

UNIVERSITY OF KWAZULU-NATAL

**Gender-based challenges faced by women in leadership: A case study of one
Government Department in KwaZulu-Natal**

By

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Declaration

I, **Sicelo Vincent Msibi**, declare that:

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Dedication

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For that, they will both be equally a huge part of me and my success.

Acronyms

SMT : Senior Management Team

EEA : Employment Equity Act

AA : Affirmative Action

KZN : KwaZulu-Natal

RSA : Republic of South Africa

Abstract

In post-apartheid South Africa, various legislation, policies and strategies have been introduced, including the new labour and employment legislation aimed at advancing equitable, fair and non-discriminatory labour force practices. These laws and legislation have resulted in an increased number of women occupying managerial and leadership positions in large organizations, both in public and private organizations. However, it has become evident over the years, since the dawn of the new South Africa, that women still face challenges that are gender-based. Women still face discrimination and other related challenges that inhibit them from performing their assigned duties to the best of their ability. These challenges are a result of patriarchal tendencies in the treatment of women by men. Amongst other visible challenges, the number of women who hold managerial positions is still low, and there is a material imbalance between men and women. The patriarchal mindset holds that women cannot be leaders of organizations and that leadership functions were meant for men only; women's functions involve household chores, taking care of the male of the house and raising children. With the employment and labour laws now in place, South Africa is in great position to fast-track the transformation agenda in relation to equality and gender-equity in organizational structures should strict measures be put into place for implementation purposes. However, it is of utmost importance to first understand the underlying challenges that women in managerial positions face and then strive to address those challenges in a manner that will be favorable to everyone. The main objectives of this study were to establish the challenges that women face as managers and leaders in organizations and ascertain whether or not such challenges have any material impact on the performance of women managers as well as the overall performance of the organization. A case study approach was adopted and face-to-face interviews were conducted with nine women who hold positions of power and authority in one selected government department in the KwaZulu-Natal provincial government. The findings of the study show there are still gender-based challenges confronting women who hold managerial positions. These challenges include discrimination on the basis of gender, unfair treatment of women by men, patriarchal treatment and stereotyping in relation to the thinking capacity of female managers, not being acknowledged and appreciated as their male counterparts, not being respected and treated fairly compared to male managers, and work functions that conflict with their household responsibilities, such as late-night meetings. The research results showed that women are still confronted with multiple gender-based

challenges in organizations; they deem these challenges as hindrances on how they perform their duties as well as their managerial capabilities as women. Emanating from the study's results, the researcher has suggested a number of recommendations that may assist the organizations in addressing the challenges faced by women. The recommendations suggested include investigating whether or not the available legislation is producing the desired results, for government to take a proactive approach in creating a conducive environment for all irrespective of gender, conduct continuous education and training on the effects of patriarchy and unfair-discrimination, establishment of a Women in Leadership Forum which will serve as a support mechanism for women in leadership, have a clear consequence management against the perpetrators of gender-discrimination, formulate an EEA that is gender balanced and enforce compliance thereafter as well as ensuring that information on the matters of gender in an organization is easily accessible to all personnel through posting on the intranet as well as having printed material on the strategic points of the organization.

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Definition of terms

i. Leadership

Leadership refers to “a process whereby an individual influence a group of individuals in striving towards achieving a particular organizational goal” (Ricketts, 2009:1). Literature provides us with information that for one to become a leader, he or she must have followers and must possess several traits which will enhance his or her ability to be a good leader. Leadership involves the ability to influence those whom you lead; for them to perceive things your own way as a leader with the aim of working towards achieving the anticipated and predetermined goals. The leadership traits include such qualities as inspiring, creativity, confidence, stirring self-esteem, trust, sincerity, willingness to share responsibility and being a visionary (Ricketts, 2009). Algahtani (2014) defines leadership as a behavior, a style, a skill, a process, a responsibility, an experience, a function of management, a position of authority, an influencing relationship, a characteristic, and an ability.

Bohoris and Vorria (2017) sum up by stating that a leader is someone with followers; and to have followers, you have to possess influence. It does not necessarily exclude the need for integrity in achieving this.

ii. Management and manager

Algahtani (2014) defines management as providing direction to an organization and/or a group of people through an executive, administrative and supervisory position. Bohoris and Vorria (2017) affirm management as a process that is used to accomplish organizational goals; that is, a process that is used to achieve what an organization wants to achieve.

iii. Gender

Acker (2006) provides a brief definition of gender as socially constructed differences between men and women. In support of this definition, Acker (2006) gives a historic example of the differences of gender in organizations whereby managers were almost always men while the lower level staff were always women. This example forms the basis of this study as it aimed at zooming in on the challenges that the elite, women in managerial positions, face on the basis of their gender. Holmes (2007) concludes by distinguishing between sex and gender. She asserts that sex is the biological differences between males and females while gender refers to socially constructed differences of the feminine and masculine.

iv. Inequality in organizations

Acker (2006) defines inequality in organizations as systematic disparities between participants in power and control over goals, resources, and outcomes; workplace decisions like how to organize work; opportunities for promotion and interesting work; security in employment and benefits; pay and other monetary rewards; respect; and pleasures in work and work relations. Acker (2006) further asserts that there are what she calls “inequality regimes”. Further to her definition of this term, inequality, she advocates that all organizations have inequality regimes which are defined as loosely interrelated practices, processes, actions, and meanings that result in and maintain class, gender, and racial inequalities within the organization.

v. Challenges and barriers

Hollnagel (1999) defines a barrier as an obstacle, hindrance or an obstruction that possesses an ability to prevent an action to be carried out as anticipated or lessens the impact of the consequences. Nxumalo (2017) agrees with Hollnagel’s definition. In the context of this paper and the topic of the study, a barrier can also be referred to as a challenge which hinders women from performing their assigned duties to the best of their ability, interferes with their work authority and even hinders them from taking decisions that they believe are in the best interests of the organization. This study’s focus was on barriers or challenges that women in managerial positions face on a daily basis which they consider as hindrances to their performing their duties to the best of their abilities and the best way they know how.

vi. Stereotypes

A definition by Jones and Colman (1996) suggests that stereotypes are relatively fixed and oversimplified generalizations about groups or classes of people, and such generalizations are usually negative and unfavorable in nature about the group of people concerned. The term is derived from the Greek word’s *stereos* and *tupos*, meaning image or impression about a certain group of people or class of people. Blum (2004) agrees with the meanings provided by Jones and Colman (1996) and reinforces their definitions by stating that stereotypes are false or misleading generalizations about groups held in a manner that renders them largely, though not entirely, immune to counterevidence. Blum (2004) further suggests that stereotypes have the power to shape the stereotyper’s perception of the stereotyped groups, seeing the stereotypic characteristics when they are not present, failing to see the contrary of those characteristics when they are, and generally homogenizing the group. Dovidio et al. (2010) agrees with the definitions provided by Jones and Colman (1996) and Blum (2004) as they briefly define stereotypes as a typical picture that comes to mind when thinking about a certain social group. They further allude that stereotyping is an inflexible and faulty thought process.

vii. Affirmative action

According to the DPSA (1998), affirmative action is a mechanism to speed up the creation of a representative and equitable Public Service, and to build an environment that supports and enables those who have been historically disadvantaged by unfair discrimination, with an aim to derive maximized benefit of their diverse skills and talents to improve service delivery. The Office on the Status of Women (1999) reinforces the first definition as it defines affirmative action as corrective measures through programs targeting women to redress the legacies of discrimination and subordination. The Office on the Status of Women (1999) also suggests that as part of short-term success indicators of Affirmative Action, a 50/50 gender representation ratio is desirable; this will indicate women's increased access to management and leadership positions within public organizations. However, the question remains – has this ratio been achieved by organizations?

Chapter one: Overview of the study

1.1. Introduction

Gender inequality had been a challenge in South Africa prior to 1994 when South Africa became a democratic state. Women have encountered discrimination mainly because of their gender in most cases. Not only have they faced such challenges at home and in society, they have also had to face the same discrimination even within their working environments because of the patriarchal ideology about women in general. Women encounter such discrimination and challenges on daily basis. Those that are in leadership and managerial positions are no exception.

Despite the introduction of various legislation and laws aimed at eliminating inequality and discrimination against women, women are still finding themselves facing challenges within the work force, both in the public and private sectors. Even though post-1994 women have had opportunities to obtain education in any field of their choice, discrimination against them has not yet been completely eliminated. It also hinders them from performing their duties to the best of their ability.

Maseko (2003) claims that “globally, despite the golden age of women which was ushered in by the Berlin Conference of 1995, women continue to be disadvantaged when it comes to public participation both in the public and private sectors of society. Even when they are eminently qualified and despite the mainstreaming of more women into public life in the last 17 years, women remain discriminated against in terms of accessing top management/leadership positions” (Maseko, 2003:1).

This study investigates some of the challenges that women still encounter, particularly those who are in managerial and leadership positions within their organizations, to ascertain whether these challenges have any impact on organisational performance and the performance of women leaders. Through this study, the researcher aims to examine closely the problems that women face in their daily working lives as well as try to suggest mechanisms that may be adopted by the government, particularly to empower women, eliminate barriers to entry to managerial positions for women, and to support women managers in the execution of their roles in realizing the achievements and effectiveness of government-owned organizations.

1.2. Background of the study

Sinden (2017) asserts that globally, women have been subjected to all forms of discrimination, and their access to the workforce has been limited. Women in South Africa are no exception. They form part of the previously disadvantaged group who were not given equitable opportunities in terms of being leaders or playing leadership roles in organizations, because of the patriarchal ideology/ perception that women are unable and unfit to be leaders and they are inferior compared to men. The post-apartheid government has enacted legislation and laws such as the Employment Equity Act, which have been introduced to balance the gender equation in organizations. However, women are still sidelined and are still not given equal opportunities to be leaders of organizations compared to men. As a result, even those who are in leadership or play a leadership role in their organizations are still subjected to discrimination.

In 1994, South Africa adopted the culture of equality amongst men and women and there has been an emphasis on encouraging gender equality and non-discrimination based on gender, culture, religion and race. The reality is that although actions have been made since then to strive towards achieving 50/50 gender representation in organizations, women are still discriminated based on gender. For those who are in managerial positions, this hinders them from performing their duties to the best of their ability; thus, this may also affect the overall performance of the organization. This study aims to ascertain whether, if gender equity and equality is well implemented in organizations, it can increase the level of performance of women leaders and the performance of the overall organization.

1.3. Research problem

Kumar (2011) argues that a research problem gives direction to the researcher's destination; it should be able to give a clear indication to the researcher, the supervisor and readers of what the research study seeks to research. He further advocates that the core function of having a research problem is to decide what you as the researcher want to find out about. Kothari (2004) defines a research problem as a challenge that a researcher encounters regarding a situation or topic and wants to find a solution for. Gender discrimination in the workforce is a challenge or a situation that the researcher wanted to find answers for by conducting this study, in light of the fact that there are numerous remedial actions, including legislation, which are aimed at achieving an equitably represented workforce in South Africa. In conducting this research, the researcher seeks to establish whether, if gender equality is well actioned and implemented in organizations, it can increase performance of women managers in how they perform their duties, and to ascertain

whether the overall performance of the organization can also improve. This research aims to investigate gender-based challenges that women perceive as hindrances in the performance of their duties.

Various legislation and laws have been formed and passed with the aim of addressing inequality in organizations and to promote the inclusion of women in leadership and managerial positions. However, such legislation has not completely addressed these issues and as a result, women still experience various barriers to entry at the managerial level. Even for those who have entered, they still face discrimination and unfair treatment resulting from various stereotypes about women in general and women as leaders. This study therefore aims to investigate the gaps between men and women in government departments, mainly those who are holding managerial and leadership positions.

