

**THE PSYCHOLOGICAL STRENGTHS OF MUSLIM WOMEN AS LEADERS
IN THE WORKPLACE**

By

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DECLARATION

“I FAHRIAL AMLA, Student Number 211560783, hereby declare that THE PSYCHOLOGICAL STRENGTHS OF MUSLIM WOMEN AS LEADERS IN THE WORKPLACE is my own work and that all the sources that I have used or quoted have been acknowledged by means of complete references.”

SIGNATURE

DATE

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to investigate the psychological strengths of Muslim women who serve as leaders in the workplace. Muslim women have increasingly entered the South African workplace, but are underrepresented in leadership, similarly to other South African women, and encounter specific challenges because of their religious and cultural backgrounds. A mixed methods approach was employed in this study. By using the qualitative research approach of semi-structured interviewing, data was made available on the psychological strengths of a sample of fifteen Muslim women who occupy leadership roles in various industries. Interpretative phenomenological analysis was the data analysis method used to analyse the emerging themes, which revealed positive psychological strengths, as well as contextual factors, including experiences of leadership and the nature of the opportunities and challenges encountered by the participants. Various categories of strengths were distinguished and labelled as cognitive, emotional, interpersonal and behavioural. Quantitative personality trait data was generated using the 16PF-5, against which the derived strengths were compared. These strengths were also considered against existing strengths frameworks in positive psychology, including the Values in Action (VIA) classification system and Buckingham and Clifton's StrengthsFinder. The results of the study were descriptive rather than explanatory and provided a basis for further research on psychological strengths and leadership, gender and personality in a South African context.

Key terms:

Female leadership, Muslim women leaders, psychological strengths, positive psychology, Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis, VIA classification system of strengths and virtues, StrengthsFinder, Psychofortology, leadership development.

DEDICATION

**I dedicate this thesis to my two precious sons, Isaa and Zaeem.
May each of you always be blessed with the inner strength to be your
best self and fulfil your greater purpose.**

Love, Mom.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION AND PROBLEM STATEMENT

1.1 INTRODUCTION

In this chapter the background to the study is introduced and the need for an investigation into the psychological strengths of Muslim women as leaders is illuminated as the research problem. The research objectives and questions guiding the study are provided, as well as the conceptual model and theoretical paradigm that set the context in which the study has been conducted. A summary of the ethical considerations and research contributions is given, followed by an outline of the chapters of the thesis.

1.2 BACKGROUND TO THE RESEARCH

The scarcity of women in senior management and leadership roles is a global trend largely because the general public has traditionally not associated leadership behaviours with feminine role behaviours (Johnson, Murphy, Zewdie, Reichard, 2008). In fact, these roles may be perceived as contradictory rather than complementary and women have typically experienced more challenges in the workplace than men have (Johnson et al., 2008).

Women in South Africa have historically been disadvantaged when it came to work opportunities, as was the general trend in many parts of the world up to the twentieth century (Mather-Helm, 2006). While the apartheid government primarily discriminated against populations who were non-European, women in general, across racial divides, enjoyed a lower social and economic status and were not even allowed to vote. South Africa's transition into a democracy elevated the status of its women to a position of equality and many initiatives have since been implemented to encourage the empowerment of women (www.sahistory.org.za).

Changes in labour legislation in particular have served as a catalyst to promote fair employment relations and consequently gender equality, with the passing of the Employment Equity Act 55 of 1998 and affirmative action policies. As a result of the new legislation and global economic trends an increasing number of women have become economically active agents, but generally tend to occupy lower-ranking positions in organisations and seem to face greater challenges in their career advancement. Consequently, a dearth of women in leadership roles is still evident and this trend is pronounced at the executive level in organisations (Daya, 2011).

Women face various challenges that serve as obstacles to learning, career development and advancement (Cheung & Halpern, 2010). These challenges present themselves in the work environment as well as the woman's personal home and family context, resulting in a sometimes complex set of issues that she would have to navigate if she has prioritised the progression of her career (Cheung & Halpern, 2010; Daya, 2011). Some of the specific issues that women often deal with include having family responsibilities outside of work, working in male-dominated environments, dealing with disrupted career paths because of taking maternity leave and caring for children and parents, dealing with stereotypical attitudes and having less access to career development opportunities (Caliper, 2014; Cheung & Halpern, 2010; Ely & Rhode, 2010).

Research shows that while women may have to work harder to progress at work, the perceptions of colleagues hardly differ when it comes to gender and general management skills such as planning and monitoring (Martell & DeSmet, 2001). However, although they may be effective as managers, many women find themselves faced with the 'glass ceiling' phenomenon and may be viewed less favourably in terms of leadership capability compared to their male counterparts (Braun, Peus & Frey, 2012; Eagly & Carli, 2007). Although they form a small population by comparison, there are women who have successfully navigated the workplace and risen as exceptional leaders. Research has demonstrated that women and men holding leadership

positions are equally effective (Eagly, Karau, & Makhijani, 1995). Female leadership is, however, distinctively characterised by stronger emphasis on relationship building and a democratic, participative leadership style in managing subordinates (Geldenhuys, 2011; Werner, 2003). Women leaders have proven to engage in more transformational leadership styles and effective leadership behaviour compared to their male colleagues (Eagly, Johannesen-Schmidt & van Engen, 2003). What is missing from the research is how these women are able to negate the challenges they face successfully. It was hoped that by studying the experiences of women who have successfully filled leadership positions, some insight could be gained into the positive supportive factors and specifically their positive psychological strengths as enablers. The purpose of the current study is to explore the psychological strengths of Muslim women as leaders and to determine the types of challenges they typically experience in today's workplace. Apart from their religious affiliation, Muslim women are similar to other South African women in their access to work opportunities owing to a shared historical context and the impact of social, political and educational factors.

Just a few decades ago, leadership was dependent on hierarchy and authority and at that time in South Africa, traditional approaches to leadership were adopted (Walker, 1990) and non-whites and women were unlikely to be found in leadership roles (Pillay, 1985). Access to educational and employment opportunities was based on the colour of a person's skin, Very few tertiary institutions catered for Indian and coloured students and practically none for black students (ANC, 1980). 'Office jobs' were reserved for better educated white people (Fedderke & Simkins, 2006) and blacks had no option but to find employment as labourers, where working conditions were often inhumane and they received minimum remuneration (Hutson, 2007). Common jobs available to women were often administrative, secretarial positions, teaching, nursing or work in the hospitality industry (Pillay, 1985). However, it was a social norm for women to be productive as homemakers and caretakers of their families well into the 1960s and 1970s (Twenge, 2001). By the early 1990s the majority of employed black women were

employed as agricultural labourers, followed by domestic work, with close to no protection from exploitation under labour law at the time (Nolde, 1991).

Pre-democracy legislation was derived from Roman and Dutch law and regarded women as second-class citizens over whom their fathers and husbands had legal control and even white women were denied economic rights and the right to enter into contracts or own property. Customary law labelled black women as minors, with no rights over children or property (Nolde, 1991; www.sahistory.org). Attitudes towards women were not favourable and their rights were disregarded, irrespective of the sector of South African society they belonged to. In common with other South African women, Muslims are a diverse sub-population who shared in being discriminated against based on “an entrenched definition and systematic subjugation by men that includes male Afrikaners, and men belonging to the Jewish, Hindu and indigenous religions, who in addition to the oppressive treatment of women, continue to amplify their hegemonistic conceptualisation of a worldview for women” (Sayed-Iqbal, 2006, p. 5).

When South African women began entering larger organisations for employment it was in lower-level, supportive functions and it was uncommon to find them in the capacity of business owner or manager. Men were typically the ‘bosses’ and found at management level, while women filled supportive roles. Since the abolishment of apartheid in 1994, statistics have shown a steady increase in female representivity in the South African workplace (Daya, 2011). Leadership practices have also evolved to become more participative and democratic since then but to date, men have continued to dominate the senior decision-making roles in most organisations while women’s progression in leadership occurs at a much slower pace and they seem to have fewer opportunities and face greater obstacles than men do (Geldenhuys, 2011; Synovate, 2011; Venter, 2009).

Political transformation prompted changes in employment legislation and company policies. Organisations began instituting and promoting gender equity in compliance with their employment equity plans (Geldenhuys, 2011), with the result that women are now far more visible in the workplace, across industries and professions. Muslim women are among them. However, their association with leadership roles is less pronounced. From a religious and social standpoint, leadership is not frequently associated with Muslim females and is even regarded as unacceptable and in breach of Islamic law by some theologians, specifically if leadership roles are assumed in a religious or political context.

Muslim women are not often heard publicly and constitute a significantly smaller part of the economically active population (Ahmed, 2008; Bux, 2004). Nevertheless, they can be very progressive in their spheres of activity, with many of them running profitable small businesses or professional careers. Both male and female learners who receive an Islamic secondary school education tend to achieve top student awards nationally, with exceptional matric results, and almost all Islamic school matriculants qualify for undergraduate studies at tertiary institutions (Benoni City Times, 2015; Johannesburg Muslim School, 2012, 2015; Muslim Directory, 2014; Orient Islamic School, 2015; Venter, 2014). From the researcher's personal observation it seems that although both genders seem set to begin their careers on an equal footing, a significantly lower number of female Muslim students continue with tertiary education and fewer still become pioneers in their chosen fields, but there is hardly any academic literature that conveys this trend. While some Muslim charitable organisations offer bursaries to qualifying Muslim students, the criteria for males and females may differ, with fewer options available to Muslim females as career options that are more 'suitable'. Ahmed (2008) mentions in her dissertation on perceptions of Muslim women that religion and education as separate socialising institutions advocate opposing purposes. While traditional, conservative forms of the religion justify gender inequality as a divine decree, education empowers and

increases access to career and financial opportunities. Muslim women who do decide to maintain careers seem to choose fields and occupations that are more flexible and allow for family, religious and social responsibilities to be met. The intent for focussing on Muslim women in this study was out of an interest in understanding what factors distinguished Muslim women as leaders in the workplace apart from the majority, by exploring their views of the opportunities and challenges encountered and the positive psychological strengths employed by them that enabled their progression. As the researcher, being a Muslim female Industrial Psychologist, the knowledge gained from the study could potentially enable the creation of practical opportunities for leadership development for more South African Muslim women in future with due consideration for their religious and cultural contexts. Furthermore, the study could be replicated and compared with other South African cultural or occupational samples to create a deeper and more comprehensive understanding of contextual issues and the manifestation of psychological strengths.

Muslim women form a minority as a South African sub-population (Stats SA, 2011) but like their South African sisters, have assimilated a similar trend in joining the workforce, many as professionals, particularly in the fields of education, finance, medicine and social development. In these instances, despite having had access to educational opportunities and being highly qualified, they successfully execute their career responsibilities but are still grossly under-represented in the sphere of leadership. While historical socio-political involvement of Muslim women has been documented by academics such as Vahed (2012, 2013), finding scientific literature on the careers of Muslim women post-apartheid was exceptionally difficult using scientific journal database and it can only be assumed to be a result of Muslim women being under-represented in the South African workplace in general and in work psychology research. One of the probable reasons for this is that their religious background remains conservative and the subject of contention in many parts of the modern world, with a widespread perception that Muslim women are discriminated against, oppressed and subjugated by their faith

(Abdulsalam, 1998; Ahmed, 2008). These pervasive views persist in a time where globalisation has influenced a world culture of individualism and exponential innovation that is manifestly evident in many international companies.

A study by Sayed-Iqbal (2006) on Muslim women in entrepreneurial and *da'wah* (Islamic propagation) activities found that his participants were concerned about improving socio-economic conditions, eradicating historical misperceptions of different race groups and religions, and while they were not members of any particular cultural or ideological group, their work showed them to be egalitarian, entrepreneurial and successful. They were motivated and encouraged by the interpretation and understanding of the Qur'an and *sunnah* and felt a sense of belonging to South African society. More pertinently, their worldviews were that orthodox beliefs hinder women's *da'wah* activities and that stereotypes enable men to undermine the influence of women by giving them an apparent basis to discount their views (Sayed-Iqbal, 2006).

