Human Resource function in public enterprises should review policy to help institute ethics-diversity committees as a mandatory function for overseeing and influencing gender inclusive leadership. The Public Enterprises Unit (PEU) should mobilise all public enterprises to create a joint task-force that fosters women active participation in leadership and decision making. In addition, develop a mechanism for monitoring quarterly and evaluating annually with clearly defined reporting systems.

Lobby women group activism to include masculine involvement that removes gender prejudices and biases by strengthening public conversations, debates, discussion forums and journal development on women leadership.

Mainstream in all public enterprise activities including decision making and meetings gender inclusive leadership by avoiding scenario as depicted in Appendix 7. The scenario be developed as a case for warning chairpersons about this fallacy and therefore solicit women visibility in such engagements. Furthermore, emphasise that the role of chairperson in these processes is interchangeable and can therefore be assumed by both genders.

7.3.1.2 Theoretical implications

In our effort to provide new knowledge on why women fail to attain leadership positions in public enterprises, women understand their weaknesses and challenges facing them to positively compete for leadership positions. The concept of women leadership seems to be central in

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developing ethical leadership in stimulating public enterprise performance from a feminine leadership evaluation perspective. The robust male-female partnership propelled through discourse and awareness programmes focuses on supporting women leadership through dialogue and conversations on the subject. Beyond the individual consideration, women in leadership positions would understand barriers to women and therefore utilize optimally their unique talents, and help develop appropriate policy in women leadership. A further visible theoretical implication pertains developing a comprehensive policy focused exclusively towards popularising a policy on women leadership at operational level.

The implications of the study point towards harmonising gender equality policies to incorporate all structures in the organization including women in operational levels, including a revisit to the quota system directed towards public enterprises in Swaziland. The study showed the need to build commitment for both genders towards women leadership policy implementation by developing learning platforms for broad-based capacity building initiatives focused on empowering women. To complement this notion, a robust monitoring and evaluation system is desirable to help women at all levels access useful information to satiate their leadership appetite.

7.4 Future Study

This research make a number of suggestions for future study where public enterprise directors in public enterprises should be interrogated on their viewpoints regarding women leadership. In order to determine the influence marital relationships, explore the impact of lesbians, gay and bisexuality in the household as a measure towards promoting role interchangeability and congruency. Furthermore, carry out an enquiry on the gender power distribution where the degree of economic influence of the breadwinner may have an impact on the paradigm shift with the objective of reversing some of the traditional practices focusing mainly on shared responsibilities both in the household and the workplace.

A further area of enquiry considered in the study pertains to exploring the applicability of incentives in the workplace paying particular attention to those such as the quota and target system and paid maternity leave for both spouses to promote women leadership in public enterprises within Sub Saharan Africa. Finally, investigating the significance of ethical leadership in gender requires exploring the magnitude of corrupt practices in the genders in public enterprises seeking to answer the question: Are men more corrupt than women?

7.5 Limitations of the Study

Like any other qualitative study, this also experienced challenges in generalizability of findings to other settings. The study targeted both male and female managers at the three managerial levels within public enterprises in Eswatini, thus a homogeneous sample was used limiting scope for a broader heterogeneous target with common yet varying experiences and opinions. A more diverse participant target group drawn from the wider geographical space beyond the peripheral of Eswatini within Sub Saharan Africa should have introduced a dimension of intersectionality, thus influencing the current results.

The voluminous amount of data collected through interviews for analysis and interpretation presented tedious and challenging work before appropriate and relevant data was eventually settled for. The exercise was therefore tedious and time consuming for the researcher's analysis and interpretation. Related to this limitation was the challenges of connectivity which compelled the researcher to almost extensively rely on Excel Software to organise useful data into codes, categories and themes. This could have been improved by using tools of analysis such as NVivo and Atlas software.

The qualitative research may also present challenges of anonymity and confidentiality if not handled professionally, requiring the researcher's additional caution in handling data being analysed. This entailed repeated daily and weekly routine checks and controls for information shared with the assistant researcher to ensure data did not land into unauthorized individuals. Furthermore, since male and female are not immune to biases and prejudices particularly with respect to ethical and authentic leadership, interpreting results demanded extra caution that would suppress any unwarranted biases that may have surfaced through a qualitative research. It is logic to encounter studies that adopt to key stakeholders, in this case women as respondents. However, this research endeavoured to maintain neutrality by accommodating the views of both male and female rather than seeking to confine its attention to women only, thus avoiding the risk of being subjective. This may not have augured well with women managers speculating that their status was being scrutinised.