1.4. Research objectives

Kumar (2011) advocates that research objectives are merely goals that the researcher sets with an aim of attaining them with the study. He suggests that the objectives must be clearly identified and stated so that it will make it easier for the researcher, the supervisor and readers to see what the study aims to attain. Du Plooy-Cilliers, et al. (2014) concur with Kumar's definition of the objectives of research as they suggest that research objectives are goals that the researcher seeks to achieve through doing or conducting research. Therefore, it is clear from the literature of different authors that research objectives form an important part of conducting a research as the main purpose behind a research study is to find answers for particular questions or offer a practical solution. Hence, in order to arrive at the point of finding answers, research objectives should be clearly identified before conducting the research.

The objectives of this study are therefore as follows:

- i. To establish gender-based challenges facing women in managerial and leadership positions that hinder performance.
- ii. To establish the material impact of gender inequality on the overall performance of the organization.
- iii. To identify whether gender discrimination against women managers has any effect on how they perform their duties.

1.5. Research questions

In the quest to giving possible answers to the research objectives as indicated above, questions need to be asked by the researcher and answers sought through the collection of data. For this study, the research questions are:

- i. What gender-based challenges are faced by women in managerial positions?
- ii. Does gender inequality in government organizations affect the performance of the organizations?
- iii. Does gender inequality in government organizations affect the way women managers perform their duties?

1.6. Methodology

A qualitative research tool was used in this research and data was collected by means of a face-to-face interview. These comprised open-ended questions with the aim to obtain the respondents in-depth perceptions and feelings regarding the subject matter.

1.7. Justification of the study

According to the researcher's experience and observations regarding the marginalization of women in managerial positions and how they are treated, the researcher was interested to seek more in-depth information about the women challenges, feelings and perceptions about how they are treated by their counterparts. Over the years it has been evident that women are still marginalized and there is a huge variance the balance of gender representation in managerial positions when comparing both genders. The researcher's aim was to investigate the underlying challenges that women encounter and seek to find practical ways that can contribute to addressing some of these, through meaningful research and recommendations.

Looking back at the history of our country, the marginalization of women has been evident, and patriarchal ideologies that are against women seem to be the order of the day. As a result, legislation and a number of laws were introduced with an objective of achieving gender equality in organizations and society at large. However, the variance of gender in managerial positions is still material and this may be an indication that the introduced legislation and laws are either not achieving what they are meant to achieve or our organizations are not putting strict measures into place to ensure implementation of such legislation, hence they are not producing the desired

outcome. It is for these reasons that the researcher conducted this study – in order to gain information on how these challenges are affecting women in managerial positions and to seek to make recommendations that will assist both the women and the organizations in achieving an environment that is free of gender-marginalization while striving towards the achievement of organizational goals.

1.8. The contribution and significance of the study

This study examined the gender-based challenges faced by women in managerial positions with an aim of making necessary recommendations on how to better deal and address such challenges for the benefit of the organization. This will also assist the organization to be in a position of knowing challenges that are faced by women managers and to find ways and mechanisms to address these challenges in order to promote gender equality within the organization. Through this study, the researcher also aims to change the manner in which women managers are treated and perceived as well as help them to voice out their concerns about what they feel hinders them from performing their assigned duties to the best of their ability and taking independent decisions that they feel are in the best interest of the organization.

This serves as the first study to be conducted within the organization at which this study took place. It will contribute to driving the organization towards being an agent of gender equality and implementing mechanisms to achieve 50/50 gender representation in the organization's management echelon.

1.9. Conclusion

Chapter one introduces the study by discussing the study background, research objectives, problem statement, research questions, a brief summary of methodology used, justification of the study and the contribution of the study. This chapter also introduces the topic with the aim of providing the readers with more information regarding the study. The following chapter reviews the existing literature and data regarding the subject matter.

Chapter two: Literature review

2.1 Introduction

The previous chapter discussed the overview of the study. This chapter focuses on reviewing the literature that is closely related to the study.

Du Plooy-Cilliers et al. (2014) state that after the researcher has identified the research topic and has decided on the scope of the research, he or she can then study the literature that is closely related to the study. A literature review involves searching for, reading, evaluating and summarizing the available literature that is related to the study's topic both directly and indirectly (Du Plooy-Cilliers, et al., 2014, p. 101). Welman et al. (2006) suggest various aspects which make the review of the literature important: it provides important facts and information about the topic; it helps to avoid duplication; it helps with developing various parts of the study; it can give the researcher ideas on methods of proceeding with the study; it gives insights regarding the challenges of the previous studies, assists with findings and conclusion; and it can provide motivation to the researcher to be eager to study more.

Sekaran and Bougie (2016) state that reviewing the literature helps the researcher to narrow down the bigger problem or challenge, whilst also developing a clear and specific problem statement. The authors further state that literature can be sourced from different sources such as textbooks, journals, theses, conference proceedings, unpublished manuscripts, reports, newspapers and the internet (Sekaran & Bougie, 2016, pp. 54-55). Du Plooy-Cilliers et al. (2014) allude that there are two types of sources: primary sources which include interviews and eye-witness accounts; and secondary sources which include published journals, books, databases and online sources. In addition to these two types of sources, Welman et al. (2006) add a third type of literature source, tertiary sources, which include indexes and abstracts as well as encyclopedias and bibliographies.

Following the direction of reviewing literature as suggested by different scholars and researchers as stated above, this chapter focuses on the available literature that is related to the study's topic by examining the following concepts:

- i. Statistical data
- ii. Conceptualizing the concept of patriarchy
- iii. Conceptualizing the concept of gender equality in South Africa

- vi. Legislative framework promoting gender equality
- vii. Chapter conclusion

2.2. Statistics

With a total population of 56.5 million in South Africa, statistics proves that there are more women than men in South Africa, with 51% being women and 49% being men (Statistics South Africa, 2017). In a sample of 1000 people, 511 are women and the remaining total are males (Statistics South Africa, 2017). Although women represent just over half of the entire population, they are still underrepresented in positions of authority and power. As a result, the South African Constitution promotes the principle of gender equality as one of the founding principles where men and women are treated the same and are treated with fairness and consideration.

The Women Empowerment and Gender Equality Bill suggest a 50/50 representation in positions of power, authority and decision making (Statistics South Africa, 2017). Although progress has been made in striving towards gender equality in South Africa, there are still gaps that remain unfulfilled. Statistics South Africa (2017) shows that from the year 2002 to 2017, 44 of every 100 employed people were women. This translates to 44% of the labor force being women; however, this number has remained the same for over a decade. It is therefore evident that although the Women Empowerment and Gender Equality Bill calls for 50/50 representation, South Africa has not yet met that ratio for positions that comes with power and a great deal of authority.

The South African Constitution calls for the realization of a non-sexist society. It has made progress thus far towards the achievement of that goal, however there is still room for improvement before it can be evidently visible that we have achieved the goals of our Constitution. Statistics South Africa (2014) suggests that in 2001, of 664 managers in South Africa, 528 were males and 137 were females. It further suggests that this number increased in 2014, as out of a population of 1343, 923 were males and 420 were females. This shows that improvement is being made, however, it also proves that the 50/50 representation has not been achieved over the years; instead there is still a huge gap between the ratios. Further to these statistics, Statistics South Africa (2014) proves that in the year 2008, 74.4% of managers were males while 28.6% were females. Although in 2018, the number of women managers increased to 32.1%, it still proved a huge discrepancy in ratio and nonrealization of the 50/50 representation in occupations of power.

2.3. Conceptualizing the patriarchy theory

The underlying subject matter of this study is to seek to find the reasons why women managers are marginalized in organizations and face gender-based challenges. Considering that gender imbalances have been a challenge for a long time due to the manner in which women are perceived in societies, homes and organizations, it is evident that this challenge emanates from the idea of patriarchy where women are subjected to be subordinates to men in various spheres of life. Because of this cultural position even in this age, women are still faced with a number of challenges that are gendered in nature, and they are still marginalized. It is thus of paramount importance for this study to discuss the concept of patriarchy with an aim of linking it with the daily reality of women who hold positions of power and authority in our organizations.

Patriarchy has always been a huge part of our society where it is believed that men are superior to women in all the spheres of life. This ideology suggests that a head of the house is a man and a man is superior to the woman of the house. As a result, because of the nature of patriarchy, traditionally men are exempted from taking part in the household chores, including taking part in child raising activities (Abideni, 2005). Further, such activities are believed to be the burden of women by nature (Abideni, 2005).

Literature from different authors has defined the concept of patriarchy in various ways. The following are some definitions of patriarchy by different scholars:

it is a system of social stratification and differentiation on the basis of sex, which provides material advantages to males while simultaneously placing severe constraints on the roles and activities of females (Abideni, 2005:2).

Patriarchy is the power of the fathers: a familial-social ideological, political system in which men by force, direct pressure, or through ritual, tradition, law and language, customs, etiquette, education, and the division of labor, determine what part women shall or shall not play, and in which the female is everywhere subsumed under the male (Warnock, 2009:28).

Holmes (2007) delineates patriarchy as a social system in which men have come to be dominant in relation to women. Eagly and Wood (2012) write that patriarchy arises when the physical attributes of men and women interact with economic and technological developments to give men the roles that yield decision-making authority. Eagly and Wood (2012) state that patriarchy can also be termed gender hierarchy. According to Holmes (2007), patriarchy suggests that women are to be quiet, to stay home

and to not take up too much space. She further argues that patriarchy is a system that subordinates women and subjects them to a hurtful lack of recognition of femininity as valuable.

From the literature, the concept of patriarchy is based on discrimination against women in different aspects of life, be in a home environment, school, society and in a working environment. Women in leadership positions are no exception to experiences of gender-based challenges.

...females were considerably under-represented in various sectors of the workforce, women were for example, introduced into the management environment as recently as the 1980s, while supportive legislation only came into place in the 1990s (Liezal, 2005:103).

The under-representation of women in managerial positions has always been a challenge, hence supporting legislation has been introduced to address this under-representation.

The formation of these acts was of utmost importance in South Africa, to ensure that the under-representation and barriers to entry for women to leadership and managerial positions are addressed and dealt with. Formation of such legislation was a way of un-rooting the ideology of patriarchy in our society and in working environments. These presented unfair practices and prejudice towards women based on the concept of patriarchy which deems that women have a lower thinking capacity than men hence they cannot be leaders of homes and big organizations.

Ademiluka (2018) states that patriarchy emanated from the Greek word *patriarkhes*, meaning 'father of race' or 'chief of race' or 'the rule of the father'. He further provides a definition by Merriam Webster which acknowledges that the concept of patriarchy is deeper than these meanings but denotes a social organization marked by the supremacy of the father in the family and the legal dependence of wives and children. Ademiluka (2018) further indicates that as much as the concept of patriarchy was initially embedded within a household setup, it has progressively been used to refer to the systematic organization of male supremacy and female subordination.

Igbelina-Igbokwe (2013) suggests that patriarchy is a system of social stratification and differentiation on the basis of sex which provides material advantages to males while simultaneously placing severe constraints and limitations on the roles and activities of females. The London Feminist Network concurs with Igbelina-Igbokwe as it states that because of patriarchy, we tend to experience current and historic unequal power relations between the sexes where females are subordinate to males and they are systematically disadvantaged and oppressed, which is visible by the under-representation of women in key state institutions, decision making positions and in employment and industry (London Feminist Network, n.d.)

The concept of patriarchy has portrayed women as morally, intellectually and physically inferior to men, where women are only subjected to be fit for household roles such as child-bearing, cleaning, taking care of the men's needs both physically and sexually, and not fit for high-profile decision-making roles such as leaders and managers of institutions.

The definitions of the patriarchal concept provided by different scholars form the basis of this study and the need to investigate the underlying gender-based challenges faced by women managers, and the reasons why they are marginalized on the basis of their gender.

2.4 Conceptualizing gender equality and equity in South Africa

According to Albertyn (2011), systematic subordination of black classified people in South Africa was a result of the oppression by white people towards the black people; and bound to that oppression was racial inequality and gender inequality. Albertyn (2011) further asserts that South Africa was and still remains a society which is deeply patriarchal, where women have been subjected to subordination to men in both public and private life.