The religious obligations (Al-Hashimi, 2003) and contemporary demands (Turner, Barling & Zacharatos, 2005) of organisations can appear contradictory and balancing both can be particularly challenging for a Muslim woman. Work expectations in terms of availability, having to travel and conducting business relationships (April, Dreyer & Blass, 2007) with the opposite gender can come into conflict with the Islamic guidelines for appropriate behaviour. References to these issues are absent in recent literature and academic sources on Muslim women and work tend to focus on its acceptability and attitudes to them assuming work over domestic roles (Ahmed, 2008), rather than current issues about how they manage both. Even a non-academic search on 'Muslim women in South Africa' or 'Muslim women leaders' on the search engine Google.com yields little more than matrimonial sites and information on the Muslim Marriages Bill, which reflects the dominating social status and concerns of South African women. However,

amidst the apparently difficult circumstances to be contended with by women in leadership capacities in general (Daya, 2011; Eagly & Carli, 2007; Łaba, 2011), there are some Muslim women who have ascended these obstacles and who visibly contribute to the performance and success of their organisations and South African society (Sayed-Iqbal, 2006).

1.3 PROBLEM STATEMENT

This study attempts to investigate the resources that have enabled Muslim women as successful leaders from a psychological perspective and seeks to capture the psychological strengths that they have employed in support of their tenure as leaders in their organisations and professions. The question that this study poses then is, given the challenges faced by women in the workplace that stall their career growth and the additional religious and cultural demands placed on Muslim women in particular, how is it that Muslim women as leaders are able to circumvent the challenges they encounter and pursue opportunities that further enhance their leadership capability? An enabling, developmental and coping factor, labelled 'psychological strengths' by the school of positive psychology, is analysed to this end. The 'psychological strengths' or positive thoughts, emotions and behaviours (Keenan & Mostert, 2013), that Muslim women leaders leverage off to resolve these situations successfully are the point of investigation, so that these strengths may be understood and possibly propagated in future management development initiatives for female leaders.

The concept of psychological strengths is relatively new as a formal sub-field of positive psychology though it has been the subject of psychological research for about as long as pathology has enjoyed the spotlight in mainstream psychology. Initially introduced as early as 1965 by Hollister as '*strens*' (Tedeschi & Kilmer, 2005), or experiences that enhance or strengthen people psychologically. According to positive psychology theory, the

identification and development of individual strengths promotes the capacity of individuals to self-actualise as compared to a focus on minimising personal shortcomings, which is more commonplace (Buckingham & Clifton, 2001). Research on psychological strengths is an emerging and rapidly growing field, as positive psychology has begun taking centre stage in much of psychological research. Conventional psychology has studied and designed interventions to manage and reduce negative psychological states such as anxiety and depression, but little has been done to promote positive psychological characteristics, though both perspectives share a common goal of enhancing psychological well-being (Seligman, 2004).

Studies on the effects of positive emotions and development of psychological strengths point to significant benefits for organisations in the form of higher levels of work engagement and performance, along with reduced risks and costs related to employee dissatisfaction, attrition and poor coping in the face of organisational changes. The benefits of developing strengths can also extend beyond the workplace and assist in coping with high levels of stress and improving relationships (Keenan & Mostert, 2013). According to Turner et al. (2005), the need for positive resources is highest when life is difficult and technological innovation, multiculturalism, organisational restructuring and changed psychological work contracts place people under tremendous pressure to develop resilience and successful coping strategies (Turner et al., 2005). Against this background, positive emotions can undo negative ones, the fostering of happiness can alleviate suffering and strengths and virtues can buffer against difficult experiences and psychological disorders (Seligman & Peterson, 2003).

South Africa is also a follower of this trend to some extent but has not yet found a place for implementing psychological strengths in the workplace (Keenan & Mostert, 2013). Along with many other emerging economies, businesses are expected to keep abreast of the rapidly changing environment as the global context influences the nature of work (Caprara & Cervone, 2003;

Turner et al., 2005). Modern employees and leaders, including women, need to be competent at self-directed life-long learning and adapt to change and the new features of society (Caprara & Cervone, 2003). By identifying and growing positive traits and behaviour in people, individual levels of resilience can be enhanced, enabling people to face opportunities and challenges in both their personal and professional lives with more confidence, effectiveness and success (Caprara & Cervone, 2003; Carr, 2004; Fredrickson & Losada, 2005).

Recognising and developing psychological strengths present an opportunity for improving the well-being of individuals and ensuring more effective, engaged leaders and employees for organisations (Buckingham & Clifton, 2001). The identification of strengths is facilitated using interviews or psychometric strengths instruments, which to date have been developed internationally and are in the early stages of being validated for the South African market. Local research on the implementation of positive psychological concepts at work is still sparse and this study is an effort to contribute to the growing body of positive psychological research and practice as it relates to leadership, gender and religion. From a practical and social upliftment perspective, the study examines the positive psychological factors that are supportive of women succeeding and leading in the workplace, particularly so for a segment of women who potentially have much to offer the economy and society but are grossly under-represented in the workplace. The additional religious, cultural and historical background factors cannot be discounted in understanding how they manage to overcome barriers and maintain key roles in their organisations. It is therefore the intention of this study to understand how this happens and which psychological strengths manifest in the case of Muslim South African women as leaders. It is presumed that these women have harnessed their positive characteristics to serve and support their achievements and it is the nature of these positive characteristics that needs to be understood, defined and nurtured for enhancing leadership potential. As change agents in the workplace, industrial

psychologists are in a position to facilitate and advocate the advancement of female employees and managers, whether Muslim or of other religious affiliations, by understanding the specific cultural contexts and challenges that they face, as well as the capabilities and strengths they contribute in the workplace.

1.4 RESEARCH QUESTIONS AND OBJECTIVES

The study serves to explore the psychological strengths that Muslim women capitalise on to promote positive experiences and fulfil their leadership roles at work. The specific questions that the study has attempted to answer include:

- How is leadership experienced by Muslim women?
- What is the nature of the positive psychological strengths that Muslim women in leadership roles demonstrate?
- What is the role of positive psychological strengths in exploiting the opportunities experienced by Muslim women as leaders?
- What is the role of positive psychological strengths in negating the challenging experiences of Muslim women as leaders?
- What are the broader implications of positive psychological strengths for the personal and professional development of female leaders?

The overall aim of the study is therefore to elicit and elaborate on the psychological strengths that serve as enablers in assisting women to deal with the demands and opportunities associated with being in senior management and leadership roles.

The objectives of the study include:

- To describe the experiences of Muslim women who are in leadership positions.
- To investigate the nature of the positive psychological strengths that Muslim women in leadership roles demonstrate.
- To explore the role of positive psychological strengths in exploiting the opportunities experienced by Muslim women as leaders.
- To explore the role of positive psychological strengths in negating the challenging experiences of Muslim women as leaders.
- To investigate the broader implications of positive psychological strengths for the personal and professional development of female leaders.

The conceptual model, which serves as a background against which the study is conducted, is discussed in the next section.

1.5 CONCEPTUAL MODEL

The conceptual model that has provided a framework for this study is the Broaden-and-Build Theory (Fredrickson, 1998, 2001). Clinical and industrial psychology were historically positioned to respond to society's need for remedying psychological disturbances and correcting undesirable work behaviour. The emergence and strengthening of the positive psychology approach has challenged the current focus on 'what is broken' in the individual to what the person is talented at and exploring how happiness and human strengths foster resilience and well-being (Carr, 2004; Seligman, 2004). The three constituent parts of positive psychology include studies of positive subjective experience and positive individual traits and the study of the institutions that support these first two (Seligman & Peterson, 2003). Typical topics of interest in positive psychology include flow, optimism, emotional intelligence, giftedness, creativity and wisdom (Carr, 2004).

Positive and negative emotions can be differentiated based on the degree to which they prepare people for win-lose (zero-sum) or win-win (non-zero-sum) transactional outcomes. Negative emotions serve to narrow down and focus attention when a threat is being perceived, preparing the individual for fight or flight and increasing the odds of a win-lose outcome. Positive emotions, on the other hand, broaden individuals' attention to the environment, increase awareness of the physical and social context, open them to creative ideas and practices and induce a feeling of something positive happening to them (Carr, 2004).

Individuals who engage in negative emotions tend to be more perceptive of their own skills and shortcomings, recollect positive and negative information, anticipate risks, be more focussed and exercise defensive critical thinking and decision-making. People with a more positive affective approach may be overoptimistic about their skills and remember more positive information, but they employ strategies that effect more positive life-planning decisions. The term used to describe people who generally feel good, regularly experience positive emotions, contribute to their environment and excel is 'flourishing' (Keyes, 2007). Flourishers are more likely to achieve optimal mental health as they inculcate, whether intentionally or not, positive emotions and their broaden-and-build effects (Catalino & Fredrickson, 2011; Keyes, 2002). They tend to respond favourably to daily activities that trigger emotion-based mechanisms that serve to maintain their well-being over time. This notion is consistent with the premise of the Broaden-and-Build Theory of positive emotions (Fredrickson, 1998, 2001, 2005), which is described next.

Fredrickson (2005) built on the notion of positive emotions leading to non-zero-sum outcomes and developed the Broaden-and-Build Theory of positive emotions to explain how positive emotions could lead to enhanced personal development and general well-being. The Broaden-and-Build Theory states that positive and negative emotions have contrasting effects (Fredrickson & Losada, 2005). Negative emotions narrow down people's attention and

cognitions in order to assist them in negating life-threatening situations, offering immediate and direct outcomes. Positive emotions broaden attention and thinking, emerge over time and promote indirect and adaptive personal resources such as social connections, coping strategies and environmental knowledge (Fredrickson, 2005; Fredrickson & Losada, 2005). Resources accumulated over momentary positive learning opportunities are durable, can be used to counter future threats and serve as sources of resilience and personal growth (Fredrickson & Losada, 2005). A positive disposition would prompt the individual to approach and explore, thereby initiating experiential opportunities that would allow for the confirmation or refutation of expectations held by the person at the outset. A negative approach would find the individual being avoidant and as a result the opportunity to review the accuracy of the impression is missed. In short, Fredrickson and Losada's (2005) findings suggest that positive affect broadens exploratory behaviour in the moment and over time encourages accurate cognitive maps to be built regarding the good and bad features in the environment. This greater knowledge becomes a lasting personal resource.

Fredrickson (Catalino & Fredrickson, 2011) listed six pleasant activities that are able to elicit positive emotions. These include helping, interacting with others, playing, learning, engaging in spiritual activity and exercising. While negative emotions encourage people to behave in a self-protective manner, positive emotions serve to broaden the thought-action repertoire and subsequently increase opportunities for building enduring personal resources. These in turn allow for personal growth and transformation as positive or adaptive spirals of emotion, cognition and action are created (Catalino & Fredrickson, 2011). Both the 'build effect' and the 'broaden effect' of positive emotions have been supported by multiple experimental studies (Fredrickson & Branigan, 2005; Fredrickson, Cohn, Coffey, Pek, & Finkel, 2008; Rowe, Hirsh, & Anderson, 2007; Schmitz, De Rosa, & Anderson, 2009; Wadlinger & Isaacowitz, 2006). Products of positive emotion include creativity and productivity (Carr, 2004); flexible thought and behaviour, an increased

capacity to cope effectively with stressful circumstances and longevity. Moreover, happier employees tend to obtain better evaluations and higher pay (Carr, 2004).