The use of interviews helped generate a deeper understanding of the phenomena under study further helping in the construction of new knowledge from the grounded theory. However, the study emphasised biases levelled against female leaders without reciprocating discrimination by women towards their male counterparts.

A further methodological limitation was that the interviews were conducted in a venue distant from the respondents work environment which would have supposedly produced distinctive insights had this been conducted in their workplace. It is further acknowledged that the use of both objective and subjective measures enhance reliability and generality in the findings when applying the grounded theory. Objectivity may have been somehow flawed as the study almost exclusively relied on qualitative data.

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Appendix 1: Public Enterprises in Swaziland

THE PUBLIC ENTERPRISES (CONTROL AND MONITORING) ACT, 1989

(COMPANIES AND ASSOCIATIONS: ACT 8/1989

SCHEDULE

PUBLIC ENTERPRISES

Category A

1. (Repealed L.N.66/1998.)
2. Central Transport Administration
3. Commercial Board
4. Motor Vehicle Accident Fund (Added L.N.66/1998.)
5. National Agricultural Marketing Board
6. National Housing Board
7. National Industrial Development Corporation of Swaziland
8. National Maize Corporation
9. Pigg's Peak Hotel
10. Posts and Telecommunications Corporation
11. Royal Swazi National Airways Corporation
12. Sebenta National Institute
13. Small and Medium Scale Business Development Fund (The Enterprise Fund) (Added L.N. 55/1996.)
14. Small Enterprises Development Company
15. Swaziland Cotton Board
16. Swaziland Dairy Board
17. Swaziland Development and Savings Bank
18. Swaziland Electricity Board
19. Swaziland Investment Promotion Authority (Added L.N.66/1998.)
20. Swaziland National Provident Fund
21. Swaziland National Trust Commission
22. Swaziland Railway
23. Swaziland Television Authority
24. Swaziland Tourism Development Company
25. Swaziland Trade Fair Company
26. Water and Sewerage Board
27. University of Swaziland

Category B

1. Barclays Bank of Swaziland
2. Central Bank of Swaziland
3. International Bank for Swaziland
4. Royal Swaziland Sugar Corporation
5. Swaziland Industrial Development Company
6. Swaziland Royal Insurance Corporation (Amended L.N.55/1996.)
7. Standard Chartered Bank of Swaziland
8. Town Council of Manzini
9. Town Council of Mbabane
10. Union Bank of Swaziland

Appendix 2: Target sample selection criteria

		Firstline Managers (Frt)	Middle Managers (Mid)	Senior Managers (Snr)	Total	%
Male		3	4	2	9	43
Female		5	5	2	12	57
Total per category		8	9	4	21	100
Age Groups: in years	25 but less than 30	5	4	0	9	43
	30 but less than 40	2	4	0	6	28,5
	40 but less than 50	1	1	4	6	28,5
Academic Qualifications:	Non Degreed	8	2	0	10	47,6
	Degreed	2	4	5	11	52,4
Relevant Experience on position: in years	Less than 5 years	5	4	1	10	47,6
	5 years and more	3	5	3	11	52,4

Appendix 3: Interview protocol

DOCTOR OF BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION: RESEARCH PROTOCOL

<u>Interview Guide</u>

(Questions to Female only = F; Both = B)

A. Barriers to Women leadership

i. What barriers do women face in getting promotions? B

ii. In your opinion, how can these barriers be removed? B

iii. Culturally, leadership has been the exclusive prerogative of men. How do you think this view can be changed in our society? B

iv. What challenges have you encountered in your role as a leader? F

v. What attempts did you make to deal with those challenges? F

B. Impact of Women Leadership

i. What special leadership traits do you think women possess? B

ii. Do you think women leadership is not being fully exploited? Why? B

iii. What strengths and weaknesses do you think you have as a leader? F

iv. How has gender or other female characteristics shaped your leader development? F

v. How receptive are other women to your leadership authority? F

C. Role Models in Women Leadership

i. What situations or events influenced you to become a leader? F

ii. Why were these situations important? F

iii. Describe any women leaders who inspired you to become a leader. F

iv. In what way have these women leaders influenced your leadership efforts? F

D. Capacity Building

i. What leadership management training programmes have you attended in the last five years? B

ii. How have these training programmes helped develop your leadership? B

iii. What women leadership training initiatives can you recommend to be introduced to develop women leaders? B

iv. How can these programmes be structured to enhance women buy in? B

v. To what extent do you support women leaders to accomplish their leadership mandates? B