Literature provides multiple conceptions about the meaning of gender equity. During 1994, the society that was inherited by the democratic government was extremely divided, with profound disparities in socio-economic wellbeing across different racial groups. Within this context, certain groups of society were further excluded and marginalized beyond racial orientation. Discrimination based on sex led to women becoming vulnerable to chronic stressors such as unemployment, poor health and education status, with generally poor standards of living (Department of Women Children and People with Disabilities, 2013).

In the fight towards rectifying gender imbalances in power, representation, healthcare, education, workplace and realizing gender equity in South Africa, the democratic government established various legislative frameworks and structures such as the National Gender Machinery to drive the gender equity strategies and activities with the guidance of Gender Policy Framework (Department of Women Children and People with Disabilities, 2013). However, Mthembu (2013) asserts that even though such policies are available, women still encounter challenges as they constantly battle to prove their worth for the positions they are occupying.

According to the Department of Monitoring & Evaluation (2014), “Gender equity is the process of being fair to women and men. As equity leads to equality, recognition of women’s rights and empowerment becomes the point of entry.” Gender equality means that women and men enjoy the same status and have equal conditions for realizing their full human rights and potential to contribute to national, political, economic, social and cultural developments, and to benefit from the results.

Other authors define gender equality, also referred to as sexual equality, as the state of equal ease of access to resources and opportunities regardless of gender, including economic participation and decision-making, and the state of valuing different behaviors, aspirations and needs equally regardless of gender (UNICEF, 2017). UNICEF notes that gender equality and gender equity are concepts which tend to be used interchangeably although they do not mean the same thing. UNICEF defines gender equity as the process of being fair to women and men (UNICEF, 2017).

A number of studies have been done by various scholars and researchers about issues surrounding gender equality and equity in organizations. Diko, citing Mthembu (2013), argues that “[g]ender equity in South African education remains elusive. Fewer women than men hold top administrative positions in education, many female administrators fill positions still considered feminine, and women in positions still considered masculine are being pushed out” Mthembu (2013:14). It is clear that this not only applies to education-based institutions but also administrative-based organizations. Matiwane (2019) points out that gender imbalances form part

of the challenges that have been faced by South Africa where, in most organizations, women are still confronted by challenges of ill-treatment and unequal opportunities compared to their male counterparts; the entrepreneurship space is no exception to these challenges.

In his study, Manqele (2018) gives an insightful historic detail of the gender inequalities that the women of today are faced with. He states,

In most societies, women lack experience of decision making and leadership in the public arena because girls, in contrast to boys, are socialized to play passive roles and given little opportunity to make decisions or develop leadership skills outside the family context. In most traditional societies, girls are kept largely within the confines of the household and family where they are protected and taught to accept the decisions that other parents, teachers, brothers, make on their behalf. As a result of this lack of experience in a public context, girls tend to lack the self-confidence and skills needed to function effectively in positions of formal leadership. An added handicap for many is their lack of capacity due to discrimination in access to education and training: in most countries, women have higher levels of illiteracy and fewer years of schooling than men (Manqele, 2018:26-27).

It is against this background that women of today are faced with gender imbalances and unfair discrimination that prohibit them from occupying positions of power and authority, whilst those who have managed to occupy such positions are still subjected to male approval and subordination. In response to this historic challenge, Corner, cited in Manqele (2018), calls all stakeholders involved to create a gender balance in government and administration; integrate women into political parties; recognize that shared work and parental responsibilities promote women's increased participation in public life; promote gender balance within the system; work toward equality between women and men in the private sector; establish equal access for women to training; increase women's capacity to participate in decision-making and leadership; and increase women's participation in the electoral process and political activities (Manqele, 2018:27).

Further to these recommendations, the South African government acknowledged the historic gender struggles that the South African women have endured over the years. The Department of Women,

Youth and Persons with Disabilities (2019) asserts that South African women have a long history of being subjected to suppression, discrimination, patriarchy, subjugation and suffering and it is due to these that the Constitution provides a framework that guides the introduction of policies and legislation that seeks to enforce transformation. It further states that the goals of the introduced policies and laws are to achieve a non-discriminative, non-sexist, equal, fair gender representation of women and their full participation in decision-making, national government structures and leadership positions (Department of Women, Youth and Persons with Disabilities, 2019). The major question is whether this is being achieved by the legislation and policies or not. The issue in contention is that our organizations seem to be far away from achieving gender representation in positions of power and authority, and women seem to be still subjected to the challenges as acknowledged by the Department. It is thus the responsibility of researchers and scholars to conduct meaningful research and provide feasible recommendations that will see our organizations achieving what the policies and laws aim to achieve.

One cannot avoid quoting some of the recommendations of the Beijing Plan of Action adopted after the 2019 conference. These recommendations clearly prove that the government is aware of the gender variances and challenges that women encounter in all spheres of life. However, the concern is whether our organizations are adhering to and enforcing the resolutions made by the government, and if not, what are the consequences of such non-compliance, imposed by the government? The Beijing Plan of Action stated that

To achieve gender-parity within the public and private sector, clear targets have been put in place in key areas of political and governance levels to promote the advancement, representation and full participation of women in power structures and key decision-making levels. In line with its commitment to the SADC Declaration on Gender and Development, South Africa attained its minimum 30% representation of women at the political level during the second national elections in 1999. The 30% target was also achieved for representation of women at the SMS level in the public service by March 2005. Following this, Cabinet adopted the 50/50 principle for women at the SMS level in the Public Service and called for the same principle to be adopted at all political, leadership and decision-making levels in the country, including in the private sector (Department of Women, Youth and Persons with Disabilities, 2019:55).

The aim of this study is to investigate whether these targets have been achieved, and if not, what impact it has on women's performance, organizational performance and the overall work-morale of women.

2.5 Legislative framework governing gender equity in government organizations

2.5.1 The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa of 1996

The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa is deemed the supreme law of the land that governs almost every human aspect that each and every person within the republic must adhere to and comply with. Further to the Constitution, policies and laws that govern our organizations should be founded in line with the Constitution and must not by any means contradict and/or oppose what is stated on the Constitution. Multiple sections of the Constitution make provision for equality and a non-discriminative society and organizations.

Chapter 2, Section 9(2) of the Constitution serves to promote the attainment of equality and advancement of the previously disadvantaged groups, while Section 2(3) further states that no one must be discriminated against on the basis of "race, gender, sex, pregnancy, marital status, ethnic or social origin, color, sexual orientation, age, disability, religion, conscience, belief, culture, language and birth" (South African Government, 1996:5).

Chapter 2, Section 23(1) of the Constitution further states that everyone has a full right to fair labor practices. This makes provision for women to freely participate in decision-making and to occupy positions of power and authority in organizations. It enforces the equality of both genders whilst also promoting a non-discriminative, non-sexist and non-racial environment in organizations.

2.5.2 Employment Equity Act, No 55 of 1998

For our organizations to be on par with the idea and objective of the principle of democracy, the organizations, particularly those which are state-owned, need not shy away from, but uphold, encourage, adhere to and comply with all the laws, regulations and policies that were formatted with an aim and objective of correcting and balancing the imbalances of the past. It is for these reasons that the Employment Equity Act, also known as an EEA within state-owned organizations, was formed. It aimed to balance the gender inequity within organizations as well as put into place corrective measures to address employment discrepancies within all levels of the hierarchy.

The Department of Labour (1998) set out the following core objectives as the main reasons behind the formation of the Act; they also provide a full understanding of what the Act seeks to achieve within organizations. The following are the objectives as set out in the Act:

- i. To promote the Constitutional right of equality
- ii. To eliminate unfair discrimination in employment
- iii. To ensure the implementation of employment equity to redress the effects of discrimination
- iv. To achieve a diverse workforce broadly representative of the people
- v. To promote economic development and efficiency in the workforce and give effect to the obligations of the Republic as a member of the International Labour Organization.

If organizations can promote, comply with and adhere to this Act, they can work and strive towards achieving the gender equality and fair treatment of everyone who is within the organization irrespective of their gender, race, age, religion and culture.

2.5.3 Promotion of Equality and Prevention of Unfair Discrimination Act 4 of 2000

South Africa is a democratic country which requires the complete eradication of economic and social inequalities, more so those that are regarded as being systematic in nature. Such inequalities entrenched through apartheid; colonialism and patriarchy have brought about suffering and pain to the majority of people, including women and children. In striving towards eradication of the above mentioned, the Promotion of Equality and Prevention of Unfair Discrimination Act was formed, Act 4 of the year 2000.

The Promotion of Equality and Prevention of Unfair Discrimination Act 4 of 2000 serves to give effect to the Section 9(23)1 of the South African Constitution of 1996 as amended. This Act was formed to enforce the contents of the Employment Equity Act, particularly Chapter Two which specifically deals with the prohibition of unfair treatment of employees within an organization. The Act sets out the below objectives as the core outputs that the Act seeks to achieve through its implementation, enforcement and promotion in all organizations.

- i. To prevent and prohibit unfair discrimination and any form of gender-based harassment.
- ii. To promote the culture of equality while eliminating unfair discrimination, prevent and prohibit hate speech and to provide for matters connected therewith.

It is evident that measurable progress has been made in striving toward the achievement of a non-discriminative working environment, but to some degree, inequalities, patriarchy and unfair

treatment towards women is still in existence. Most of our organizations are not yet close to the realization of a 50/50 gender representation in management and leadership positions, which suggests that injustice in our organizations is still in existence and our organizations are not doing enough to eradicate such injustices and inequalities.

2.5.4 White Paper on Affirmative Action 564 of 1998

The White Paper on Affirmative Action was formed as a mechanism to achieve a representative and equitable public service throughout the national and provincial spheres of government. It sought to build an environment that supports and enables those who were historically disadvantaged and excluded by unfair discrimination to fulfill their full potential within the Public Service, so that it may derive the maximum benefit of their diverse skills and talents to improve service delivery. The Affirmative Action's objective is set within the framework of the Employment Equity Bill and other relevant labour and Public Service legislation.

The objectives as set out in the Affirmative Action policy are as follows:

- i. Enhance the capacities of the historically disadvantaged through the development and introduction of practical measures that support their advancement within the Public Service.
- ii. Inculcate in the Public Service a culture which values diversity and supports the affirmation of those who have previously been unfairly disadvantaged.
- iii. Speed up the achievement and progressive improvement of the numeric targets set out in the White Paper on the Transformation of the Public Service.

Over and above the legislative framework that supports the concept of equality, the government has also formed various structures that are mandated to carry out functions towards the realization of gender equality and human rights. Some of the structures are The Human Rights Commission, The Commission for Gender Equality, The Parliamentary Committee on Women, Children and People Living with Disabilities and others.

2.6 Chapter Conclusion

This chapter has examined various literature and already available data from studies and perceptions of scholars in relation to the concepts that have been discussed in this chapter. The literature discussed in this chapter forms the basis and cornerstone of the study and has given more insight into the concepts and terms related to the subject of the study. The research methodology chapter

follows, which will give a clear guide of how this study was carried out, using what instruments, and focused on whom.

Chapter three: Research methodology

3.1 Introduction

The previous chapters discussed in detail the underlying concepts and terms related to the subject matter. The researcher has examined various concepts and terms in studies published by various scholars, authors and researchers to provide information on the foundation and meaning of this study. This chapter provides information on how the study was conducted, what instruments were used to collect data, how data was analyzed after collection using which data analysis instruments, who the respondents were and how the respondents were determined.

3.2. Research approach

Sedgley (2007) defines the term methodology as the overall approaches and perspectives of the research process which details the why, what, where and how of the study. Kothari (2004) defined research methodology as a systematic way to solve the research problems of the study. Thus, methodology is a guideline or action plan of how the researcher will go about seeking solutions to the research problems. Rajasekar et al. (2013) agrees with the definitions of the two scholars above whilst adding that research methodology serves as the science of how the research project will be carried out. In as far as methodology is concerned, there are three research methodologies, namely qualitative, quantitative and mixed methods.