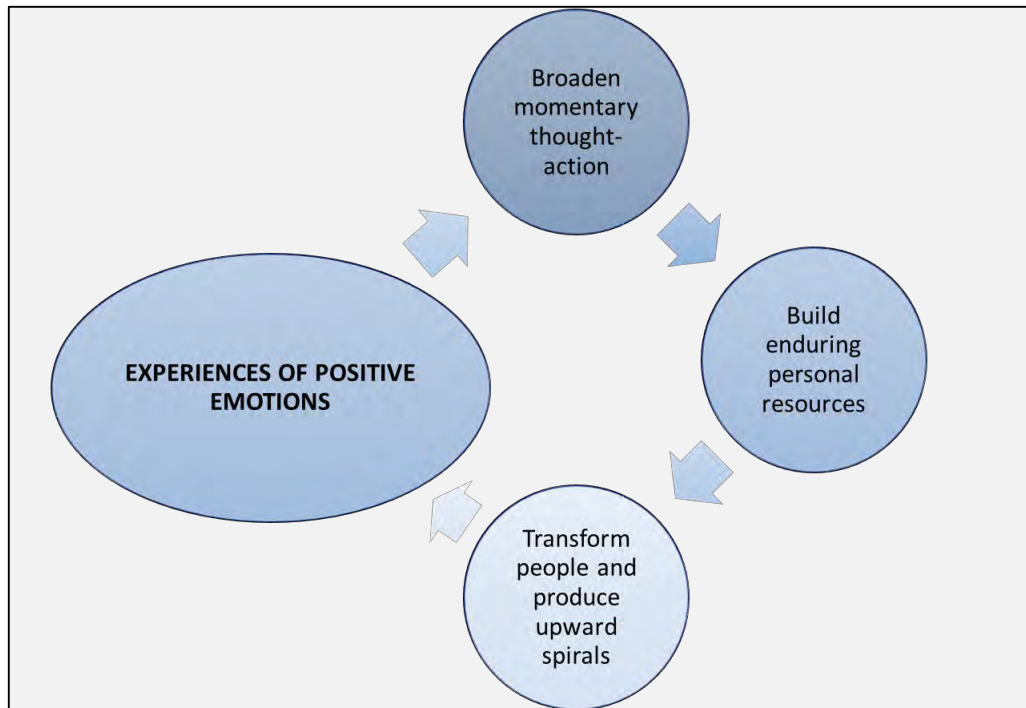


Figure 1

The broaden-and-build theory of positive emotions (Fredrickson, 2005, p. 679)

The figure presented above depicts the process outlined in the Broaden-and-Build Theory and it is postulated that the psychological strengths that are the object of analysis in this study function similarly. Hypothetically, the psychological strength of kindness as the act of doing good deeds for others (Peterson & Seligman, 2004) could lead to positive behaviours to uplift the well-being of others, which in turn would build a positive sense of accomplishment, caring and benefaction and a favourable disposition towards others. These positive emotions may serve as resources that reinforce similar behaviour in future, as positive experiences are recreated and become enduring patterns of behaviour. Similarly, it is suggested that there are

psychological strengths that Muslim women have utilised that have enabled positive experiences and resources and enabled their capability as leaders. This study addresses these strengths with reference to the Broaden-and-Build Theory in order to understand the process by which these psychological strengths manifest for women in a leadership context.

1.6 THEORETICAL AND RESEARCH PARADIGM

This research is conducted from a perspective of positive psychology referred to as psychofortology, a term coined by Wissing and van Eeden (2002) to describe a sub-discipline that studies the nature and origins of psychological well-being, its manifestations and ways to enhance psychological well-being and develop human capacities. Wissing and van Eeden (2002) derived the term fortology from Strümpfer (2001), who argued for the broadening of Antonovsky's (1979, 1987) construct of salutogenesis of promoting health to fortigenesis, which refers to the origins of strength. The concept of 'fortology' is therefore akin to positive psychology's approach of studying and classifying strengths (Peterson & Seligman, 2003). This contemporary approach is a shift from the traditional paradigm, which was based on pathogenic thinking and viewed people as passive recipients of difficulties. Martin Seligman realised that the focus of psychology on psychopathology and negative experiences since World War II had resulted in the neglect of the full spectrum of human experience (Gable & Haidt, 2005) and he consequently established the field of positive psychology in 1998 (Peterson, 2006), which aimed its focus away from victimology and towards strengths. The paradigm of psychofortology, however, encompasses a wider perspective than psychology and includes other positively orientated fields of study, such as social work (Strümpfer, 2005). The new paradigm steers psychology away from victimology towards a focus on strengths, the grounding for the paradigm of *psychofortology* (Strümpfer, 2001). The advantage of the term 'fortology' is that, unlike 'positive psychology', it is not tied to a particular discipline and Strümpfer

(2005) mentions that even Seligman proposed the need for a wider designation, by writing about positive social science.

Positive psychology studies the conditions and processes that influence the optimal functioning and flourishing of people and groups, as well as their organised institutions, by focussing on their positive life experiences (Gable & Haidt, 2005; Peterson, 2006). It is possible, according to Seligman (2000), for human beings to experience a meaningful life and find joy in their personal lives and workplaces by inculcating positive qualities such as love, courage, perseverance, forgiveness, originality and wisdom. At a group level, altruism, civility, moderation, tolerance and work ethic are examples that promote citizenship. Furthermore, the rate of change can be catalysed by utilising positive experiences and the potential of people rather than focussing on their inefficiencies and 'gaps'. Positive psychologists accept both the good and bad aspects of people and are committed to the scientific method. People are studied and understood by talking to them about what they consider important about their lives (Peterson, 2006).

This contemporary approach is a shift from the traditional psychology paradigm that was based on pathogenic thinking and viewed people as passive recipients of difficulties. The ideals promoted in positive psychology and psychofortology are not new. Ancient theoretical works of Bhuddist, Yoga, Chinese medicine, Arab, Roman and Greek origin, over 2000 years old, already contained salutogenic components and the origins of positive social science (Strümpfer, 2005). Documented Western references to a range of early authors in the arena of the positive self were presented during the first eight decades of the twentieth century, followed by over forty great contributing figures in psychological history, including the likes of Maslow, Rogers, Jung, Erikson, Goldstein and Frankl, to mention a few. Other authors, including Csikszentmihaly, Antonovsky and Deci (Strümpfer, 2005), produced works between the late 1960s and early 1980s centred on topics of

flow, salutogenesis and self-determination theory respectively, which have found relevant status in contemporary mainstream positive psychology.

The study of the psychological strengths of women in leadership roles fits neatly within the psychofortology paradigm, as the topic of interest directly addresses the description and classification of the strengths and the methodology adopts an inclusive approach to both the positive and negative experiences of Muslim women in roles of leadership. However, the focus has remained on the positive conditions and processes that have supported their development and views the Muslim woman leader as a positive agent in her personal and professional life, rather than a passive recipient of difficulties when faced with challenges in both contexts. The qualitative framework selected to describe and understand these experiences views the participant as more than just a subject in a causal sequence of events but rather as an active agent who engages with information and events and ascribes meaning to these exchanges (Polkinghorne, 1989). Whereas Western scientific and quantitative traditions of research seek to measure objective phenomena that are observable via physical sensory information, it is the personal world of the participant that is of interest and the research paradigm of phenomenology captures this goal (Smith & Osborne, 2007).

Phenomenology is a research approach adopted in the social sciences that seeks to describe the experiences of individuals, and extends observation to perception, feeling, memory and imagination (Polkinghorne, 1989). Human beings have an intrinsic relationship with their world and consciousness allows for awareness of what is present, without excluding either mind or body but rather accepting these interactions as dynamic and applying relational principles and interpretation beyond just the sensations of what is being observed (Polkinghorne, 1989). The current method of inquiry for understanding the experiences of individuals, developed from this research perspective as a foundation, is Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis

(IPA) which aims to explore the processes, or self-reflections that constitute their experiences in a way that they meaningfully understand such events (Brocki & Wearden, 2006; Smith & Osborn, 2007). In addition, such information tends to complement and be compatible with quantitatively derived data and is therefore better suited to a mixed methods research methodology. A more detailed description of IPA is provided in Chapter 4.

1.7 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

In order to ensure that the research participants would not be adversely affected because of their willingness to be part of the study, each of them was briefed about the intent and nature of the research, the information required and the data collection methods to be used. The research participants were requested to provide accounts of their personal experiences in their interviews and since they occupied senior roles or positions of influence, the information they provided could be potentially sensitive to their employers or their own positions. They were therefore assured that their identities would be protected and this was detailed in an informed consent form that they read and signed. In order to ensure anonymity, aliases or false names were used when relating information from the interviews and questionnaires, more specifically because excerpts of raw data were narrated in the results. It was indicated to the participants that unless a participant had given written permission for the disclosure of identity, no personal or traceable information would be disclosed.

1.8 RESEARCH CONTRIBUTIONS

The nature of the study, although primarily focussed on positive psychology and its sub-discipline of strengths, touches on other issues of contemporary concern, such as gender equity within the workplace, employee well-being

and leadership development. The study will address the lack of research regarding strengths and their application in the South African workplace. Assessment of strengths is currently approached using quantitative questionnaires that generate a list of 'top strengths', but do not provide information about the way that these strengths interact with one another and how they then translate into behaviour is hardly known (Biswas-Diener, Kashdan & Minhas, 2011). The constellation of strengths drawn from one individual would differ from another and even strengths within a constellation may appear to contradict each other (for example, consistency versus adaptability). Biswas-Diener et al. (2011) therefore recommend the combined use of a personality instrument and a strengths assessment in order to explain any such contradictions and to further an understanding of personality-strength dynamics. This recommendation to combine both measures has been followed in the current study.

Furthermore, an entry point would be provided for the exploration of strengths from a South African perspective as opposed to most of the literature and strengths measurement tools, which are at present being sourced from abroad. The original contribution of the study to research and practice would be to provide insight into the experiences of a niche Muslim population of South African female leaders compared to broader explanations of gender-specific career issues that are highlighted in the literature, which could pave the way for similar studies on varying demographic profiles. It is hoped that an understanding of leadership from the perspective of females could be harnessed, since the observations of previous studies on leadership have tended to represent the male majority in senior positions in the workplace. The practical benefit of the study can be realised if specific strengths applied by female leaders are identified and developed to improve their capacity for self-actualisation and in turn result in functional and economic benefits for companies (Buckingham & Clifton, 2001).

The broader contribution of the study would therefore be the generation of knowledge of one of the key areas of focus in positive psychology, human strengths (Seligman & Peterson, 2003). The longer-term social contribution would be the promotion of psychological well-being of females in the workplace by encouraging them to embrace their strengths and utilise them in a manner that benefits themselves, their employer organisations and ultimately, the economy. This is especially critical at a time when global economic instability compels organisations to be resourceful in order to ensure their survival. It is hoped that this study will represent a step towards uncovering people's areas of potential and encourage new strategies to develop desired skills and improve occupational opportunities and meaningful work for employees.

1.9 CHAPTER SUMMARY OUTLINE

An overview has been provided below, which outlines the structure of the thesis. The background to the study, the research objectives and theoretical paradigm have already been introduced and in addition, the following chapters will be presented to meet the objectives of this study:

CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION AND PROBLEM STATEMENT

The first chapter of the thesis serves as an overview of the direction, content and focus of the study and positions the perspective of the research question within the field of positive psychology.

CHAPTER 2 LITERATURE REVIEW: POSITIVE PSYCHOLOGY AND PSYCHOLOGICAL STRENGTHS

The second chapter describes the emerging field of positive psychology and relates the theory and research findings to date. This chapter will elaborate on psychological strengths as an important component of positive psychology and the nature, categories and various viewpoints on the conceptualisation of strengths are reviewed. Current forms of strength assessment and application to various contexts have also been described.

CHAPTER 3 LITERATURE REVIEW: LEADERSHIP AND THE SOUTH AFRICAN MUSLIMAH

This chapter will describe the research to date on women in leadership, specifically relating to trends and current issues globally and on the status of female leadership in South Africa in particular. An overview of Islam as a faith is given, as well as the background to the issues faced by Muslim women in South Africa. In order to understand the identity of Muslim women, the Islamic context is provided, as well as research on contemporary scenarios.

CHAPTER 4 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The methodology followed in conducting the research is described in this chapter. An outline of the research process followed in the design of the study, the sampling method, data collection and data analysis are related and described in this section.

CHAPTER 5 DESCRIPTION OF THE SAMPLE AND ANALYSIS OF THE RESULTS

The summarised results obtained from the quantitative and qualitative analyses are presented and described in this chapter.

CHAPTER 6 ANALYSIS OF QUALITATIVE RESULTS

The personality profiles and the analyses of results with emerging themes are examined in this section. An analysis is conducted of individual research participants' results, stories and the integration thereof at an individual level.