E. Strategies for Enhancing Gender Inclusive Leadership

i. What does gender inclusive leadership mean to you? B

ii. In what ways can this phenomenon contribute to the leadership? B

iii. How can we make women contribute effectively to leadership? B

iv. What positive/negative leadership behaviours have you experienced in your supervisor? B

v. What values can reflect successful leadership in today's demands? B

vi. What changes can you propose to your organization that can promote women leadership? B

F. Policy on Women Leadership

i. What views can you share with us about the impact of women policies? B

ii. What benefits have women derived from these policies? B

iii. What do you think should be done to improve the impact of such policies? B

iv. Do you know of any organizations that contribute to women advancement? B

v. Is there any known support you can share with us that is evident in women leaders? B

Appendix 4: Gatekeeper letter

P.O. Box 5400, Mbabane
H100, Swaziland
Tel: (+268) 24163155/6
        (+268) 24161326
Fax:(+268) 24163156
Email: mananga@raalnet.co.sz
        info@mananga.org

MANANGA
CENTRE FOR REGIONAL INTEGRATION AND MANAGEMENT DEVELOPMENT

26th April 2016

Dear Mr Kamalizeni

Re: REQUEST FOR PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH IN THE CENTRE

Kindly refer to your letter dated 24th April 2016 on the above subject.

Your research topic on "Gender Inclusive Leadership" has been noted and be informed that permission has been granted for you to undertake the research in the institution, as you pursue the Doctor of Business Administration (DBA) degree with the University of Kwazulu Natal.

It is further noted that the study will target students in the Business Management and supervision programmes and will be conducted on campus.

In this regard, liaise with the Registrar who should be able to provide any logistical support for the purpose.

I wish you well in your studies and trust we will all benefit from this activity.

Yours faithfully

Dr P Tarugonga
Director

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Appendix 5: Ethics clearance letter

UNIVERSITY OF KWAZULU-NATAL
INYUVESI YAKWAZULU-NATALI

20 July 2016

Mr Collin Kamalizeni (214563897)
Graduate School of Business & Leadership
Westville Campus

Dear Mr Kamalizeni,

Protocol reference number: HSS/0820/016D
Project title: Gender inclusive leadership: Investigating the underrepresentation of women leadership in the Public Enterprise, Swaziland

Full Approval – Expedited Application

With regards to your application received on 06 June 2016. The documents submitted have been accepted by the Humanities & Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee and FULL APPROVAL for the protocol has been granted.

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.

The ethical clearance certificate is only valid for a period of 3 years from the date of issue. Thereafter Recertification must be applied for on an annual basis.

I take this opportunity of wishing you everything of the best with your study.

Yours faithfully

Dr Shamila Naidoo (Deputy Chair)

/ms

Cc Supervisor: Dr Abdulla Kader and Dr Muhammed Hoque
Cc Academic Leader Research: Dr Muhammad Hoque
Cc School Administrator: Ms Zarina Bullyraj / Ms Ellieen Mohamed

Humanities & Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee
Dr Shenuka Singh (Chair)
Westville Campus, Govan Mbeki Building
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Telephone: +27 (0) 31 260 3587/4557/4087 Facsimile: +27 (0) 31 260 4609 Email: ximba@ukzn.ac.za / snymanm@ukzn.ac.za / mohunp@ukzn.ac.za
Website: www.ukzn.ac.za

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Informed Consent Letter 3C

UNIVERSITY OF KWAZULU-NATAL

GRADUATE SCHOOL OF BUSINESS AND LEADERSHIP

Dear Respondent,

DBA/PHD Research Project

Researcher: Collin Kamalizeni (+268 76087200)

Supervisors: Prof Hoque (0825928488) Dr Kader (0829010225)

Research Office: Ms. Zikhona Mojapelo 031-2603587/ 031-2602784

I, **COLLIN KAMALIZENI** am a DBA/PHD student, at the Graduate School of Business and Leadership, of the University of KwaZulu Natal. You are invited to participate in a research project entitled:

Gender Inclusiveness Leadership: Investigating Underrepresentation of Women Leadership in Public Enterprises, Swaziland

The aim of this study is to:

Explore the underrepresentation of women leadership in Swaziland's Public Enterprises with a view to establishing the degree to which women leaders can contribute to performance of public enterprises in Swaziland and Sub Saharan Africa (SSA)

Through your participation I hope to understand your views and opinion on the contribution of women leaders in the public enterprises. The results of the interviews and discussions are intended to contribute to influencing the behaviours of all stakeholders in shaping and encouraging the role of women leadership in the region

Your participation in this project is voluntary. You may refuse to participate or withdraw from the project at any time with no negative consequence. There will be no monetary gain from participating in this project. Confidentiality and anonymity of records identifying you as a participant will be maintained by the Graduate School of Business and Leadership, UKZN.