Brynard and Hanekom (2006) suggest that there are two main approaches to research; quantitative and qualitative approaches. They further distinguish that the quantitative approach is concerned with numerical and analytical research whereas qualitative research refers to studies that have descriptive data, which is generally the participant's own spoken and/or written words describing the respondent's feelings, experiences and perceptions, hence there is no element of numbers or counting assigned to the qualitative approach. Sekaran and Bougie (2016) add a third approach, the mixed methods approach, which seeks to give responses to research questions that cannot be answered by either qualitative or quantitative approaches. Therefore, a mixed methods approach is a combination of the both the quantitative and qualitative approaches.

For the purpose of this study, qualitative methodology was used, considering the nature of the organization in which the study was conducted, as well as the population size available for the study, which was very minimal. The use of qualitative methodology in this context is supported by Welman et al. (2006) as they advocate that qualitative studies are successfully used in the description of

groups, small communities and organizations. A qualitative approach helps the researcher to easily translate and describe the phenomena, feelings and perceptions in the social world. “Qualitative research deals with the underlying qualities of subjective experiences and the meanings associated with phenomena” (Du Plooy-Cilliers, et al., 2014). The decision to use the qualitative approach for this study emanated from the fact that it would assist the researcher to gain in-depth knowledge, understanding of the respondents’ feelings about the subject matter, as well as understanding of the nature of the issue at hand. Leedy and Ormrod (2016) and Mishra and Alok (2011) agree that qualitative studies are studies that make use of verbal, visual and nonnumeric information.

3.3. Research Design

Welman et al. (2006) suggest that the research design of a project is a mechanism used to investigate any relationships that the researcher postulated in the hypothesis and research questions. Creswell (2014) asserts that a research design is a type of an enquiry on the research methodology that provides a certain direction for the procedures in a study. Sekaran and Bougie (2016) suggest that a research design is a plan by which the researcher collects, measures and analyzes data to give answers to his/her research questions. A research design provides direction and a guideline on how the researcher conducted the study.

A case study approach was utilized because “it allows in-depth, multi-faceted explorations of complex issues in their real-life settings hence the case study approach is well recognized in the fields of business, law and policy” (Crowe, et al., 2011:1). Scholars and authors have shared different perspectives of what a case study is in research. “A case study focusses on collecting information about a specific object, event or activity, such as a particular business unit or organization” (Sekaran & Bougie, 2016). Du Plooy-Cilliers et al. (2014) advocate that a case study “... is a thick and detailed description of a social phenomenon”. Leedy and Ormrod (2016) further state that “in a case study, which is also referred to as an idiographic research, a particular individual, program, or event is studied in-depth for a defined period of time” (Leedy & Ormrod, 2016).

According to Kothari (2004), a case study approach comprises at least five major phases that are involved in conducting the research. These are listed below:

- i. Recognition and determination of the status of the phenomenon to be investigated or the unit of attention.
- ii. Collection of data, examination and history of the given phenomenon.

- iii. Diagnosis and identification of causal factors as a basis for remedial or developmental treatment.
- iv. Application of remedial measures, i.e., treatment and therapy (this phase is often characterized as case work).
- v. Follow-up programme to determine effectiveness of the treatment applied.

3.4. Study site

This study was conducted in one of the state-owned government departments in Pietermaritzburg, KwaZulu-Natal province. The site in which the study was confined in was a Provincial Head Office that is responsible and accountable for the four regions within the province of KwaZulu-Natal, namely North Coast Region, Midlands Region, Southern Region and eThekweni Region. Due to the nature in which the organization is structured, the targeted sample is only located within the Head Office where the Directors are located, considering that three of the regions are headed by male Regional Directors who do not form part of this study's targeted population nor sample. Therefore, for these reasons mentioned, the study was conducted in Pietermaritzburg, the capital city of the KwaZulu-Natal province.

3.5. Target Population

According to Welman et al. (2006), the population in a study refers to the study objects, which may include but are not limited to, individuals, organizations, human products and events; it is a full set of cases from which a sample is taken. Sekaran (2016) further states that a target population can be objects of interests that the researcher wishes to investigate and things that the researcher wants to make inferences on. An example is a study conducted within an organization targeting only permanently employed employees; therefore, all those who are permanently employed within that organization become the study's population.

According to Brynard and Hanekom (2006), it is important to note that "population" does not mean the entire population of the country; rather it refers to a phenomenon, case, objects, subjects, events and activities which the researcher wants to research in order to gain new information and/or knowledge. Therefore, Brynard and Hanekom (2006) define a population as a "group in the universe which possesses specific characteristics". Du Plooy-Cilliers et al. (2014) sum up that a study's population is the "total group of people or entities from whom the information is required" (Du Plooy-Cilliers, et al., 2014).

Considering the topic of the study and the research problem for this project, the population of this study are all the women, irrespective of race and age, who are occupying managerial positions that have some level of authority and decision making. According to the structure of the government's organizations, a Responsibility Manager is a person who has authority and power in her section or division, who holds and is accountable for a budget of the section, to the Head, who is also referred to as the Accounting Officer of an organization. Therefore, the population of this study are women who occupy a Directorship position or higher. This position is scaled as a Level 13 position and upwards.

3.6. Sampling and sample size

Because of the infeasibility for a researcher to study the entire study population, a researcher is then compelled to scientifically draw up a sample, which is a calculated representative number of the entire population. This is referred to as a sample in research. According to Du Plooy-Cilliers et al. (2014), a sample is referred to as a subset of the accessible population. Sekaran and Bougie (2016) state that, a sample is a subgroup or a scientifically calculated portion of the entire population that consists of some but not all the elements of the entire target population that is of interest to the researcher for his or her study. Teherdoost (2016) asserts that it is close to impossible for a researcher to collect data from all his cases, hence to answer the research questions there is a need to select a sample.

Before going into the adopted sampling method for this study, it is vital to discuss and differentiate between the two broad sampling methods, namely, probability and non-probability sampling. Du Plooy-Cilliers et al. (2014) and Teherdoost (2016) suggest that in probability sampling, each element within the population has an equal chance or an opportunity to be part of the sample for the study. Du Plooy-Cilliers et al. (2014) further state that this type of sampling method is, in most cases, used in quantitative studies as it removes human bias from the sampling process through the use of methods that are random and systematic. In contrast to the probability sampling method, we look at the non-probability sampling method. According to Teherdoost (2016), the non-probability sampling method is more associated with case study research design and qualitative research.

On the basis of Teherdoost's suggestion, for this study, a sample was selected from the study's population. Emanating from the research method used for this study, the qualitative method, non-probability sampling was utilized to arrive at a representative sample. Welman et al. (2006) advocate that this type of sampling method is more cost effective and less complicated when dealing with cases such as individuals, compared to the probability sampling method.

According to Sekaran and Bougie (2016), under non-probability sampling there are at least four sampling methods. These are convenience sampling, purposive sampling, judgement sampling and quota sampling. Du Plooy-Cilliers et al. (2014) add accidental sampling, snowballing sampling and volunteer sampling. For the purpose of this study, a purposive sampling method was utilized on the basis and support of the nature of the study, the target population, as well as the topic of the study. This was done to accurately seek possible answers to the study's research questions. In support of this decision, the researcher referred to Du Plooy-Cilliers et al. (2014) who state, "with purposive sampling, we purposefully choose the elements that we wish to include in our sample, based on the set list of characteristics. We look at our population and our research questions, and determine what characteristics from the population are important for the research" (Du Plooy-Cilliers, et al., 2014).

As discussed above under the population heading, this study's population was very minimal and small with 11 elements; women who occupied Directorship positions within the organization. This led to the calculation of the sample being the very same, 11 elements, which makes the population equal to the sample size. As confirmation of this, an online-based sample size calculation tool by three different authors, namely, Qualtrics, Survey Monkey and The Survey Systems, produces a sample size of 12 required for this study where the confidence level is 95%, confidence interval is 5% and population being 12 individuals. The identity of the population and sample size comes as a result of the limited number of the targeted population.

3.7. Data collection method and measuring instrument

"By using qualitative data collection methods, the researcher obtains the richness and depth of data, gathered from complex and multi-faceted phenomena in a specific social context" (Du Plooy-Cilliers, et al., 2014). Data collection is a process in which a researcher gathers information from the sample to gather in-depth understanding of a phenomena from those who are affected by it. It is

also referred to as a study's sample. Pune (2013) states that there are three broad data sources, namely, primary sources, secondary sources and tertiary sources.

For the purpose of this study, the researcher used primary data to address the research objectives and give possible answers to the research questions. Primary data, also referred to by other scholars as primary sources, refers to the data collected first hand by the researcher for the purpose of the study; it is raw without interpretation and represents the personal or official opinion or position (Pune, 2013). Sekaran and Bougie (2016) further suggest that primary data is data which is gathered from the original sources for a specific purpose. The researcher made use of survey interviews as suggested by Du Plooy-Cilliers et al. (2014). This data collection technique was used with the aim of gathering and learning more about the respondents' opinions, perceptions and beliefs about the subject matter.

To collect the primary data from the study participants, the researcher opted to use structured interviews; these were conducted face-to-face between the participant and the researcher. Leedy and Ormrod (2016) mentioned that qualitative researchers use multiple methods to collect data in a single study, such as interviews, observations, objects, written documents, audiovisual material and electronic material. Sekaran and Bougie (2016) agree with Leedy and Ormrod and state that these methods allow the researcher to gather a wide range of information from human respondents. According to Driscoll (2011), it is best to make use of interviews when collecting data if you seeking to study detailed information from a few specific individuals. He further argues that interviewing is the best data collection method when seeking opinions from individuals who are experts in their fields. Driscoll (2011) suggests that an interview can be briefly defined as a question and answer session between one or more people and a way of gaining in-depth information from a person about a phenomenon related to the primary research project. Driscoll (2011) concludes by advising that in conducting interviews, there are three highly important points to note and consider. These are, choosing the right person for the interview, finding the most suitable location, and lastly, recording the interview.

3.8. Data analysis

In as far as qualitative data analysis is concerned, the researcher referred to Marshall and Rossman (2016) who state that analyzing a mass of collected data can be untidy, ambiguous, time consuming, fascinating and creative. At times the researcher may feel that he is tormented artist. However, they

assure that this is only normal when analyzing a large volume of data. Considering the suggestions of these authors, it is important to have a clear understanding of what analyzing data entails. Creswell et al. (2010) define the concept of analyzing data as an interpretative philosophy that seeks to examine meaning and the symbolic concepts of qualitative data that is phrased differently by different respondents. Marshall and Rossman (2016) advocate that it is a procedural act of attaining order, structure and meaning of mass data.

Therefore, the process of analyzing data is aimed at gaining a clear understanding of the participants' thinking about a phenomenon or a particular situation. It helps the researcher to gain an in-depth understanding of the data, about how the respondents feel and perceive an issue of interest to them. There are two common methods of analyzing qualitative data which are supported (Uwe Flick, 2018), namely, coding and categorizing. According to Uwe Flick (2018), coding and categorizing are not only methods of analyzing qualitative data but they are the most prominent ones if the data was collected from interviews, focus groups and observations.

Leedy & Ormrod (2016) suggest that researchers make use of electronic computer software to store research collected data as this may assist the researcher in times of unforeseen circumstances. They further provide a wide range of computer-based software such as EthnoNotes, HyperQual, HyperRESEARCH, Kwalitan, MAXQDA, NVivo, QDA Miner and Qualrus to organize and analyze data to make meaning out of it. "Such programs provide a ready means of storing, segmenting and organizing lengthy field notes, and they are designed to help you find patterns in your notes" (Leedy & Ormrod, 2016). Emanating from the suggestions of Leedy and Ormrod (2016), the researcher, taking into consideration the topic, nature and research methodology of this study, decided to use a different approach of analyzing data other than the computer-based systems such as NVivo. Microsoft Excel Spreadsheet was used to analyze the data. The choice of using this method to analyze data was based on the suggestion by Solveig (2016) that no computer-based programme can analyze data but only a human mind can as programmes such as NVivo and CAQDAS are basically data management tools that support the researcher during the process of analyzing data. She further asserts that rather than making use of very powerful, complex and sophisticated programmes that require full understanding of how to use them, it may be useful for emerging researchers to use a more easy method for systematic coding and structuring interview data based on basic functions in Word and Excel (Solveig, 2016).