CHAPTER 7 ANALYSIS OF QUANTITATIVE RESULTS

The personality profiles and the analyses of results with emerging themes are examined in this section. An analysis is conducted of individual research participants' results, stories and the integration thereof at an individual level.

CHAPTER 8 DISCUSSION OF QUALITATIVE AND QUANTITATIVE RESULTS

The main themes emerging from across the individual participants' interviews are compared, discussed and then considered against the research questions and other related research findings in the field.

CHAPTER 9 CONCLUSION, RECOMMENDATIONS AND LIMITATIONS

The intent of the study and research findings and implications are reconciled in the concluding section of the thesis. The implications of the results for practice and further research are also articulated.

CHAPTER 2

POSITIVE PSYCHOLOGY AND PSYCHOLOGICAL STRENGTHS

2.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter introduces positive psychology as an emerging field in contemporary psychology and relates the fundamental assumptions upon which the approach is built. The application of positive psychology in the organisational context is then considered, paying particular attention to psychological strengths. The conceptualisation and categorisation of strengths are subsequently described, along with the current forms of application in the workplace and relevant research.

2.2 POSITIVE ORGANISATIONAL PSYCHOLOGY

Positive organisational psychology has been described as the “scientific study of positive subjective experiences and traits in the workplace and positive organisations, and its application to improve the effectiveness and quality of life in organisations” (Donaldson & Ko, 2010, p. 178). By 2010 much of the research on positive organisational psychology was focussed on the relationship between positive psychology constructs and organisational outcomes and behaviours (Donaldson & Ko, 2010). Positive organisational behaviour, for example, is a sub-area of positive organisational psychology that looks at how the demonstration of particular behaviours, such as human resource strengths, hope, optimism and resilience, are associated with positive organisational outcomes that include organisational commitment, job satisfaction and happiness at work (Donaldson & Ko, 2010). These positive organisational behaviours are individual capacities that can be measured and developed for improved performance.

Psychological capital (PsyCap) is an integral and very popular concept in positive organisational behaviour. Defined, PsyCap refers to the individual being in a positive psychological state, and this state is said to be comprised of four elements, namely efficacy, hope, optimism and resilience (Avey, Luthans, Smith & Palmer, 2010; Luthans, Youssef & Avolio, 2007). Efficacy refers to the ability to exercise confidence and effort to achieve a goal, hope describes being persevering and realigning effort if needed, and optimism is as an attitude of anticipated success and the ability to rise successfully above adversity and become stronger is referred to as resilience (Luthans et al., 2007).

Studies on PsyCap have shown positive associations with job performance, job satisfaction and organisational commitment (Larson & Luthans, 2006; Luthans, Norman, Avolio, & Avey, 2008); engagement and organisational citizenship behaviour (Avey, Wernsing, & Luthans, 2008); lower absenteeism (Avey, Patera & West, 2006); reduced cynicism and deviance (Avey et al., 2008); and fewer symptoms of stress, intentions to quit and job search behaviour (Avey, Luthans, & Jensen, 2009).

A majority of the studies, such as those mentioned above, were centred at the individual level, while those at the organisational level covered topics such as appreciative inquiry and crisis management, including downsizing or traumatic events. It was found that at the organisational level, the effectiveness of interventions and organisational development improved with the use of positively oriented organisational development approaches and processes. An analysis of the scholarly publications on positive organisational psychology between 2001 and 2009 revealed that a 72% majority of the publications were authored in the United States, followed by the United Kingdom, Australia, Canada, the Netherlands, South Africa and Spain. Initially most of the publications were conceptual in nature, but by 2008 empirical studies outnumbered conceptual studies, suggesting an emerging evidence base to confirm or refute conceptual claims (Donaldson & Ko, 2010). Content analysis of the most popular topics studied identified positive leadership as the

preferred study area, followed by positive organisational development and change, positive psychology at work, positive organisational behaviour and PsyCap (Donaldson & Ko, 2010). These and the other areas of positive organisational psychology favoured by research may also be inter-related and are ranked in Table 1.

Table 1

Ranking of positive organisational psychology topics studied between 2001 and 2009 (Donaldson & Ko, 2010, p. 679)

-
1. *Positive leadership*
 2. *Positive Organisational Development and change*
 3. *Positive psychology at work*
 4. *Positive organisational behaviour*
 5. *Psychological capital*
 6. *Organisational virtuousness*
 7. *Job satisfaction and happiness*
 8. *Well-being at work*
 9. *Work engagement*
 10. *Stress*
 11. *Flow at work*
 12. *Coaching*
 13. *Identity*
 14. *Compassion*
 15. *Hope*
 16. *Work-life relationships*
-

The study on the psychological strengths of Muslim women as leaders would fall within the 'positive leadership' category and would contribute to the research base in this area. Women in leadership are a growing population, come from diverse backgrounds and face challenges that may not always be reflected in theory. Compared to the earlier traditional theories of leadership that sought to understand whether leaders were born or made, contemporary leadership theory has to adapt to the characteristics of a new age of

leadership, which may be influenced by gender and culture and the psychological strengths in these cases have hardly been accounted for. Strengths do not feature prominently in the list above, but compassion and hope are mentioned. This study contributes to closing this gap and encourages future research in the discovery of positive characteristics that make people better leaders.

2.3 THE DEVELOPMENT OF POSITIVE PSYCHOLOGY

Positive psychology shot to popularity after Seligman's APA Presidential Address in 1998 (Seligman, Parks & Steen, 2004; Wong, 2011). Prior to World War II the focus of psychology included curing mental illnesses, making 'normal' people happier and studying genius and talent. After the war there was an urgent need to respond to mental illnesses and much funding was dedicated to this purpose, so this was the direction that mainstream psychology followed. Attention was therefore paid to mental disorders and mental health fell by the wayside (Seligman et al., 2004). Over time, progress was made in alleviating the psychological suffering of people but in the process, psychology grew into a field that viewed its 'patients' as the victims of mental damage, internal pathological drives and external stressors. In order to bring balance to the field and address those factors that contribute to people functioning and feeling well, studies in the late 1980s started exploring the more positive aspects of psychology (Akhtar, 2012; Avey et al., 2010).

Humanistic psychology provided the foundation for positive psychology with its emphasis on human potential, growth and self-actualisation (Akhtar, 2012). Strümpfer (2006) had noted that there were developments in psychology that were not focussed on pathology at the time and remained less conspicuous than the deficit approach. A formal approach to a positive form of psychology was cofounded by Seligman and Csikszentmihaly (2000). This branch of psychology introduced the concepts of happiness, optimism and flow and at the heart of the field was the study and enhancement of subjective well-being (Akhtar, 2012). Positive psychology subsequently made its way into

mainstream psychology, advancing rapidly in teaching, research and application. Extending to a global phenomenon, articles on positive psychology are increasingly common and sub-disciplines are steadily growing, especially the area of resilience (Wong, 2011).

2.4 DEFINITIONS OF POSITIVE PSYCHOLOGY

Positive psychology is a broad term to describe the study of positive emotion, character and institutions (Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2000; Seligman, Steen, Park & Peterson, 2005). Compton (2005, p. 3) defines positive psychology as the use of “psychological theory, research and intervention techniques to understand the positive, the adaptive, the creative and the emotionally fulfilling elements of human behaviour.” Wong (2011), whose view was to promote positive psychology as a field dedicated to bringing out the best in people through good and bad experiences, defined positive psychology as “the scientific study of virtue, meaning, resilience, and well-being, as well as evidence-based applications to improve the life of individuals and society in the totality of life” (Wong, 2011, p. 72). Positive psychology encourages a more complete and complementary psychology as a science that acknowledges both the deficiencies and potential of human beings with a view to create the best possible life despite the challenges that may be experienced (Seligman et al., 2005).

2.5 THE BASIC ASSUMPTIONS OF POSITIVE PSYCHOLOGY

Positive psychology seeks to understand what makes life worth living and how to improve peoples’ lives (Seligman, 2011). The main goals of positive psychology are to build positive emotion, gratification and meaning so that people can begin to access greater happiness (Seligman, Parks & Steen, 2004). According to Compton (2005), Seligman set out to remind psychologists of the original mission of the profession; that is, to build human strengths and nurture genius. These areas had been neglected by

mainstream psychology, having focussed primarily on negative mental health. The Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM) attests to the strides made in diagnosing and addressing mental disorders over the last sixty years, but comparatively little is known about what makes a person optimistic, kind, giving, content, engaged, purposive or brilliant (Seligman et al., 2004). Although it is a contemporary approach in psychological practice, the ideals and assumptions of the movement of positive psychology are not new. Rather than replacing what had been contributed by decades of traditional psychology, positive psychology should be used to supplement what is known about treating illness and repairing damage with knowledge about nurturing well-being in individuals and communities (Seligman et al., 2004).

Ultimately, applied positive psychology culminates in virtue, meaning, resilience and well-being for society - four pillars that form the basis of the field. These four concepts have been the focus of many studies, as factors that contribute to human survival and flourishing. *Virtues* are reflective of the preferred strengths and values that guide individuals to behave morally and strive towards good for themselves and greater society. They represent the best forms of character strengths for people to exemplify and they typically serve a good purpose, as existential values that foster worthiness and excellence. In many cases they are culturally influenced (Wong, 2011).

Another core area of positive psychology had been the focus of Bruner (1992) who asserted that meaning was the central concept of psychology, while Peterson (1999) conducted analyses to show the connection between beliefs and neuropsychology in the creation of meaning. To Hoffman (2009), human existence was aimed at the achievement of meaning. They all advocated that positive psychology went beyond being a science to create meaning for individuals. Meaning is one of the central aspects of human existence and can be explored through narratives, myths and culture. Rather than just a concept, meaning in itself has structure and functions that work together as part of a

self-regulation process (Baumeister & Vohs, 2011; Carver & Scheier, 2001; Ryan & Deci, 2000; Wong, 2011) that serves and integrates the basic human needs of motivation as 'purpose', cognitive 'understanding', moral and spiritual 'responsibility' and affective 'enjoyment'. Several studies have also shown the link between meaning and the various dimensions of well-being from personality and social psychology perspectives. Meaning can be found in the experiences of happiness, achievement, intimacy, relationship, self-transcendence, self-acceptance and fairness (Wong, 2011).

The third pillar, *resilience*, is associated with the ability to adapt to difficulties and obstacles so that one not only bounces back but becomes stronger as a result (Seligman, 2011). Resilience is an adaptive process motivated by the will to survive. Sufficient protective factors in the individual and in the environment can contribute to resilience and serve to prevent illness and help one bounce back from trauma and difficult experiences. Resilience not only enables endurance and bouncing back from adversities, but also strengthens the individual to withstand setbacks in the future. The development of resilience is dependent on learning coping strategies and skills, which include cultural knowledge and being able to discern between adaptive and maladaptive coping behaviours (Mak, Ng & Wong, 2011).

Lastly, well-being is a broad term that denotes health, flourishing and optimal living and epitomises for people what they deem to be a '*good life*'. Positive emotion, engagement, meaning, positive relationships and accomplishments contribute to the experience of well-being (Seligman, 2011). Culture has an influence on the predictive factors that lead to happiness and well-being and these can vary from one country to the next. Objective and subjective assessments of well-being consider mental, physical, emotional, social and economic aspects of the concept. Achieving a high level of well-being is possible if the other three pillars are realised and if positive life experiences are savoured and appreciated (Wong, 2011). Well-being does not imply the exclusion or avoidance of negative experiences and suffering, but rather

seeks to transcend them and encourage what is positive in spite of the difficulties that are present.

Positive psychology can be studied and applied at different levels or dimensions of human experience (Compton, 2005). 'Positive subjective states' are an examination of positive experiences at the subjective level. These can include positive emotions such as joy, satisfaction and contentment or positive thoughts such as optimism and hope. The study of 'positive individual traits' at the individual level considers the aspects of personality, which are relatively stable and enduring, focussing on traits, character strengths and the development of potential (Compton, 2005; Peterson, 2006). The second level, positive traits, encompasses talents, interests, creativity, wisdom, values, character strengths, meaning, purpose, growth and courage (Peterson, 2006). Positive entities at the group level or societal level are termed 'positive institutions' and include positive families, schools, businesses, communities and societies (Compton, 2005). Peterson (2006) maintains that the last level facilitates and supports the first two levels to promote human flourishing. Csikszentmihalyi and Seligman (2000), who describe positive psychology as the scientific study of positive human functioning, are in agreement with the multiple level perspective of positive functioning.