If you have any questions or concerns about participating in this study, you may contact me or my supervisor at the numbers listed above.

The survey should take you about 60 - 90 minutes to complete. I hope you will take the time to complete this survey.

Sincerely

Investigator's signature_____ Date 24 April 2016

This page is to be retained by participant

UNIVERSITY OF KWAZULU-NATAL

GRADUATE SCHOOL OF BUSINESS AND LEADERSHIP

DBA/PHD Research Project

Researcher: Collin Kamalizeni (+268 76087200)

Supervisors: Prof Hoque (0825928488) Dr Kader (0829010225)

Research Office: Ms. Zikhona Mojapelo 031-2603587/ 031-2602784

<u>**CONSENT**</u>

I……………………………………………………………………… (Full names of participant) 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, should I so desire.

SIGNATURE   OF   PARTICIPANT

…………………………………………………..   **DATE:**

………/…………/20……………………..

This page is to be retained by researcher

Appendix 7: Women involvement in the workplace

Appendix 8: Thematic Analysis Tables

Category 1: Barriers to women leadership

Codes/Themes	Frequency per code in interviews N=21	Frequency: Senior manager (Snr) interviews containing code (%) N=5	Frequency: Middle manager (Mid) interviews containing code (%) N=10	Frequency: Firstline manager (Frt) interviews containing code (%) N= 6
Cultural-historical & religious stereotypes	8	3(50)	4(40)	1(16,6)
Perceived women low self-esteem	4	2(40)	1(10)	1(17)
Women centric cynicism	5	2(20)	2(20)	1(17)
Failure to manage leadership emotions	7	1(20)	3(30)	3(50)
Women dependency syndrome	6	1(20)	5(50)	0(0)

Category 2: The Impact of Women Leadership

Codes/Themes	Frequency per code in interviews N=21	Frequency: Senior manager (Snr) interviews containing code (%) N=5	Frequency: Middle manager (Mid) interviews containing code (%) N=10	Frequency: Firstline manager (Frt) interviews containing code (%) N= 6
Women leadership inspiration	2	1(20)	1(10)	0(0)
Impact of special traits in women	2	1(20)	1(10)	0(0)
Competence in management and clerical	8	1(20)	3(30)	4(66,6)
Woman leader as team builder	11	2(20)	5(50)	4(66,6)
Women respect for mankind	12	2(20)	6(60)	4(66,6)
Women leadership inspiration	2	1(20)	1(10)	0(0)

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Category 3: : Strategies for Addressing Local Barriers

Codes/Themes	Frequency per code in interviews N=21	Frequency: Senior manager (Snr) interviews containing code (%) N=5	Frequency: Middle manager (Mid) interviews containing code (%) N=10	Frequency: Firstline manager (Frt) interviews containing code (%) N= 6	
Shift towards woman leader acceptance	2	1(20)	1(10)	0(0)	
Empowerment through female role models	8	1(20)	3(30)	4(66,6)	
Broad-based capacity building initiatives	11	2(20)	5(50)	4(66,6)	
Paradigm shift	12	2(20)	6(60)	4(66,6)	
Extensive women involvement	2	1(20)	1(10)	0(0)	

Category 4: : Policy for enhancing Gender Inclusive Leadership

Codes/Themes	Frequency per code in interviews N=21	Frequency: Senior manager (Snr) interviews containing code (%) N=5	Frequency: Middle manager (Mid) interviews containing code (%) N=10	Frequency: Firstline manager (Frt) interviews containing code (%) N= 6	
Policy design	2	1(20)	1(10)	0(0)	
Initiating the policy	2	1(20)	1(10)	0(0)	
Accessibility to gender information	8	1(20)	3(30)	4(66,6)	
Challenges in policy monitoring	9	2(40)	3(30)	4(66,6)	
Slow gender policy impact	10	2(40)	4(30)	4(66,6)	
Government role in the policy	2	1(20)	1(10)	0(0)	

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