3.9. Validity and reliability

It is equally important for the researcher to cover the actual area of investigation when conducting the study. This exercise is referred to as validity in research. Taherdoost (2016) refers to validity as the means of ensuring that what is meant to be measured is actually measured. He discusses various types of validity in research, namely, face validity, content validity, construct validity and criterion validity (Taherdoost, 2016). Maree (2010) asserts that validity and reliability, in as far as research instruments are concerned, are very crucial aspects in research; hence when these aspects are spoken of, they usually refer to research that is credible and trustworthy.

Although these aspects are important in research, Leedy and Ormrod (2016) suggest that since validity and reliability are measurements, qualitative research does not measure things in the numerical sense but is more concerned with validity and reliability of the data collected for the study. Denzin and Lincoln (2018) refer to validity in qualitative research as the trustworthiness of the manner in which data was collected by the researcher.

” Reliability concerns the extent to which a measurement of a phenomena provides stable and consistent results and is also concerned with repeatability” (Taherdoost, 2016:33). There are people in life who we consider to be reliable because of the fact that they keep to their word – they do as they say they will do, and when they said they will do. This is a practical demonstration of the term reliability as provided by Du Plooy-Cilliers et al. (2014). In research, the readers always want to trust the research findings provided by the researchers through their research work; they want to be assured that should the same study be conducted by a different researcher, he or she will produce the same results. In research, this is referred to as research reliability.

On the basis of the discussion above regarding validity and reliability in research and in striving to achieve these aspects in this research, the researcher referred and use of the techniques as suggested by Alshenqeeti (2013). These techniques are as follows:

- i. making notes during the interview;
- ii. allowing the respondent to sum up and give clarity about the opinions they have made;
- iii. avoiding the use of leading questions during the interview;
- iv. avoiding the portrayal of the researcher’s opinions, projections and attitude towards an issue, and;
- v. minimizing the tendency to seek answers that lead to the researcher’s own preconceived notions.

3.10. Ethical considerations

Integrity and honesty are important aspects when conducting a research study; it is not only about the skills, knowledge and diligence required from a researcher. For these reasons, ethical aspects are taken into equal account, with the aim of upholding and protecting the rights of the research respondents; more so if it is human subjects. In research, human respondents have rights, such as anonymity, confidentiality, informed consent and self-determination. Thus, observing these rights renders the research study ethical. As part of upholding the ethical considerations of the study, written approval to conduct research and collect data within the respective organization, also referred to as the Gate Keeper's Letter, was obtained from the organization under study. An Ethical Clearance Certificate was also obtained from the UKZN Humanities and Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee with reference **HSS/0975/018M**.

Before the collection of data, a signed informed consent form was obtained from all the participants. This form made them aware of their rights as participants and that participation was voluntary. This means that it is within their own right to accept or decline to participate and to withdraw from participation at any given time without penalty. In addition to that, confidentiality and anonymity of participants was maintained throughout the research by not mentioning their names and/or the names of their portfolio of responsibility within the organization as this is ultimately linked to their identities. In conclusion, as per the condition of the Gate Keeper's Letter, the name of the organization in which the study was conducted was not disclosed in this research report nor the subject of the study.

3.11. Chapter conclusion

This chapter explored the different strategies and steps that the researcher employed to find possible answers to the research questions, in light of the aims and objectives of this study. These steps and strategies were discussed in detail to give a clear indication of how the researcher conducted the study and what strategies were used to arrive at the final destination. Various important aspects of research were discussed to provide a full context of what was required and expected from all parties in relation to the study.

This chapter covered aspects such as the data collection method, chosen research design as well as sampling technique utilized in this study. This study investigates the gender-based challenges faced by women in managerial positions, hence the study involved field research conducted through a case study approach. Primary data was collected through face-to-face interviews with the participants in their natural setting, which was their workplace or office environment. In the

following chapter, the researcher presents findings stemming from the respondent's responses to questions asked during the interviews.

Chapter four: Presentation of research results

4.1 Introduction

Chapter three presented detailed information regarding the research methods adopted and utilized for this study. This chapter presents details about the response rate of participants to the open-ended questions during the interview, as well as analysis of the responses of the research respondents. The research outcomes discussed in this chapter are an end-result of the research questions and research objectives as presented in chapter one of this research.

4.2. Response rate

The response rate for the face-to-face interviews conducted with open-ended questions totaled to nine participants. Of the remaining two that did not participate in the study, one resigned from the organization before the interview could take place, and the other one did not like to participate in the study. The organization's women in management team were diverse with different professions and academic backgrounds. Some were more into what they classified as support services or administrative support, which includes strategic management, financial services, ethics and security services, while some were from professional services such as occupational health and safety, quantity surveying, and architectural and design services. Gathering data from people with different and diverse knowledge, skills and experience where some are office-based and some are field-based assisted the researcher with covering most units across the organization as well as providing the researcher with an overall perspective of their experiences, perceptions and feelings around the subject matter.

4.3. Demographic details of study participants

The demographics section discusses the background information and data about the research participants.

4.3.1 Gender

Emanating from the research topic and the targeted group of this study, all the participants who took part in this study were female.

4.3.2 Age range

One of the sub-topics under the demographic information of respondents was the age (presented in the table below). Five respondents were found to be over the age range of above 45 years, while four were between the age range of 35 to 44 years old. These were the only applicable age ranges as there was no one under the age of 34 years. This showed that there is currently no woman Director in the youth age range, 34 years and below.

Table 4.1: Age groups of respondents

	<u>21-24</u>	<u>25-34</u>	<u>35-44</u>	<u>45+</u>	
Participant 1				1	
Participant 2				1	
Participant 3				1	
Participant 4			1		
Participant 5				1	
Participant 6			1		
Participant 7			1		
Participant 8			1		
Participant 9				1	
	0	0	4	5	
Percentage	0%	0%	44%	56%	100%

4.3.3 Highest qualification

The qualification results of respondents are shown in Table 4.2 below. The table show that two of the respondents were in possession of a Diploma qualification, four held Post Graduate Diplomas or Honours Degree, and three were in possession of a Master's Degree. The researcher observed that

the qualifications that the respondents held were very dynamic in nature and this assisted the researcher with more insight into the skills that the respondents had.

Highest level of Educational Qualification.						
	<u>Matric</u>	<u>Diploma</u>	<u>Degree</u>	<u>Postgraduate diploma/Honours</u>	<u>Masters</u>	<u>PhD</u>
Participant 1				1		
Participant 2					1	
Participant 3				1		
Participant 4					1	
Participant 5				1		
Participant 6					1	
Participant 7		1				
Participant 8		1				
Participant 9				1		
Percentage	0%	22%	0%	44%	33%	0%
						100%

4.3.4 Experience of management position (in years)

Table 4.3 indicates the participants' level of experience in managerial positions, in years. This helped the researcher to ascertain how long the participants have been exposed to managerial responsibilities in order to see the depth of their knowledge of the subject matter and exposure. There were three categories in respect of years of experience. These were: 1-3 years; 4-6 years; and 7 years & above. There was no manager with 1 to 3 years; four had 4-6 years; while five had experience 7 years and above.

Table 4.3: Level of experience as a Manager (in years)

	<u>1-3 Years</u>	<u>4-6 Years</u>	<u>7+ Years</u>	
Participant 1			1	
Participant 2			1	
Participant 3			1	
Participant 4		1		
Participant 5			1	
Participant 6		1		
Participant 7		1		
Participant 8		1		
Participant 9			1	
Percentage	0%	44%	56%	100%

4.4. Presentation of research results

This section presents and discusses the research results in accordance with the research objectives.

4.4.1. Research objective one

To establish gender-based challenges facing women in managerial and leadership positions that hinder performance.

Objective one aimed at establishing the gender-based challenges that are faced by women in managerial positions and how these affect them as managers and leaders.

Table 4.4: Challenges faced by women in managerial positions

Themes	Count
Males considered themselves and are treated as superior to females	02
Females are not being respected, recognized and acknowledged	03
Unfair treatment against women compared to their male counterparts	01
Working conditions that are not favorable to women	02
Gender equality policies are being implemented and enforced as they should be	01

The main objective sought to gather information about the feelings and perceptions of women in managerial positions concerning the challenges that they face as women and to ascertain whether they regard these as hindrances in performing their assigned duties the best way they know how. This objective also sought to get information on what those challenges are, according to them, how they affect their morale and motivation as managers, and their job satisfaction as women managers.

Out of nine participants, eight agreed that there are a vast number of challenges they are facing as women managers in this organization, and these directly affect the manner in which they perform their duties and responsibilities. It leads to some being demotivated and unsatisfied with their roles.

Table 4.5: Participant Responses

Participant No.	Verbatim Responses
One	<i>“although there are challenges but sometimes knowing your work and standing your ground is the key...”</i>
Two	<i>“work logistics are made in a way that doesn’t accommodate their family responsibilities such as late-night meetings and over the weekend meetings”</i> .
Three	<i>“men still consider themselves as superior to females and the patriarchal stigma that a women’s place is at home doing house chores and raising children still exists”</i> .
Four	<i>“meetings logistics are sometimes not favorable for women and the society is structured in a sense that women responsibilities compared to men”</i> .

Four of the five remaining participants agreed on the following points. Some of the pressing issues are that women are not respected, they not recognized, not acknowledged, and their efforts are never appreciated. They also shared that they feel that unfair treatment is still in existence as their views and suggestions are not considered nor implemented until a male puts the very same view in a different manner, hence historical gender issues have not yet been rooted out. Although legislation and policies are available, implementation is never an order of the day.

Only one participant argued that she feels no challenges coming mostly from her male counterparts. She supported this by explaining that it may be because of the nature of her work which forces her not to be office-based most of the time; she is operating in isolation with her team. As a result, she hardly feels any pressure or gender-related issues specifically from males.

Are there challenges the hindrance to performing assigned duties?

Question three of the interview under objective one sought to find out whether the identified challenges have a positive or negative impact on how women managers perform their assigned duties. Table 4.6 below demonstrates the results according to the responses.

Table 4.6: Impact of gender-based challenges on women work morale

Themes	Count
Challenges have a positive impact on how women perform their duties	1
Challenges have a negative impact on how women perform their duties	7
Neutral feeling over the subject matter	1

Table 4.6 demonstrates three themes that were common and identified by the respondents. One respondent portrayed neutrality in as far as the impact of gender-based challenges on how women perform their assigned duties. Seven respondents agreed that having gender-based challenges in a workplace does affect the manner in which they perform their duties and their work morale generally. One respondent disagreed with the rest and mentioned that such challenges should affect the manner in which one does her work, but in a different way; she felt that they (challenges) should positively impact on how you perform your work instead.

Participant one, in support of her neutrality on the subject matter, mentioned that:

“males are not committed to meeting regularly which affects the service delivery while females have to constantly fight for work to be done and it is through those fights that positive outcomes come into life”.

Seven of the respondents agreed that the challenges they face negatively affect the manner in which they perform their duties and they argued as below:

Table 4.7: Participant Responses

Participant No.	Verbatim Responses
Two	<i>“when your efforts are being looked down upon and not recognized, it weighs you down and end up being demotivated and tired of fighting for work to be done”.</i>
Three	<i>“being not accepted as an equal lead to being treated as a second best, that feeling leads to not being in liberty to perform at your best possible ability”.</i>

Participants four and six shared the same sentiments, mentioning that the negativity women are subjected to makes them fail to perform at their best level, and as much as they would like to do their work well, it cripples their work morale and the love they have for their work. They end up doing what they can do and leave the rest with the mentality of *“we can only do so much”*.

Table 4.8: Participant Responses

Participant No.	Verbatim Responses
Seven	<i>“we spend more time fighting battles rather than doing work and without doing work, we are not performing”.</i>
Eight	<i>“obviously negative with no doubt or reservation”.</i>
Nine	<i>“with such challenges, we end up being unable to work freely and without that free mindset, you are unable to perform and without you performing, the entire organization will fail”.</i>

Participant five disagreed with the rest of the other respondents and argued that even if there were challenges, she looks at them from a positive point of view that they “*should produce growth and better understanding of your field of work as a woman*”. She further argued that challenges should not only be seen from a female point of view but also from the male point of view, and they not only come from males but from also females to females.