The end goal of positive psychology is to encourage flourishing, which is encompassed by positive emotion, engagement, meaning, self-esteem, optimism, resilience and positive relationships (Seligman, 2011). Earlier, the focus of positive psychology was on fostering happiness, which was described as a threefold construct, according to Seligman (2002), and included positive emotion and pleasure, engagement and meaning. Happiness is causal and apart from just feeling good, happy people tend to be healthier, more successful and more socially engaged, and the causal direction runs both ways (Seligman et al., 2005). Happiness is also not equivalent to the absence of unhappiness (Seligman, Parks & Steen, 2004).

The first form of happiness can be achieved as a temporary, hedonic pursuit, expressed as positive emotion (Seligman, Parks & Steen, 2004). The second form of happiness is engagement in activity in which gratitude is experienced. Such activities typically involve the deployment of a person's strengths. The third form of happiness involves finding meaning and realising one's purpose in life. A person who pursues all three of these forms of happiness, the pleasant life, the good life and the meaningful life, therefore strives toward a 'full life' (Seligman et al., 2004). While a hedonic happiness-oriented person may falter more easily in the face of adversity, the person who is oriented towards meaning is more likely to persevere through personal suffering. Even under dire circumstances, meaning will provide a means of survival and growth by eliciting virtue, integrity and purpose (Wong, 2011).

2.6 CRITICISMS OF POSITIVE PSYCHOLOGY

A criticism of positive psychology is that that negative emotions' contribution to growth is overlooked (Stokols, 2003; Wong, 2011). Baumeister, Bratslavsky, Finkenauer and Vohs (2001) describe human beings' sensitivity to negative emotions and experiences as greater, an evolutionary adaptation to ensure survival, given dangerous environmental elements. They argue that being oblivious to threats would have more dire consequences than missed opportunities and the impact of negatively influenced events is therefore more profound. Bad is therefore more pronounced in the perception of individuals and behaviour change is aimed primarily at reducing the negative rather than enhancing what is good. In response, positive psychology acknowledges negative emotions and rather than replacing the disease model with all that is good, seeks to provide a more balanced view of people who may be subject to the negative, but the positive has the potential to prevail. It maintains that by placing emphasis on positive emotions, the negative ones will fade away and eventually lose their importance (Wong, 2011).

Fredrickson and Losada (2005) lamented the fact that people tend to focus more on what is wrong with their character than what is right and asserted that it takes at least three times more positive than negative effort to turn people's thoughts in a more positive, strengths-focussed direction. They labelled this quantitative concept the critical positivity ratio (Fredrickson & Losada, 2005), which was generally accepted in the positive psychology community and referred to in the construction of strength-based interventions and approaches (Tai, 2014). An interrogative study of the mathematical formula of the critical positivity ratio by Brown, Sokal and Friedman (2013) showed up conceptual and mathematical errors that invalidated Fredrickson's work. These authors took issue with the mathematical formula that Fredrickson had used as an ideal emotional ratio (Brown et al., 2013) and she replied by conceding that additional research was needed to refine the ratio, but insisted that the high positivity compared to negativity ratio had been adequately substantiated in her research (Fredrickson, 2013).

On the optimal use of strengths, it is recommended that individuals would have to go beyond only knowing what their strengths are to being able to manage them by using them to the appropriate degree in the right context and time (Tai, 2014). Maintaining a balanced approach enhances the optimal use of a strength in a constructive manner, as opposed to over-using a strength or misapplying it so that counterproductive, negative or undesirable results are realised (Tai, 2014).

Considering the criticisms regarding the use of a positive psychological theoretical approach and strengths, the counter-arguments do not call for a dismissal of all things positive but rather for a holistic, balanced approach that incorporates human strengths and weaknesses in realising positive outcomes and wellness (Seligman et al., 2005).

2.7 POSITIVE PSYCHOLOGICAL STRENGTHS

2.7.1 Defining human strengths

One of the key focus areas of positive psychology is psychological strengths. Conventional psychology has paid a lot of attention to negative attributes (Seligman et al., 2004) and organisations have learnt of the implications of demotivation, low job satisfaction and poor leadership, but have not tapped the various ways in which strengths are of value to their well-being and prosperity. Csikszentmihalyi and Seligman (2000) issued a broad call for the study of strengths and the prevention of illness, arguing that scientific psychology had predominantly focussed on pathological issues. Strengths can enable near-perfect performance and the ability to manage several activities simultaneously. When talents are refined with knowledge and skills they can be employed as strengths (Clifton & Harter, 2003) and yield greater positive outcomes.

The field of positive psychology has developed to a point where the central issues concerning human strengths need to be understood (Aspinwall & Staudinger, 2003), but the ways in which strengths are studied are not clear-cut. Researchers of positive psychology experience some difficulty when it comes to clearly classifying the various forms and expressions of human strengths and a comprehensive taxonomy has yet to be established (Compton, 2005). Aspinwall and Staudinger (2003) stated reasons to explain why defining human strengths is challenging. Unlike pathology, where the direction of progression is known, that is, the state of normality, determining the direction of a strength can prove difficult. Other considerations can confound this problem, such as whether strengths should be represented based on their adaptiveness or functionality, whether they are to be measured subjectively or objectively, whether specific value or ethics systems should be consulted, or which stakeholder perceptions of change should be used (Aspinwall & Staudinger, 2003).

Despite the ambiguity about a clear definition, a number of positive psychology researchers have undertaken investigations into various aspects of the sub-field. Human strengths are considered in a variety of contexts, including the evaluation of different medical and psychological treatments as, well as the development of interventions or promoting corporate cultures of excellence. Defining and clarifying the composition and application of strengths is therefore an important task (Aspinwall & Staudinger, 2003).

Diverse approaches to explaining strengths have been followed and progress with understanding concepts such as intelligence, creativity, health, personality, self-regulation, emotion, close relationships and others has been the result. Aspinwall and Staudinger (2003) have clustered these contributions according to the following eight themes: cognition, judgement and intelligence; creativity, excellence and wisdom; development and aging; emotion; health and well-being; institutions and culture; self and personality and social relations.

Carr (2004) described the tendency of people to look to their strengths when they are faced with opportunities or challenges. He identified three categories of strengths: historical, personal and contextual. Historical strengths are those that indicate early secure attachment, childhood experiences of authoritative parenting, positive school placement experiences and previous experiences of coping with adversity. Personal strengths are those attributes that enable the solving of complex problems and include character strengths (Park, Peterson & Seligman, 2006), intelligence, creativity, wisdom, emotional intelligence, easy temperament, positive personality traits, positive motives, self-esteem, self-efficacy, positive defences, positive coping strategies and immuno-competence (Carr, 2004). Contextual strengths refer to the positive elements of a person's current social network and lifestyle. Examples of these are the current family, family of origin, occupational roles, the social support network, and leisure activities in which one participates.

2.7.2 A model of strengths and healthy psychological growth

With the growing recognition and operationalisation of strengths, the interconnections with resources, healthy processes and fulfilments also need to be considered as part of a more comprehensive though complex process (Snyder & Lopez, 2004). Snyder and Lopez (2004) cited the lack of a model to explain how the concepts of strengths, healthy processes and fulfilments interplay to promote the 'good life' and therefore proposed the model below, which is embedded in the environmental context.



Figure 2

A model of healthy psychological growth (Snyder & Lopez, 2004, p. 463)

All people possess strengths and everyone could potentially achieve optimal mental health; this is the assumption that the model is grounded in and strengths are an integral component to growth so that healthy processes can develop and personal fulfilment can be achieved (Snyder & Lopez, 2004). Healthy processes are more effective in responding to adversity if they arise from strengths and those healthy processes that do not derive from strengths can support psychological survival, but optimal mental health is less likely. When people establish a repertoire of strengths and healthy processes, they are more likely to experience a life of fulfilment. They are more inclined to find

meaning in their work and personal engagements and derive some benefit from the difficulties and challenges they face (Snyder & Lopez, 2004).

As depicted in the model diagram, the arrows suggest many alternatives to healthy psychological growth. The arrows on the right indicate that strengths may be used to create positive processes that lead to fulfilment, or alternatively strengths may directly affect fulfilment, such as in the expressions for love or satisfaction. The arrows on the left show how Snyder and Lopez (2004) suggest strengths and healthy processes are maintained. People who are fulfilled adapt better and in turn retain or develop new strengths, or alternatively fulfilments may directly contribute to the building of a person's repertoire of strengths. The model is a proposal of the possible interplay between strengths, healthy processes and fulfilments, but does not claim to cover the complexities of these interactions comprehensively (Snyder & Lopez, 2004).

The model suggests that allowing for optimal psychological health would enable more effective responses to opportunities and challenges to be initiated. It can be argued that psychological strengths, similar to positive emotions, serve healthy adaptive processes and in the context of this research, enable Muslim women to achieve their goals. While this view is complementary to the broaden-and-build theory (Fredrickson, 1998), no competing models of strengths, their development or processes have been developed. There is no theory either to establish whether the explanation offered by the model is true for all strengths. Strengths are also categorised a little differently by researchers; the most popular and most established groupings to date are described in the next section.

2.7.3 Taxonomies of strengths

Established approaches to categorising and measuring psychological strengths include the classification of character strengths and virtues by Seligman (2003), as well as Buckingham and Clifton's Signature Strengths (2001).

2.7.3.1 Seligman's theory of virtues and character strengths

Seligman (2011) differentiated two types of categories of positive emotions: those that are momentary pleasures arising from sensual experiences and more enduring gratifications, such as the experience of flow when engaging in activities that involve the use of personal or signature strengths. His Values in Action Classification System identifies six values, namely core moral and philosophical characteristics of wisdom, courage, humanity, justice, temperance and transcendence (Park et al., 2006), which can be further analysed to reveal signature strengths. Signature strengths are the 24 personal traits associated with the virtues and in order to demonstrate good character according to these definitions, a person would need to exemplify two or more strengths within a virtue group, as depicted in Table 2.

The 24 strengths associated with the six virtues can be measured using the Values in Action Inventory of Strengths (VIA-IS), a 240-item self-report questionnaire (Peterson & Seligman, 2004). These strengths are also tied to personality and studies of the relationship found correlations between the Big Five personality traits and the VIA-IS. These included the following positive correlations: openness to experience correlates with awe, curiosity and love of learning; agreeableness correlates with teamwork and conscientiousness correlates with industry and self-regulation. Factor analyses of the scales suggest five factors or categories of strengths. Cognitive strengths (curiosity, love of learning, and creativity), emotional strengths (playfulness, zest, hope), conative strengths (judgement, perseverance, prudence and self-control), interpersonal strengths (leadership and teamwork) and transcendence

strengths (awe, gratitude and spirituality) (Park, Peterson & Seligman, 2006). Since personality is relatively stable during a person's lifetime, it can be inferred that related strengths would be more likely to be evident over time, as well.

Seligman (2003) and Saleebey (2001) proposed that each individual possesses a set of strengths which, if applied, will promote experiences of gratification and authentic happiness. The main life areas in which they recommended that knowledge of strengths should be applied are romantic relationships, parenting, work and leisure activities. Described as advancing beyond 'integrity', character is suggested to include virtues that are traditionally philosophic or religious as well. They suggest that character strengths and virtues serve to create an 'ascetic self-construal' or self-identity. Self-identity refers to one's self-concept or understanding of self in relation to one's environment and 'ascetic' refers to a predisposition to bringing out the best in oneself and others. Sosik and Cameron (2010) proposed that it is this tendency that leads to the projection of authentic transformational leadership behaviour.