Women motivation as managers

Question four of the interview under objective one aimed at ascertaining whether or not women in managerial positions would say they are motivated or not, considering the challenges they face in a working environment. Table 4.9 below consists of three themes that were evident from the responses to the question.

Table 4.9: The rate of women motivation as managers

Themes	Count
A motivated women manager	5
A demotivated women manager	2
A neutral women manager	2

Five of the women managers that participated in the study mentioned that they remain motivated managers regardless of the challenges they are faced with and come across in the course of doing their work. They all have different reasons to support their feelings but the most common response was due to the love of what they do and their work. Below are their reasons for being motivated.

Table 4.10: Participant Responses

Participant No.	Verbatim Responses
One	<i>“...because of the love I have for what I do”.</i>
Three	<i>“proving men wrong and that I am deserving of the position motivates me”.</i>
Five	<i>“the field of my work is interesting and exciting, each day I feel joyful in doing my work and being motivated then comes naturally”.</i>
Eight	<i>“the fact that I have managed to be in this position which is hard for most of the females out there is motivating on its own and it makes me want to motivate other women to ignore all odds and strive through no matter the cost”.</i>

Nine	<i>"I love what I do, I enjoy it and I'm always looking forward to each day".</i>
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Two of the respondents made it clear that they are not motivated as managers, and the core of this is the challenges they are faced with as well as what they identify as an uncondusive working environment. Below are extracts from their responses.

Table 4.11: Participant Responses

Participant No.	Verbatim Responses
Two	<i>"not being recognized and respected leads to being demotivated".</i>
Six	<i>"because of the working conditions, being motivated is an issue of the past".</i>

The remaining two participants shared their neutral views on the subject. They were both unable to ascertain whether they are motivated or not and shared that they are unsure. Below are extracts from their responses.

Participant four argued as follows:

the physical and emotional balance is an issue of all days where your body is in a meeting and mind is at home cooking, attending to your kids and picking them up from school. In that state of mind, one cannot positively participate and contribute in a meeting. So, I end up being caught in between my wife and motherly responsibilities as well as being a manager and by that alone, I am confused whether I'd say I'm motivated or not, I'm uncertain myself because I love these both worlds in which I sometimes find myself living in at the same time.

Participant seven stated:

I am only motivated by the fact that what I do is my passion; I love it but the conditions in which I do what I consider to be my passion are not conducive enough for me, it tests the level of my perseverance and love for what I do. As a result, at this point I am not sure which is greater than the other between my passion and the uncondusive working environment, I am really not sure about my motivation level, not at all.

4.4.2. Research objective two

To establish the material impact of gender inequality on the overall performance of the organization.

The main focus of objective two of this study was to establish the impact of gender inequality on the overall performance of the organization. This was to ascertain whether the inequalities based on gender are somehow affecting the manner in which the organization is performing. The research sought to find out from female managers how they perceive the impact of gender imbalances, as they are the minority in terms of gender in the higher structures of the organization.

Impact of gender inequity within the SMT on the performance of the organization

This section sought to discover the impact of gender imbalances within the SMT and how this affects the overall performance of the organization. Two themes were discovered when interviews were conducted: seven of the respondents agreed that the gender imbalances do have a negative impact on the overall performance of the organization; two respondents argued against the sentiments of the other respondents by saying no it doesn't have any impact. Table 4.12 below demonstrates the two themes as well as the response rate relating to each theme.

Table 4.12: Impact of gender imbalances on performance of an organization

Themes	Count
Gender imbalances have an impact on the performance of the organization	7
Gender imbalances do not have any impact on the performance of the organization	2

Table 4.12 shows that most (7) of the participants agree that the gender imbalances in the senior Management Team of the organization have an impact on the overall performance of the organization. Below are response extracts from the participants regarding the subject matter:

Table 4.13: Participant Responses

Participant No.	Verbatim Responses
One	<i>"...resolutions are not being implemented, there is always a reactive thinking over matters that need proactive thinking, males are good at supporting and</i>

	<i>backing each other against females not considering the criticality of the subject matter”.</i>
Two	<i>“male domination in the SMT is a common issue raised by females as female views are being ignored and not considered, however if there can be a fair representation in the SMT, maybe women will also be bold enough to stand firm for what they believe in and support each other”.</i>
Six	<i>“the gender imbalance plays a huge role in the failure of our organizations”.</i>
Seven	<i>“...instead of doing work, we fighting battles and no produce thereafter, females are overpowered by males in most cases”.</i>
Eight	<i>“since males are a majority, in most cases their word is the final, after all the saying say the majority wins not considering the effects of winning thereafter”.</i>

The two remaining participants argued against the rest of the participants regarding the subject matter. They both agreed that the gender imbalance in the SMT doesn't have any impact on the overall performance of the organization. Below are their responses:

Table 4.14: Participant Responses

Participant No.	Verbatim Responses
Five	<i>“there is no male or female job as such, the 50/50 presentation should not be a reason for non-performance of the organization. If both genders can do their assigned job, the organization should perform irrespective of the gender issues and ratios”.</i>
Nine	<i>“performance of an organization is dependent on employees not gender, everyone needs to do what is expected of him/her and non-performance can never be an issue”.</i>

Can gender equity help the organization to achieve its objectives?

Question two of objective two focused on ascertaining whether the women who participated in the study believed that if strict measures were enforced to achieve gender balances, the organization would be able to achieve its organizational goals. This question arises from the first question where women were asked whether they thought gender imbalances have any impact on the overall performance of the organization. During the interviews, two themes were evident and are shown below in Table 4.15.

Table 4.15: Gender balance and achievement of organizational objectives.

Themes	Count
Yes, if there was a gender balance, the organization would achieve its objectives	7
Not sure (neutral) whether gender balance would help the organization or not	2

The above table presents the two themes that emerged from the responses regarding gender balance and achievement of organizational goals. From the interviews, it was evident that most (7) of the respondents believed that if gender balance policies and legislation were implemented and enforced within the organization, the organization would be fairly represented in as far as gender is concerned within the SMT, and that would assist the organization to achieve its organizational goals and mandate. Below are some of the responses.

Table 4.16: Participant Responses

Participant No.	Verbatim Responses
One	<i>“because males have an emotional management style and fail to take decisions that are in the best interest of the organization, they can be forceful and patriarchal”.</i>
Three	<i>“without teamwork, it is not feasible to achieve our organizational objectives, thus, when there are still ‘males’ and ‘females’ as it stands now, there is no teamwork and the organization suffer. So strict measures need to be put into place and enforce equity and equality amongst the genders as that will produce a one united team”.</i>
Four	<i>“having more women in decision making positions might assist the organization as they may make positive contribution that is not in the best</i>

	<i>interest of other parties but the organization and society that we serve and represent”.</i>
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Participants six, seven and eight agreed with the rest of the respondents by stating a clear “*yes it would assist the organization*”.

The two remaining participants disagreed with the rest of the respondents; they did not see how these elements are related, thus raising a feeling of being unsure and neutral regarding the issue.

Below are their responses:

Table 4.17: Participant Responses

Participant No.	Verbatim Responses
Five	<i>“I don’t necessarily see gender inequality and inequity as a hindrance to any organizational operations”.</i>
Nine	<i>“I don’t think performance is dependent on the issues of gender”.</i>

Is the organization doing justice in implementing gender balancing policies and legislation?

This was the third question under objective two of the study. This question aimed to gather information on the opinions and feelings of the respondents in relation to whether or not the organization is doing everything possible to implement and enforce gender balance within the organization, focusing on managerial positions that have the decision-making and leadership responsibilities within the organization. During the interviews, three themes surfaced from the responses of the participants, shown below in Table 4.18.

Table 4.18: Implementation of gender equity policies in SMT positions

Themes	Count
Yes, the organization is doing justice in implementing gender balancing policies in SMT	1
No, the organization is not doing justice in implementing gender balancing policies in SMT	7
Not sure (Neutral)	1

Table 4.18 reflects the three themes that surfaced during the interviews. The main focus of this question was to ascertain whether the women felt that the organization is doing justice in implementing and enforcing the gender balancing policies in SMS positions of the organization. It is thus evident from above that most (7) female managers felt that there is not much will and priority in ensuring that gender equity policies are implemented and enforced at all times during recruitment processes. Below are extracts of the responses for this question.

Table 4.19: Participant Responses

Participant No.	Verbatim Responses
One	<i>“women are employed while most are driven out of positions and not because they are incompetent but because of association, hence we are not yet to realize gender balance”.</i>
Two	<i>“competent and qualifying females are out there and some are within the organization, but for some reason we are recruiting them into position of power, so we are not yet going to see any justice but we remain hoping for good chance though”.</i>
Three	<i>“males are still dominating SMT positions, not differentiating on the basis of race, but truth is race also plays a huge role”.</i>
Four	<i>“we have the mechanisms to achieve the objectives of the policies but we are not integrating them to arrive at a desired destination as per the policy”.</i>
Six	<i>“the 50/50 ratio has not yet been achieved and until such time that we do, then I’d say justice is not being done”.</i>
Seven	<i>“organization is making progress but it is slow moving; however, the current Accounting Officer is tirelessly looking into it and addressing it”.</i>
Eight	<i>“the truth is males are still dominating the SMT positions and there is not much change as yet”.</i>

One of the remaining participants disagreed with the rest of her colleagues and argued that the organization is indeed doing justice in implementing and enforcing the gender balancing policies. Her response extract is as follows:

“although we have not yet made it to the policy threshold but we are making progress and we almost there, so yes I’d agree in that respect”.

The last participant remained neutral about the matter as she responded as below:

“EEA is taken into account in recruitment but not sure if they stick to it or not when appointing”.

4.4.3. Research objective three

To identify whether gender discrimination against women managers has any effect on how they perform their duties.

After the findings of objectives one and two, it was imperative to find out whether gender discrimination against the respondents has any impact on their performance as managers and leaders within their respective line of duty. Objective number three thus focused on ascertaining whether or not the respondents regard the gender discrimination they are faced with as hindrances to their overall performance. Under objective three, four questions were asked of the respondents, discussed below.

The impact of gender discrimination against women on their performance

All the respondents (9) unanimously agreed that indeed the discrimination against women has an impact on how they perform their duties as managers within the organization. Most of the respondents supported their agreement to this question with their previous responses and some of the participants mentioned the following:

Table 4.20: Participant Responses

Participant No.	Verbatim Responses
Two	<i>“discrimination is a negative factor and it affects your wellbeing and is demotivating in a working environment”.</i>
Three	<i>“women are still not taken serious compared to men and that alone makes us feel incompetent, not enough and not deserving”.</i>

Four	<i>“because of the same discrimination against us, we end up being unable to participate and be involved in meeting discussions; it affects our performance”.</i>
Five	<i>“discrimination possesses a negativity, hurt, insecurity and fear, hence being emotionally burdened at work affects your productivity as a whole”.</i>
Six	<i>“discrimination against us makes us feel that we are subjected to male approval and that we are bound to be subordinates to males”.</i>
Seven	<i>“any pain inflicting situation messes with one’s mind and nothing positive will come as a result”.</i>
Eight	<i>“being constantly shut down, your views being criticized, not recognized nor respected and interference to your work and decisions, you end up having an ‘I don’t care’ mindset towards your work and everything you do thereafter”.</i>
Nine	<i>“being badly treated isn’t a good feeling and it hurts; thus, nothing positive will come out of such a hurt mind”.</i>

From the responses above from all the participants, it was clear that women are still facing discrimination in their workplace and environment, and as such, this affects the manner in which they take decisions for the organization; it affects their work ethic and morale, it affects their motivation as individuals towards work, and it ultimately affects their performance as managers within the sections they direct. This also shone a bright light, showing that gender discrimination in organizations still exists and patriarchy is still the order of the day in organizations.