2.7.3.2 Buckingham and Clifton's strengths

Buckingham and Clifton (2001) employed a slightly different approach to describing strengths, differentiating between 'talents' and 'strengths'. In agreement with Seligman (Peterson & Seligman, 2004), strengths are rooted in personality theory and have strong correlations with the Big Five personality factors. Their approach focussed more on exploring the neurological processes that mould individuals into unique beings. Neurological development is described as dependent on genetic makeup and life experiences that contribute to unique and established patterns of interpreting and responding to the external world (Buckingham & Clifton, 2001). It is through these patterns that enduring talents are created, which become increasingly difficult to alter as people grow older.

When these talents are combined with knowledge (both content and experience) and skill, they become strengths. A talent can therefore be any positive or negative trait or behaviour that can be applied in a positive manner to achieve a desired result. Diplomacy or stubbornness, for example, can be useful if used in the right context. In the case of strengths, rapid learning is possible and satisfaction is achieved when applied to activities that capitalise on them (Buckingham & Clifton, 2001). A more detailed overview of the strengths is provided in Table 3.

At present the assessment of strengths is a growing trend in the United States and United Kingdom, with both the StrengthsFinder by Buckingham and Clifton (2001) and the VIA scale by Peterson (Park et al., 2006) frequently assessing users online. Whereas Peterson's questionnaire measures 24 'character strengths', the StrengthsFinder measures 34 'talents' as strengths and both convey the top few strengths with the highest scores achieved to be areas of focus and intervention. Shortfalls of these instruments are that they do not present how much of a strength is present in the individual or to what extent an individual has achieved successful regulation of these strengths, information that could assist in the types of interventions selected to further an individual's application of strengths. Another issue with strengths assessment is that the list of 'top strengths' does not provide information about the way in which these strengths interact with one another and how they then translate into behaviour is hardly known (Biswas-Diener et al., 2011). The constellation of strengths drawn from one individual would differ from another and even strengths within a constellation may appear to contradict each other (for example, consistency versus adaptability).

Table 2

Classification of Virtues and Character Strengths (Park, Peterson & Seligman, 2006, p.119)

Virtue and Strength Definitions

Wisdom and knowledge Cognitive strengths that entail the acquisition and use of knowledge

Creativity Thinking of novel and productive ways to do things

Curiosity Taking an interest in all of ongoing experience

Open-mindedness Thinking things through and examining them from all sides

Love of learning Mastering new skills, topics and bodies of knowledge

Perspective Being able to provide wise counsel to others

Courage Emotional strengths that involve the exercise of will to accomplish goals in the face of opposition, external or internal

Authenticity Speaking the truth and presenting oneself in a genuine way

Bravery Not shrinking from threat, challenge, difficulty or pain

Persistence Finishing what one starts

Zest Approaching life with excitement and energy

Humanity Interpersonal strengths that involve “tending and befriending” others

Kindness Doing favours and good deeds for others

Love Valuing close relations with others

Social intelligence Being aware of the motives and feelings of oneself and others

Justice Civic strengths that underlie healthy community life

Fairness Treating all people the same according to notions of fairness and justice

Leadership Organising group activities and seeing that they happen

Teamwork Working well as member of a group or team

Temperance Strengths that protect against excess

Forgiveness Forgiving those who have done wrong

Modesty Letting one’s accomplishments speak for themselves

Prudence Being careful about one’s choices; not saying or doing things that might later be regretted

Self-regulation Regulating what one feels and does

Transcendence Strengths that forge connections to the larger universe and provide meaning

Appreciation of beauty and excellence Noticing and appreciating beauty, excellence, and/or skilled performance in all domains of life

Gratitude Being aware of and thankful for the good things that happen

Hope Expecting the best and working to achieve it

Humour Liking to laugh and tease; bringing smiles to other people

Religiousness Having coherent beliefs about the higher purpose and meaning of life

Table 3

StrengthsFinder descriptions adapted from Buckingham and Clifton (2004, pp. 75-121)

StrengthsFinder themes

Achiever – drive for achievement and accomplishment of goals to feel satisfied, serves to initiate action.

Activator – values action in order to make things happen and learn the results, motivated to get things done.

Adaptability – able to respond to the demands of the moment, flexible in attending to various tasks at once.

Analytical – objective, dispassionate, seeks connections and patterns in data, looks for proof to support theories.

Arranger – flexible, enjoys arranging the variables of a complex situation and realigning them into a productive configuration.

Belief – possesses core values that are enduring and provide meaning. Family-oriented, altruistic, spiritual and values ethics.

Command – inclined to take charge and assert views, align others with own goals. Confrontational and accepts challenges.

Communication – conveys ideas into exciting presentations. Enjoys speaking, writing and dramatic representations of information

Competition – awareness based on comparison with competitors and motivated to win.

Connectedness – believes that people and events are interconnected and have a greater purpose. Considerate, caring and accepting.

Consistency – values balance and equal treatment of people. Favours a predictable, consistent environment.

Context – looks to the past for underlying structure in order to understand events occurring in the present.

Deliberative – careful, vigilant and private. Identifies and assesses risks. Selective in activities and relationships.

Developer – identifies potential and opportunities for the growth of others. Encourages and challenges others.

Discipline – prefers order, structure and predictability. Values precision and impatient with errors, surprises and distractions.

Empathy – perceptive and understanding of others' emotions and assists others to express themselves appropriately.

Focus – requires clear direction, sets regular goals and evaluates activities that assist in achieving them.

Futuristic – visionary, looks beyond present environment and projects a detailed picture of the future.

Harmony – dislikes friction and conflict. Seeks common ground, consensus and focus is on matters on which people agree.

Ideation – fascinated by ideas and connecting them to other concepts. Energised by novel ideas and new perspectives.

Includer – needs to include people and have them be part of a group. Non-judgemental and accepting of others.

Individualisation – identifies the unique qualities of individuals, observes behaviour and builds relationship

Input – inquisitive, collects things, drawn to variety and complexity. Stores collectables as information, things or experiences.

Intellection – enjoys thinking, problem solving, developing ideas. Spends a lot of time on introspection.

Learner – has a love of learning and interested in the process of learning. Motivated to be competent in a subject.

Maximiser - motivated by excellence and seeks out opportunities to transform others' and own strengths to be superb.

Positivity - enthusiastic and optimistic, generous with praise, identifies the best of situations, light-hearted, humorous.

Relator - enjoys meeting new people and establishing relationships. Favours deepening of genuine relationships.

Responsibility – takes psychological ownership of commitments and emotionally bound to follow them through to completion.

Restorative – enjoys problem solving in area of interest with the aim of restoring and saving a technique, person, company etc.

Self-assurance – faith in own strengths and ability to deliver. Withstands challenges, confident of judgement, decision-making.

Apart from inventories that measure specifically for psychological strengths, they can also be inferred or derived based on personality characteristics, an individual possesses. Combining the use of a personality instrument and theory may be helpful in explaining such contradictions and further an understanding of personality-strength dynamics and has been recommended by Biswas-Diener et al. (2011). Psychometric theories of personality typically use traits or types to describe the characteristics of people in a meaningful way that explains their behaviour and each of these is described along with the associated strengths.

2.7.4 Psychological strengths and personality traits

2.7.4.1 Psychological strengths and the Five-Factor Model

Research has pointed to links between personal strengths or subjective well-being and specific traits or motives (Carr, 2004). Personality traits refer to those individual characteristics that are stable over time and influence cognition, affect and behaviour. Traits need to be differentiated from states, which are less enduring and situation-specific. For example, conscientiousness is a trait and being busy is a state. Motives, on the other hand, are those dispositions that urge action in a particular direction to achieve goals and can be understood as either enduring and trait-like or transient and state-like (Carr, 2004).

The causes of happiness in the form of positive states and emotions can be traced to a limited number of personality traits, with personality studies showing that there are distinct profiles of happy and unhappy people (Carr, 2004). In Western cultures happy people tend to be extraverted, optimistic, have an internal locus of control and high self-esteem, while unhappy people tend to have high levels of neuroticism. Extraversion correlates with happiness at 0.7, neuroticism correlates with unhappiness at 0.9 and intelligence is shown to be unrelated to happiness. Explanations for these

trends include that extraversion and neuroticism predispose people to experience positive and negative events, respectively (Carr, 2004).

Trait theory suggests that traits are normally distributed within a population. Most people will fall in the middle in possessing a trait, such as agreeableness, and only a few people would possess the trait at the extreme ends. The Five-Factor Model of personality (Carr, 2004) is a commonly used approach in grounding personality trait theories and includes the dimensions of openness to experience, conscientiousness, extraversion, agreeableness and neuroticism. Other trait theories argue that fewer or more traits are required to explain personality fully; Eysenck suggested just three personality factors (neuroticism, extraversion and psychoticism), while Cattell argued that 16 traits were required. The Five-Factor Model itself was extended from Eysenck's three-factor theory and the five factors developed comprised six facets each. The personal strengths associated with the facets on which there are high scores are illustrated in Table 4.

Instruments that measure for strengths and that have been developed based on the Five-Factor theory include the StrengthsFinder by Buckingham and Clifton (2001), introduced in the preceding section. The factors were a result of the clustering and factor analysis of exhaustive lists of adjectives describing traits extracted from the dictionaries of many languages and self- and observer-rated items. A profile that exhibits many personal strengths, especially those with positive adjustment on all five factors, is associated with highly 'resilient' personality profiles. A second type of profile, 'overcontrolled', shows people who have high levels of agreeableness and conscientiousness with low extraversion. Lastly, the 'undercontrolled' profile is displayed by people who have high scores on neuroticism and low scores on agreeableness and conscientiousness. These findings are repeatedly gained from typological studies associated with the Five-Factor Model (Carr, 2004).

Table 4

Strengths associated with the Five-Factor Model of personality by Costa and McCrae, as adapted by Carr (2004, p.50)

Factor	Components	Correlated positive trait adjective
Sociability/Neuroticism	N1. Courage/Anxiety	Not tense
	N2. Calmness/Angry hostility	Not irritable
	N3. Happiness/Depression	Contented
	N4. Positive self-regard/Self-consciousness	Not shy
	N5. Impulse-control/Impulsiveness	Not moody
	N6. Resilience/Vulnerability	Self-confident
Extraversion	E1. Warmth	Outgoing
	E2. Gregariousness	Sociable
	E3. Assertiveness	Forceful
	E4. Activity	Energetic
	E5. Excitement seeking	Adventurous
	E6. Positive emotions	Enthusiastic
Openness to experience	O1. Fantasy	Imaginative
	O2. Aesthetics	Artistic
	O3. Feelings	Excitable
	O4. Actions	Wide interest
	O5. Ideas	Curious
	O6. Values	Unconventional
Agreeableness	A1. Trust	Forgiving
	A2. Straightforwardness	Not demanding
	A3. Altruism	Warm
	A4. Compliance	Not stubborn
	A5. Modesty	Not showing off
	A6. Tender-mindedness	Sympathetic
Conscientiousness	C1. Competence	Efficient
	C2. Order	Organised
	C3. Dutifulness	Not careless
	C4. Achievement striving	Thorough
	C5. Self-discipline	Not lazy
	C6. Deliberation	Not impulsive

The determinants of strengths associated with personality traits seem to be due to an approximately equal influence of genetic and environmental factors (Carr, 2004). Twin studies attribute 50% of the variance in neuroticism and extraversion and 40% of the variance in agreeableness, conscientiousness and openness to genetic factors. Personality traits tend to remain fairly constant during the lifespan and all individuals are affected by general

maturity trends. Between late adolescence and the age of 30 the traits of neuroticism, extraversion and openness to experience decline a little as agreeableness and conscientiousness increase. After the age of 30 this trend is maintained but at a much slower rate. This translates into younger people having the strengths of extraversion and openness and older people having the strengths of stability, agreeableness and conscientiousness. However, these shifts are not drastic and traits evident in earlier life are predictive of those observable at later stages in life (Carr, 2004).

With regard to the traits of women who are leaders, those that enable their effectiveness in the light of barriers such as work-life balance and gender-role stereotypes include higher scores on assertiveness, ego-drive, abstract reasoning, urgency and risk-taking (Caliper, 2014). Lower scores also associated with inhibited performance are external structure, thoroughness, and cautiousness. The results from Caliper (2014) therefore seem to emphasise traits that relate to an action-oriented approach, a straightforward and persuasive communication style and the ability to solve complex problems and recognise patterns in data.

2.7.4.2 Strengths and temperament

Hutchinson, Stuart and Pretorius (2010) found that there are relationships between temperament, character strengths (Park et al., 2006) and resilience, with a significant positive relationship between the temperament subscale of activity and all of the character strengths measured. This suggests that leading a proactive lifestyle can enhance the development of character strengths. Statistical relevance was found for lower neuroticism-anxiety on personality and aggression-hostility on temperament with higher levels of resilience and character strengths. However, these effects were not large enough to suggest that the development of character strengths may be impeded by any potential biological predispositions (Hutchinson et al., 2010).

2.7.4.3 State- and trait-like motives

Some strengths have also been linked to state- and trait-like motives. State-like motives are associated with subjective well-being where the pursued object is personally meaningful, where the initiation and control resides with the individual, where there is an available supportive network and where the pursuit is moderately challenging but not overly demanding (Carr, 2004). Individuals who score high on the personality trait of openness to experience tend to take on more personal projects compared to individuals high on neuroticism who tend to report more stressful experiences in their projects. State-like motives, also known as personal action constructs, have been grouped into four different conceptual categories by different researchers but have much in common (Carr, 2004). The motivational task of committing to or abandoning a project is referred to as a 'current concern'. An interrelated sequence of actions directed at achieving a personal goal is referred to as a 'personal project'. This includes thinking about, planning and performing everyday tasks. Sets of problems that individuals work through at specific points during their lives, such as having a child and managing work, home and the baby, are examples of 'life tasks'. The fourth state-like motive is 'personal striving', which describes a tendency that underlies many apparently different actions where an individual tries to achieve something such as trying to please someone, or trying out something for the first time. Trait-like motives, such as the needs for power, affiliation or achievement, are more frequently observed as associated with personal strength, as well as the motive of altruism, a unique motive associated with improving the welfare of others (Carr, 2004).

To date, research related to personality and strengths has primarily focussed on the link to the Five-Factor theory (Buckingham & Clifton, 2001; McCrae & Costa, 1992). Human strengths are often recognised firstly for the individual-level traits that describe character or talent (Buckingham & Clifton, 2001), such as intelligence or self-efficacy. While the trait approach to strengths has contributed to an understanding of their measurement and development over

the life span (Aspinwall & Staudinger, 2003), little explanation has been provided for the underlying processes and dynamics or the interplay between traits and the situational context. Descriptive results have provided valuable insights regarding strengths and personality traits (Carr, 2004), but the personality dynamics perspective could provide additional and possibly explanatory information (Bayne, 2004). To this end, a recommendation has been made by Aspinwall and Staudinger (2003) for a trait approach to be combined with a process approach, where the unfolding and actioning of a positive construct can be observed. Personality type theories may provide more insight in this regard.

2.7.5 Personality type and psychological strengths

Biswas-Diener et al. (2011) proposed the use of personality measures to assist in interpreting strength assessment results and the traits-based personality approach has been the first choice thus far (Carr, 2004), with strengths related to personality types hardly being mentioned. While trait theory tends to be descriptive of emotional, behavioural and cognitive tendencies (McCrae, 2000), personality type theory provides insight into personality dynamics (Bayne, 2004). Some studies have pointed to strengths in the form of giftedness and higher aptitude in specific personality types (Hawkins, 1997). Positive leadership behaviours associated with personality type were found in a study of managers: Introverts tended to be more ethical managers, extroverts were more optimistic; intuitive types were innovators, learners, and systemic thinkers; feeling types were more skilled at relationship and change management behaviours; perceivers rated higher on innovativeness and judgers were described as effective planners (Berr, Church & Waclawski, 2000). Further research on personality types and psychological strengths could shed light on the process and manifestation of these strengths in the development of a type, a step forward from the descriptive correlational information that is currently available.

2.7.6 Psychological strengths in the workplace

As suggested by Seligman (2003), psychological strengths are widely applicable and present particular value for workplaces and in organisational contexts. Therapeutic interventions based on positive psychological constructs (Csikszentmihalyi & Seligman, 2000) can provide equivalent if not better effectiveness compared to traditional rehabilitative therapy (Biswas-Diener, Kashdan & Minhas, 2011) and the application of positive psychology theory has extended from the therapeutic environment to the organisational context where identifying and developing employee strengths can have significant economic benefits for companies (Buckingham & Clifton, 2001). By focussing on individual strengths, according to positive psychology theory, the capacity of individuals to self-actualise is enhanced, compared to focusing on minimising personal shortcomings (Buckingham & Clifton, 2001).

Psychological strengths may also serve to counter adverse experiences, in addition to realising individual talent (Keenan & Mostert, 2013; Turner et al., 2005). People tend to respond to the demands of work with increasing levels of stress, which can threaten to undermine their performance at work, their health and relationships. The need for positive resources is therefore highest when life is difficult and positive emotions have the potential to undo negative ones. The fostering of happiness can alleviate suffering, while strengths and virtues can buffer against difficult experiences and psychological disorders (Seligman & Peterson, 2003). Adapting positively to changing circumstances is a requirement of many organisations in order to keep abreast of the rapidly evolving environment, as the global context influences the nature of work (Caprara & Cervone, 2003; Turner et al., 2005). Technological innovation, multiculturalism, organisational restructuring and changed psychological work contracts place people under tremendous pressure to develop resilience and successful coping strategies (Turner et al., 2005) and these can be improved with the development of psychological strengths. Modern employees need to be competent at self-directed life-long learning and adapt to the new features of society (Caprara & Cervone, 2003). Strümpfer (2005) commented on

change no longer being incremental but rather abrupt, discontinuous and non-linear. By identifying and growing positive traits and behaviour in people, individual levels of resilience can be enhanced, enabling people to face opportunities and challenges in both their personal and professional lives with more confidence and success (Caprara & Cervone, 2003; Carr, 2004; Fredrickson & Losada, 2005).

Littman-Ovadia and Steger (2010) integrated their findings in a study of strengths into a model of well-being in the work context. The results showed that when the strengths of employees and volunteers were endorsed, this was related to meaningful work. When their strengths were both endorsed and deployed, this was related to well-being. Meaning and wellbeing are both important contributors to job satisfaction (Littman-Ovadia and Steger, 2010). Being able to use strengths effectively in response to opportunities and challenges may also lead to positive outcomes such as improved physical and psychological health, flow experiences and further enhancement of personal strengths (Carr, 2004).

Of growing interest to organisations is the concept of PsyCap, which was shown in initial cross-sectional studies to be an indicator of performance and organisational citizenship. The composites of PsyCap, efficacy, hope, optimism and resilience (Luthans, Youssef & Avolio, 2007), are closely tied to personality and effective use of strength. In a recent longitudinal within-individual study, PsyCap was also shown to change over a period of time with a subsequent impact on job performance. The results of this study reinforced the notion of a positive causal relationship between PsyCap and job performance (Peterson, Luthans, Avolio, Walumbwa & Zhang, 2011). The suggested relationship between PsyCap and individual strengths is that building and maintaining strengths serve to feed and support the four components of PsyCap, encourage appraisals of circumstances in a positive direction and together with motivated effort and perseverance, can be predictive of goal attainment and optimal performance (Peterson et al., 2011).

The nurturing of strengths can therefore benefit organisations and their employees in various ways that promote well-being and engagement.

2.7.7 The development of strengths

The progression of the strengths movement saw the successful application of strengths in the educational, therapeutic, coaching and organisational settings (Biswas-Diener et al., 2011). Developing and enhancing character strengths and resilience could potentially prevent and address psychological difficulties and enhance psychological well-being with interventions such as psychological counselling, career guidance, workshops and training courses (Hutchinson et al., 2010). As a popular application of positive psychology, strengths development was quickly accepted and promoted (Buckingham & Clifton, 2001) as a means to make employees happier and more engaged and to make managers better leaders (Kaiser & Overfield, 2011). Strengths development is regarded as more than merely identifying and using strengths by Biswas-Diener et al. (2011), as they recommend a more complete approach by introducing strength-specific interventions. The positive effects of strength development interventions are most evident with the continuation of the intervention, but resources accumulated from the intervention tend to last long after its discontinuation (Cohn & Fredrickson, 2010).

American studies to date in the work context have shown that people who capitalise on their strengths tend to experience job satisfaction (Peterson, Stephens, Park, Lee and Seligman, 2009) and job engagement (Harter, Schmidt & Hayes, 2002). In the UK, research showed a decrease in turnover where employees made regular use of their strengths (Stefanyszyn, 2007). A study by the Corporate Leadership Council reported in the work of Biswas-Diener et al. (2011) found that performance in a group of managers increased significantly when they were given feedback on their areas of strength, while those who were informed of their weaknesses subsequently showed poorer performance. The idea of measuring for individual strengths is somewhat

contradictory to common practice in organisations in South Africa. Typically, individual competence and organisational skills audits are analysed to determine the extent to which available and desired skills are evident. Subsequent training and developmental initiatives are then launched in order to narrow these skills gaps. The success of conventional efforts at addressing competency gaps is questionable, since some trainees seem to be more proficient at acquiring new skills than others.

Research has shown that learning potential, personality preferences and motivational factors lend significant predictive evidence to the effectiveness of training interventions (Spector, 2008). Implementing developmental interventions based on identified individual strengths promises to build creative problem-solving and decision-making, enhance positive emotional experiences and contribute to more resilient employees (Catalino & Fredrickson, 2011, Fredrickson, 2001). Kaiser and Overfield (2011) warn against the overuse of strengths, however, lest they become weaknesses. They refer to cases where strengths that got people promoted were overplayed and eventually became their undoing. Increasing the level of a positive trait can improve performance up to a point, after which, if not moderated, it can hamper task performance. Seligman (2004) describes interventions as meaningful if they are able to identify and utilise people's signature strengths creatively to help them connect with something larger than themselves. Whereas personality measures characteristics that are relatively enduring, the strengths development perspective introduces the notion that it is the situational context that will mediate the appropriate application of a strength. Individuals would also need to employ their 'wisdom' and discretion in regulating the use of these strengths, affecting subsequent behaviour (Biswas-Diener et al., 2011).

South African literature on the identification and application of psychological strengths is still fairly limited and concentrated more strongly on therapeutic studies. Strengths, regarded as individual resources, were examined in white

dormitory students who showed higher levels of hope, gratitude and life satisfaction among females and no significant gender differences on generalised self-efficacy and self-esteem (Jackson, van de Vijver & Fouche, 2014). Another study on the psychological strengths of male ex-offenders who had successfully reintegrated in South African society exhibited the strengths of hope, gratitude and spirituality and an apparent sense of posttraumatic growth (Guse & Hudson, 2014). In a work context, positive affect was found to buffer against job insecurity related to psychological distress in a government organisation (Bosman, Cuyper, De Witte, Stouten & van der Elst, 2013). Literature on the psychological strengths of women in the South African workplace has yet to be produced.

This study proposes that it is the psychological strengths of Muslim women that have enabled their effectiveness in their professional roles and as leaders by assisting in negating many of the adverse issues (Seligman & Peterson, 2003) with which they are presented in their personal and work contexts (Bux, 2004). These may include maintaining work-life balance, gender-based and religious-based stereotypes and organisational barriers, such as patriarchy. The study aims to describe and understand the extent to which psychological strengths serve as factors that support resilience and enable Muslim women leaders to resolve problems and capitalise on opportunities with confidence and success (Carr, 2004; Caprara & Cervone, 2003; Fredrickson & Losada, 2005)

2.8 CONCLUSION

This chapter served to introduce the field of positive psychology and its development as a contemporary and complementary approach to mainstream psychology that has predominantly focussed on human flaws in its theory, practice and research. The application of positive psychology was described with special emphasis on a sub-area, 'psychological strengths', which was

explored in some detail in order to give an indication of the definition and utility of the positive constructs that are related to leadership, which is focussed on in the next section of the literature review. For the purpose of this study, it is the psychological strengths of Muslim women that require attention and since no previous research on the subject is available, the theoretical background to psychological strengths has been provided. The exploratory nature of the research aims to provide data on the presence of psychological strengths, which can serve as the basis for intervention and improvement of working experiences for disadvantaged groups of people, more specifically for women.