Legislation and policies against gender discrimination and unfair treatment of women in organizations and in society at large have been available for a number of years. The question then emerges as to why we are still facing the very same issues that the legislation aimed to address and root out. Why are our organizations not adhering to the legislation and complying with policies? Why do we remain so change-resistant towards women, as men? It was these questions that

motivated the researcher to embark on trying to gather information about whether women still feel that discrimination against them is not the thing of the past, but something very much of the present, as the legislation and policies are not just naming unjust treatment and systems but seek to create and promote new and just conditions.

The following question under this objective aimed to ascertain whether or not our organizations are still facing gender discrimination and unfair treatment towards women.

Is the Promotion of Equality and Prevention of Unfair Discrimination Act achieving its objectives?

Under this section of objective number three, respondents unanimously agreed that the policies and legislation may be good but they are not producing the desired results. This is due to many reasons, such as the stronghold of patriarchy as well as lack of will to implement and enforce them. All nine participants answered ‘Yes’ when they were asked whether unfair treatment and discrimination against them is still in existence even after the introduction of the Promotion of Equality and Prevention of Unfair Discrimination Act. This is evidence that the policy is not producing the outcomes anticipated and desired by its objectives. It was also noted that some of the women did not even know about the existence of this policy as no one was bold enough to conduct a workshop on it or even paste it on the organizational website under policies. To some, it proved that this policy that was not regarded to be much importance as it did not form part of the policies that were made available to them.

Below are responses from the participants that supported their feelings and perceptions regarding the subject.

Table 4.21: Participant Responses

Participant No.	Verbatim Responses
One	<p><i>“yes, it definitely exists, typical example, the lesbians and gay people, they also being discriminated against so much that there are no facilities that accommodates them as human beings, they somehow forced to live in two worlds, being lesbian but still making use of female labelled bathrooms, same as gay people. so, discrimination on the bases of gender still exists”.</i></p>

Two	<i>“there are always training and workshops on new policies but in most cases, they not being actioned and surprisingly, they have never been workshopped on this particular policy”.</i>
Three	<i>“it still exists but not much as before, there has been a great shift of change over the years and it will take time to completely see no more of gender discrimination”.</i>
Four	<i>“if males would understand that the advancement of females doesn’t mean neglecting the males, maybe we can see such policies implemented and enforced; as it stands there are good policies but they have been parked and not putted into action”.</i>
Six	<i>“it even the first time hearing about such policy, hence the same policies are being ignored and no implementation takes place”.</i>
Seven	<i>“females are still subjected to unfair treatment and even worse, there is a pull-her-down syndrome where its women against women discrimination and unfair treatment”.</i>
Eight	<i>“the women cry is all over the organizations and that shows that it still does exist”.</i>
Nine	<i>“the variance between men and women in managerial position’s is the evidence that it still does, they still not seen equal to males and not have the capabilities and abilities like males are considered to be”.</i>

From the above presentation of participants’ responses, it is clear that the legislation and policies in relation to gender balancing and unfair treatment of women has not yet produced the desired results. Participants were of the view that there are good policies but they are not implemented and enforced as yet, hence they are not yet achieving what they are meant to achieve. It was also evident that women are still faced with a vast number of issues around being unfairly treated, discriminated

against, patriarchy, not being recognized and not being respected compared to their male counterparts.

4.5. Chapter conclusion

In this chapter, the research results were presented. The biographical data of the participants were presented, providing an image of the diverse nature of the women who participated in this study. The sample of this research comprised only women who occupy managerial positions within the organization. The biographical data also showed that all the women who participated in this study were graduates in different fields related to the positions that they are occupying. The research outputs revealed that there are a vast number of challenges that the women in managerial positions face. Further, seven of the participants acknowledged that these challenges hinder them from producing the results they would want to produce, and they also negatively affect their overall performance within their line of duty. However, one respondent remained neutral on this subject. Another discovery was that when women managers are not performing due to the challenges they discussed, this also negatively affects the overall performance of the organization. It was also evident that seven of the women feel that the gender inequity within the SMT of the organization also serves as a negative factor in how the organization is performing. However, two who participated in this study disagreed with their colleagues and cited that the organization's performance should not be associated with gender equity and equality. Lastly, it was also cited that the historical gender issues emanating from the apartheid era still exist and the policies and legislation introduced to address and root out these factors are not being implemented and enforced; thus, they are failing policies.

Chapter five: Discussion of results

5.1. Introduction

The previous chapter presented the research results together with the verbatim responses of the study's participants in response to the questions asked during face-to-face interviews. The interviews were used to collect data from the participants on their perceptions, feelings and ideas regarding the subject matter. This chapter discusses the research results presented in the previous chapter with the aim of checking whether the results provide answers to the research questions of the study. This is done through a brief analysis of the results for each objective, and seeing whether the study has done justice to the research objectives, the research questions and the intended contribution of the study.

5.2. Discussion of results

5.2.1. Objective one

The first objective of the study aimed at establishing and identifying gender-based challenges encountered by women occupying managerial positions which may negatively impact how they perform their assigned duties. The results revealed a vast number of challenges that women managers encounter within their line of duty. Some of the challenges they encounter include being not treated as equals to male counterparts, being disrespected, their views and decisions being ignored or treated as second best to those of male managers, unfair discrimination and treatment, as well as working arrangements that are not favorable and considerate for them as women, like late night meetings and weekend meetings. It was further noted from the results that women perceive these challenges as huge hindrances to their performing at their best; it draws a lot of conflict and women end up having to fight personal and gender battles instead of investing that time spent fighting into ensuring service delivery and overall performance of their respective divisions within the organization. Although some participants felt that there are no gender-based challenges within the organization, most of the participants shared that there are a number of them. Because of these challenges, their decisions and opinions that are meant to take the organization forward sometimes go unnoticed and ignored until a male counterpart shares the same in a different way or approach. According to this objective, the results have concurred with the idea of the existence of patriarchy which suggests that women are subjected to being subordinates to male and thus almost everything they do should be subjected to the male approval or else, it is wrong and not considered. Therefore, the social stratification and differentiation on the bases of sexual orientation as asserted to Abideni (2005) is still an order of the

day in our societies and organizations hence this place severe constraints on the roles and activities of females.

5.2.2. Objective two

The second objective of the study aimed at establishing whether gender inequality within the organization has any material impact on the overall performance of the organization. The results revealed that gender inequality does have an impact on the overall performance of the organization as most of the respondents perceived gender imbalance as one of the factors that leads to non-performance and failure of the organization to achieve its objectives. They feel that male dominance in SMT hinders them as women from positively participating and contributing to critical decisions that determine the future of the organization. Patriarchal treatment that women encounter from their male counterparts also plays a vital role in making female managers believe and feel that they are subordinate to males and that their decisions and resolutions should be subjected to male-manager support and approval. The study results further exposed that gender imbalances within the organization demotivate female managers from positively contributing to strategic planning meetings as their contributions may go unnoticed and are sometimes visibly criticized; this leads to women having doubts against themselves and their capabilities as leaders. It was also shared by most of respondents that in most cases, male-driven resolutions are taken in meetings for immediate implementation within the organization; however, implementation of those decisions is never realized because of the lack of will and commitment to ensure that resolutions are implemented and enforced. It was concluded that indeed gender inequality within the organization has a negative impact on the overall performance of the organization as there is no gender balance among the positions that have power and influence. The results have agreed with the suggestion of Matiwane (2019) where he advocates that gender imbalances form part of the challenges that have been faced by South Africa where, in most organizations, women are still confronted by challenges of ill-treatment and unequal opportunities compared to their male counterparts. It was thus clear that women are still faced with such challenges and as a result, they are set for failure in performing their duties, positively contribute to critical decision making and ultimately, the entire organization suffers non-performance and not achieving its mandate and strategic objectives.

5.2.3. Objective three

The third and last objective of this research was to identify whether gender discrimination against women leaders has any effect on how they perform their duties and their performance as leaders. The

results of this study exposed that gender discrimination against female managers negatively affects the manner in which they perform their duties and this leads to non-performance. It was also discovered that discrimination on the basis of gender is still in existence even after the introduction of various legislation that aims to achieve a discrimination-free workforce and society. Most of the respondents revealed that discrimination has no positive influence on whom it is directed and it negatively affects the state of one's mind; hence, a person who is mentally and emotionally distracted cannot perform at their best, if there is any performance at all. It was discovered that this factor affects the women so much that they end up losing self-esteem and belief in their own managerial competence and leadership skills. It is concluded that based on the results, gender discrimination negatively affects the women managers. It affects how they perform their duties, their overall performance as managers and leaders within their line of duty, their capacity as managers entrusted with a vast number of responsibilities, such as budgetary management, human resources management, and ensuring that the organization achieves its organizational objectives. The outcome of this objective has painted a clear picture that discrimination on the bases of gender in employment is still in existence. This; then proves that the legislative framework that has been introduced to fight against matters of unfair discrimination in employment has not produced the desired results despite that they have in existence for a long period of time such as the Employment Equity Act of 1998 which its objectives are to eliminate unfair discrimination in employment as well as to ensure implementation of employment equity to redress the effects of discrimination.

5.3. Chapter conclusion

On the basis of the results discussed above, it is evident that our organizations are still faced with the challenge of gender imbalances and how we view managerial abilities based on the gender of the managers. Women are unfortunately still the victims of such challenges due to the failure of our organizations to enforce the laws and implement the policies and regulations that were introduced to bring about gender balance, root out unfair discrimination and address the challenges of the past. It is important to note that almost all the women who participated in this study were of the same perceptions, feelings and experiences regarding the subject matter. Through the results of the study, the study achieved justice to be a voice for the women who are in most cases voiceless regarding their challenges, with a fear of victimization and further inappropriate treatment. The results also revealed a huge gap between the desired state of affairs as addressed by the legislation and the reality that is there in our organizations. For these reasons, the researcher feels confident and hopeful that through the recommendations of this study, our organizations will be in a position to review what is desired against

that which is a reality and thereafter strive to enforce and implement the strategies, mechanisms, policies and legislation that aim to deal with gender imbalances as well as the marginalization of women in managerial positions of our organizations.

Chapter six: Conclusion and recommendations

6.1. Introduction

The previous chapter discussed the results of the study as per each objective with the intention of finding whether or not the results provided answers to the research questions. This last chapter focusses on providing recommendations that can be implemented and used to address the challenges identified through this study. It also seeks to provide an overall conclusion of this project through presenting a brief summary of what each chapter covered. The limitations as well as the contribution of the study to the existing body of knowledge with regards to human resources and gender equality concepts are also addressed in this concluding chapter.

6.2. Summary of chapters

This research project was made up of six chapters in total including the concluding and recommendations chapter. Each chapter discussed data regarding the subject matter and how this study was conducted. Under this sub-heading, a brief summary of each chapter from the beginning of this project is provided with an intention to provide an overview of what each chapter covered.

The first chapter presented the overview of this research, covering different concepts that form part of the introductory information regarding the research project. This chapter presented the background of the study, the research problem, objectives and questions as well as the justification of the study. These aimed to give the reader baseline information or the underlying factors that motivated this research work. Through reading this chapter, a reader must be in a position to have a clear picture of what the study is about, the underlying problems that constituted the need for the study, what motivated the study as well as what the study aimed to achieve.

The second chapter serves as a support for the information that is provided in the first chapter through reviewing the literature on the subject matter and topic. This is done through reading, analyzing and conceptualizing what is yet known regarding the subject of the research hence that exercise is called a literature review which is the title of the second chapter. Various sources were reviewed to support the study's concept, such as existing legislation regarding gender balancing, the statistics surrounding gender and managerial positions, conceptualizing the theory of patriarchy in relation to the study, conceptualizing the concept of gender equality in South Africa as well as

defining terms closely related to the topic. Reviewing the existing literature assists the researcher to minimize the risk of repeating what is already known as well as showing the gaps in knowledge.

The third chapter discussed the research methodology. This chapter provides information on how the study was conducted, what mechanisms were utilized and what approach was adopted. The chapter discussed the design that was used, the site in which the study was conducted, the population of the study, the sampling strategies and sample size of the project, how data was collected and analyzed to make sense of it, the validity and reliability of the data collected as well as the ethical principles taken into consideration during this study. The information contained in this chapter served to guide the researcher on the steps to follow during the study and provides a guide to the reader on how the study was carried out.

Chapter four presents the data gathered from the participants. This is called a Presentation of Results Chapter. As self-explanatory as it is, it is also important to note that this chapter must give the entire sides of the respondent's perceptions, feelings and experiences regarding the topic without any prejudice and biasness from the researcher's side. This chapter also gives a brief background on the participants which in research is known as the biographical data of participants. The biographical data consists of information such as the age group, the sexual orientation, the experience in years as well as the highest qualification of participants. Under chapter three, the response rate is also noted as it gives an indication of whether or not the sample size as reflecting of Chapter three has been met which in research is known as having a representative sample.

Chapter five discusses the results of the study, providing information on what was found under each objective. It gives the answers to the questions and whether the results do justice to the study. The contents of this chapter are also important in the next chapter, which is chapter six, as the recommendations that the researcher provides emanate from chapter five.

Chapter six provides a summary of the entire research project together with recommendations on how to mitigate and address the issues discovered through the study. The chapter concludes by discussing the limitations of the study and indicating areas of future research regarding the subject matter of this project. This is to assist other researchers and scholars to have knowledge of what

were the limitations of the study and what was not covered in this project which may constitute a research project in the future in order to cover almost all the bases regarding the topic.

6.3. Conclusions

The overall aim of this study was to explore and identify gender-based challenges encountered by women who hold managerial and leadership positions. The literature review relates to the challenges and patriarchal issues that women in managerial positions feel they are facing. There are four critical aspects that were covered by this study: first, to identify the gender-based challenges that women in managerial positions encounter. This was crucial considering the history of patriarchy and apartheid in South Africa which resulted in women's oppression and gender inequality, both in society and working environments. The second was to ascertain the impact (positive or negative) that these challenges may have on how women perform their duties and their performance as managers. The third was the material impact these have on the overall performance of the organization as a result of gender inequity and inequality in SMT structures; and lastly, the impact these have on the work morale and motivation of women who hold managerial positions.

It was of utmost importance to first gather information on the challenges that women in managerial positions are encountering as this would indicate how women are treated by men in a working environment. This was done while considering the introduction of various legislation that seek to bring gender balance and eliminate unfair treatment and discrimination. The South African government has introduced multiple laws and legislation in the post-apartheid era to ensure that the gender imbalances of the past are addressed in the new dispensation; however, two decades have passed and balance has not yet been realized. The results of the study also revealed that although legislation is available, the implementation of such legislation is taking longer than anticipated, and there is not much priority and will to enforce the implementation as women are still discriminated against in one way or another. Thus, this shows that although the legislation is available, it has not yet achieved the much-desired results.

An interview-based survey was conducted with nine women managers within the organization and due to the exploratory nature of this study, data was collected using the qualitative method. The findings discovered that women are still facing a number of gender-based challenges and these include gender inequity in SMT structures, gender inequality, being disrespected, patriarchy, and think manager–think male stereotypes. Women are not recognized as equals to their male counterparts; their views and decisions are subjected to male support and approval, meeting

logistics do not take into consideration their female and family responsibilities, and they face unfair treatment and discrimination. The findings also revealed that women are more often reprimanded in front of their subordinates, in a discourteous manner, for making mistakes, as compared to their male counterparts.

6.4. Recommendations

Based on the study outcomes, one of the recommendations is for government to investigate whether or not the introduced gender balancing and non-discrimination legislation is achieving the intended results. In addition, the organization should take a proactive approach and promote an environment that is free of unfair discrimination and gender imbalance. The government should also conduct monitoring and evaluation on programmes and initiatives that seeks to promote gender equality, manage diversity and inclusiveness of the previously disadvantaged and marginalized groups. It is also recommended that the organization take an initiative to educate the personnel on the history of apartheid and patriarchy so that they can have a better understanding of it factors and how the government is trying to address the same going to the future. This will assist the organization to formulate organization-based policies that will help to address the real challenges facing women from the organizational level. Below are recommendations as per the research objectives.

The first objective of the study aimed at identifying the gender-based challenges encountered by women managers which hinder them from performing the duties assigned to them. In order to ensure that the identified challenges are rooted out, thereby allowing women managers to perform their duties as free moral agents and within a conducive environment, the organization should consider the following recommendations:

- Establish a Women in Management Forum where women managers will gather and share the challenges they are facing and how they can assist and support one another in rising above such challenges. This Forum should also include human resources practitioners as well as labour practitioners who will guide and give advice on how to tackle such challenges. This will assist women in supporting one another, having a platform where they can talk, encourage and support each other rather than operating in isolation.
- Establish a sub-division within human resources management that will serve as a support mechanism to all women within the organization, where they can report cases of unfair

discrimination and ill treatment towards them, and where such cases will be dealt with fairly and without fear or favour.

Formulate and introduce clearly defined measures on how to deal with perpetrators of gender discrimination, unfair treatment and ill treatment. This will assist the organization to know how to deal with such cases as they are different from all other labour issues; they are personal and against the vision of the post-apartheid government.

- Provide continuous education and training through workshops and seminars on gender issues, unfair discrimination, legislation and policies. This may assist the organization and the entire workforce on understanding the impact of such and how to deal with the issues in a progressive manner.

The second objective of the study aimed at establishing whether gender inequality has any impact on the overall performance of the organization and, if there is any impact, is it a positive or negative? The results of the study revealed that gender inequality has a negative impact on the performance of the organization. Thus, it is recommended that the organization put in place stricter measures to ensure that gender balancing is prioritized for managerial positions. This can be done through having a clearly defined target group when advertising vacant positions and ensure that women are prioritized during the recruitment and selection processes. It will benefit the organization to have a clear direction of who the target is when vacant positions are available within the SMT. The organization should also ensure that the EEA is adhered to and complied with when recruiting candidates for positions. Therefore, strict implementation of the EEA should be promoted and enforced at all times and ensure that the employed candidate is in accordance with the EEA target group. This will help the organization to achieve its organizational goals and strengthen the overall performance of the organization.

The third objective focused on identifying whether discrimination against women managers has any impact on how they perform their duties and their performance as leaders of their respective divisions within the organization. The results of the study revealed that indeed gender discrimination against women has an impact on how they perform their duties and their performance and it is a negative impact. It is therefore recommended that the organization establish an independent committee or task team that will be entrusted with ensuring that gender discrimination and unfair treatment is rooted out within the organization through enforced implementation of legislation that seeks to address such issues. It is also of utmost importance that the Human Resources Management division particularly the Labour

Relations Office conducts workshops that will define and conceptualize what is regarded as gender discrimination by law and how this should be dealt with, as well as what the consequences are for gender discrimination culprits. This will assist the personnel to know and differentiate when they are being discriminated against. The organized labour unions should also be made part of these workshops so that they can have full knowledge of what is regarded as discrimination within the organization and what the consequences are for culprits, as the unions tend to protect the culprits under the shield of the argument that they were not made aware and educated on such matters. In addition, it is also recommended that the guidelines, information, workshop slides and material as well as policies and legislation against gender discrimination and unfair treatment be made available to all personnel through being pasted on the organizational intranet as well as on strategic points within the organizational buildings where it can be easily accessible to everyone.

6.5. Limitations of the study

Leedy and Ormrod (2016) advocate that a good researcher acknowledges weaknesses or limitations of their research project that may cast doubt on the research results and conclusions. They assert that there is no such thing as a perfect research project and an ethical researcher will not pretend that his or her research project is perfect. On this note, the limitations of this research project are acknowledged. The number of women occupying managerial positions within this organization was very minimal and it limited the possibility of obtaining a large numbers of study participants. To enable generalization, other government departments within the province could contribute to a future study with a similar topic. This study was conducted in one selected government department within the KwaZulu-Natal Provincial Government, therefore, the findings did not comprise other government departments within the same province. Because the study was confined within one selected organization, the researcher opted to make use of the case study so to gain an in-depth understanding, perceptions, feelings, opinions and experiences of the target group.

6.6. Areas for further research

This research focused mainly on women in managerial positions in a selected government department. A future comparative study should be conducted to also include male managers. On the same note, the similar study should be conducted in different sectors such as private, state-owned enterprises as well as semi-state organizations as this will provide more insight into the subject matter and sectoral uniqueness, if there is any that exists in the different sectors. Further to this, different countries could be investigated on the same subject beyond South Africa. The ultimate

objective of this would be to continue adding more knowledge to the existing body of knowledge on gender-based challenges encountered by female managers and leaders of different organizations and of different magnitudes.

6.7. Contribution to the study of human resources and gender equality

The study focused on the gender-based challenges faced by women in managerial positions. This forms part of the Human Resources Management of an organization, which, among its responsibilities, is to ensure and enforce fair and equitable opportunities of employment in any position within an organization without gender marginalization and discrimination based on other factors such as race, economic background and/or physical abilities. This study contributes to two major aspects of human resources of an organization and that is gender equality and management. Both these aspects fall under the scope of the Human Resources Management studies. It is therefore a contribution that may assist the stream to take note of the matters that are not yet dealt with completely, as well as legislation that is not enforced to achieve its main objectives. Researchers and scholars within the human resources stream may further conduct studies in relation to what constitutes an unfair, imbalanced and biased labour force. There is a wealth of legislation, guidelines, operating procedures and policies that are aimed at addressing and mitigating such challenges, such as those discussed in this study.

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APPENDICES

A. Ethical clearance certificate



20 November 2018

Mr Sicelo Vincent Msibi (217079935)
School of Management, IT & Governance
Pietermaritzburg Campus

Dear Mr Msibi,

Protocol reference number: HSS/0975/018M

Project title: Gender-based challenges faced by women in leadership: A case study of one Government Department in KwaZulu-Natal

Approval Notification – Expedited Application

With regards to your response received on 19 November 2018 to our letter of 14 November 2018, the Humanities & Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee has considered the abovementioned application and the protocol has been granted **FULL APPROVAL**.

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

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: Professor Maxwell Phiri
cc Academic Leader Research: Professor Isabel Martins
cc School Administrator: Ms Jessica Chetty

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B. Interview Questions

Objectives of the study:

- i. To establish and identify gender-based challenges facing women in managerial and leadership positions, which may be hindrances for women to perform their roles and responsibilities, assigned to them in their organizations.
- ii. To establish whether gender inequality have any material impact on the overall performance of the organization.
- iii. To identify whether gender discrimination against women leaders have any effect on how they perform their duties and their performance as leaders.

Questions for an Interview

Objective 1

- i. Are you satisfied with your current job as a woman in managerial position? Why?
- ii. In your opinion, are there any specific challenges you would say or feel are facing only woman in management? Discuss your response
- iii. Will you say that the above discussed challenges have positive or negative impact on how you perform your assigned duties and your overall performance?
- iv. Are you a motivated woman manager in your current workplace? Substantiate your response

Objective 2

- i. In your opinion, do you think that gender inequity within the Senior Management Team of your organisation has any impact on the overall performance of the organisation? Discuss your answer
- ii. Do you think that the organization will be able to achieve its organisational objectives should it put more strict measures and actions towards achieving gender equity and equality on management positions?
- iii. In your opinion, do you think the organisation is doing justice in implementing the gender equity policies, substantiate.
- iv. In your opinion, do you think the organisation is doing justice in implementing the gender equity policies within managerial positions and why?

Objective 3

- i. In your opinion, is discrimination on the basis of gender, towards women have any material impact on how they perform their duties as managers within organisations? Substantiate
- ii. Do you think that gender discrimination against women in organisations still exist even after the introduction of the Promotion of Equality and Prevention of Unfair Discrimination Act? Support your response
- iii. "Gender discrimination against women is only faced by women in managerial position". Will you say that this statement is true or false? Substantiate your response.
- iv. Do you think that women in general still face gender discrimination from men?