CHAPTER 3

LEADERSHIP AND THE SOUTH AFRICAN MUSLIMAH

3.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter introduces the concept of leadership according to traditional and more contemporary approaches that have evolved to assimilate the propositions of positive psychology. Trends regarding women and leadership are related and relevant South African studies are highlighted, as well as the typical challenges that women face at work. Some of the international trends related to women in leadership are narrated, followed by the experience of work and leadership for South African women against the historical and current challenges that they face. The next section deals with the identity of the South African woman by explaining her position according to the principles of her faith and current perceptions and stereotypes of Islam. This is followed by an evaluation of Muslim women as public participants and as leaders.

3.2 DEFINITION OF LEADERSHIP

Leadership is a commonly used term, which refers to the “social process of influencing people to work voluntarily, enthusiastically, and persistently towards a purposeful group or organisational goal” (Werner, 2003, p. 186). Leadership is associated with the ability to provide direction for others and the exhibition of characteristics and activities that assist in the achievement of shared goals (Von Eck & Verwey, 2007). Whereas management is concerned with the operational aspects of running a business, leadership is associated with having a long-term perspective, developing strategies and inspiring other members of the organisation to achieve the vision. Leadership typically involves initiating and driving change. It is a creative and personal activity; influencing ‘buy-in’ is indicative of effectiveness and timing is an important skill, which includes calculated strategy and action. Nohria and Khurana

(2010) differentiated leaders as those who introduce change, whereas managers maintain the status quo by motivating subordinates to work effectively.

Good leadership is dependent on being able to respond to the leadership requirements of various contexts, since there is no single prototype of a suitable leader to deal with every situation (Nohria & Khurana, 2010). Generally speaking, successful leadership depends on a match between leader characteristics and the features of the situation that a leader confronts. Perceptions of what it means to be a good leader are therefore dynamic and context-dependent (Ryan, Haslam, Hersby & Bonjiorno, 2011). Definitions of leadership have been offered exhaustively in previous research and a simple description of a leader is offered in this study, as one who provides direction and guides the effort of the collective people toward a common goal.

3.3 TRADITIONAL LEADERSHIP THEORIES AND MODELS

Numerous theories of leadership have been developed over the years, the more popular of these being traits-based leadership theories, which focus on the physical and mental characteristics, skills and behaviours of individual leaders in the workplace (Brewster, Carey, Dowling, Grobler, Holland & Wörnich, 2003). Behavioural leadership theory looks to behaviours that contribute to successful leadership in all situations. Other theoretical approaches to leadership include contingency leadership, transactional leadership, transformational leadership, charismatic leadership and authentic leadership approaches, which vary in focus, from the application of different leadership styles (Brewster et al., 2003), exerting charisma and influence, to being genuine and leading with integrity (Parikh & Gupta, 2010).

3.3.1 Traits-based leadership approach

Much of the earlier studies in the 1930s and 1940s on leadership focussed on the physical and mental characteristics, skills and behaviours of individual leaders in the workplace (Brewster et al., 2003). Attribution theory suggested that leaders possess special characteristics that enable them to lead others effectively. The leader is a distinctive person with distinctive personality dimensions, special competencies and character traits (Nohria & Khurana, 2010). Where the situation allows for the expression of a leader's traits, those traits are more likely to influence effective behaviour. Despite the large body of research from this perspective, no conclusive list of traits has been found to be indicative of effective leadership. Though many traits differentiated leaders from others, these could not be generalised as effective for all leaders and the traits of a leader would need to be relevant to the situation being dealt with (Goldman, 2007). According to Ayman and Korabik (2010), preferred leadership traits may vary across cultures and may have a different impact on the perceptions of leadership of men and women and their subsequent access to leadership positions. Inferences about effective leadership skills and traits as assessed in competency model frameworks are susceptible and could be influenced by implicit leadership stereotypes, which may influence opportunities for females negatively.

3.3.2 Behavioural leadership perspective

By the 1950s the behavioural approach featured as researchers attempted to identify leadership behaviours that would affect successful leadership in all situations. One of the first of the behavioural theories was Lewin's (1939) classical model of autocratic, democratic and laissez-faire styles of leadership. Much of the research at the time involved examining what leaders actually did and the theories that emerged were largely concerned with whether leaders displayed relationship- or task-based orientations (Blake & Mouton, 1982) and how these styles were related to subordinates' satisfaction and performance. This research movement was large, but the results remained inconclusive (Brewster et al., 2003) and similar to trait theorists,

behavioural researchers failed to gather consistent results because they had not included the effect of context on leadership behaviour (House & Aditya, 1997).

3.3.3 Contingency leadership perspective

Also known as situational leadership theory, the contingency perspective was developed during the 1960s and 1970s and took into account the traits of both leaders and followers, the tasks requiring completion and the situation that affected them. Fiedler's (1967) Contingency Model sought to match 'fixed' leadership styles with relevant situations, similar to Vroom and Yetton's (2000) Leader-Participation Model, which identified a continuum of leader behaviours, contingencies which influence these behaviours and the way in which this relates to participation in decision-making. Hersey and Blanchard (1993) popularised the approach by emphasising that leadership effectiveness depended largely on being flexible and adapting one's behaviour when dealing with different subordinates (Brewster et al., 2003).

By the 1980s and 1990s the findings and flaws in the earlier theories prompted the development of the transactional, transformational and charismatic models of leadership, known as the 'attribution approach'. The transactional approach implied the practice of 'contingent-reward' and 'management by exception' styles of leadership (Brewster et al., 2003). This involved the development of an agreement with subordinates describing the consequences of correct and incorrect behaviour. The nature of the leader-follower relationship was therefore transactional and free from personal values such as loyalty. The transformational and charismatic approaches developed as more positively oriented approaches and these are described under positive leadership theories, along with authentic leadership and altruistic leadership styles.

3.4 POSITIVE PSYCHOLOGY AND LEADERSHIP

Vianello, Galliani and Haidt (2010) found that of the various ways leaders could influence their followers, eliciting positive emotions and the emotion of 'elevation' in particular, significantly enhanced citizenship behaviour and affective organisational commitment. The moral positive emotion of elevation is observed by leaders showing self-sacrifice and interpersonal fairness. Positive moral emotions can strengthen positive attitudes and enhance virtuous organisational behaviour significantly more than other positive emotions such as happiness, serenity, or positive affect (Vianello et al., 2010). Publications on positive leadership have considered the characteristics and the potential benefits for the leaders themselves, employees, and the organisations they serve. By 2010 most of the literature on positive leadership published by American scholars indicated a need for the limits and boundary conditions of this new focal point of inquiry to be worked out, and for a practical knowledge base to be built for making significant improvements in the quality of working life and organisational effectiveness (Donaldson & Ko, 2010). The positive approaches to leadership taking precedence encompass different leadership styles, including transformational, authentic, charismatic and altruistic leadership approaches (Donaldson & Ko, 2010).

3.4.1 Transformational leadership

The transactional model of leadership was useful at a time when organisations sought to maintain the status quo. This changed over time and a transformational approach to leadership became more appropriate in response to increasing changes in the environment and the need to motivate employees. Earlier in 1978, Burns, quoted in Sosik and Cameron (2010), proposed that leaders should be moral agents and that followers could potentially become leaders as well, in response to the resulting mutually stimulating relationship. Transformational leaders are those who foster and develop the strengths of their followers by enhancing intellectual stimulation and confidence, communicating a positive vision and exploiting followers'

strengths (Peterson, Walumbwa, Byron & Myrowitz, 2009). Peterson et al. (2009) found that traits predictive of transformational leadership included hope, optimism and resilience. Positive leadership theories cite character as the foundational aspect of outstanding leadership (Sosik & Cameron, 2010). Character, as beliefs, predispositions and intentions, is expressed by Sosik and Cameron (2010) who use the character strengths of Peterson and Seligman (2004). These strengths and virtues lead to higher performance in individuals, groups and organisations (Sosik & Cameron, 2010), specifically the development of follower PsyCap, organisational performance and citizenship (Donaldson & Ko, 2010; Gooty, Gavin, Johnson, Frazier & Snow, 2009).

3.4.2 Authentic leadership

Authentic leadership evolved from transformational leadership as a more genuine form of transformational leadership (Parikh & Gupta, 2010). Pseudo-transformational leaders had been influencing followers using charisma and inspiration and publicly offering applaudable intentions, while being personally motivated by political or psychological incentives (Parikh & Gupta, 2010). In contrast, authentic transformational leaders are transparent, behaving in a manner consistent with their virtues, core values and self-concept. Their moral and exemplary behaviour (Sosik & Cameron, 2010) supports a culture of ethical excellence (Avolio, Gardner, Walumbwa, Luthans & May, 2004). Additional benefits are the leadership development of colleagues, organisational commitment and citizenship, job satisfaction and follower satisfaction (Walumbwa, Avolio, Gardner, Wernsing, & Peterson, 2008; Yammarino, Dionne, Schriesheim, & Dansereau, 2008). This theory integrates some aspects of other theories, but focuses on exceptional leadership. The themes encountered in this perspective include being optimistic and having stable global causal attributions of positive events, having emotional intelligence, a value for positive emotions, and possessing integrity to facilitate relationships built upon trust (Parikh & Gupta, 2010).

3.4.3 Charismatic leadership

A charismatic leader shows the capability for strategic leadership as well as emulating and articulating the positive values of the organisation in an influential way (Glynn & Dowd, 2008). Charismatic leaders will often provide an emotional, persuasive expression of the mission and values. They do this through a complex process of simultaneously reflecting the threats and adverse conditions facing the organisation, yet still upholding their authority and charisma to overcome the challenges at hand through positive emotive communication (Donaldson & Ko, 2010). Strong emotions and identification are gained from followers (Brewster et al., 2003; Parikh & Gupta, 2010). Charismatic leaders tend to show sensitivity regarding the opportunities and barriers encountered by others and at times may use unconventional means to achieve their goals. Mutual liking and respect in dealing with followers is the influential factor, rather than empowerment in the transformational approach. Being able to arouse followers at an emotional level has been found to have a stronger effect than rationally-based forms of leadership (Parikh & Gupta, 2010).

3.4.4 Altruistic leadership

Altruistic leadership behaviour is a demonstration of helping behaviour and a service orientation that is directed towards individual followers (Sosik, Jung & Dinger, 2009). Sosik et al. (2009) found that employees rated their leader's altruistic leadership behaviour and job performance as positive and that the more commitment shown by the leader to the welfare of others, the more entrenched the members' collective-self became and the probability of them engaging in altruistic leadership behaviour themselves increased.

Overall, positive leadership has thus been shown in various forms in empirical research and the variations have been linked to positive outcomes for both individual employees and organisations as a whole (Donaldson & Ko, 2010).

3.4.5 Gender and leadership style

The relevance of gender to leadership theory across meta-analytic studies has shown that female leaders tend to be more transformational than male leaders and that they adopt more of the contingent reward behaviours that are a characteristic of transactional leadership. Male leaders are more likely to exhibit aspects of transactional leadership and laissez-faire leadership. While these differences in leadership for gender are small, other research has established that the aspects of leadership style on which women surpass men relate positively to leaders' effectiveness (Eagly, Johannesen-Schmidt & Engen, 2003).

Traditional theories that were generated were primarily based on male leadership (Pauchant, 2005) and the possibility of cultural bias has to be considered (Maritz, 2001). Apart from gender bias, there is some concern about leadership theories and their applicability across nations and cultures (Goldman, 2007), as more than three thousand studies over eighty years have stemmed from a Western point of reference, with about 98% of the empirical evidence being North American in origin (House & Aditya, 1997; Swanepoel, Erasmus, van Wyk & Schenk, 2000). Western leadership theories also tend to reflect an individualistic as opposed to a collectivistic orientation, which is more characteristic of African traditions. Eastern approaches to leadership have a different focus, believing that much of leadership is as an inner state of being rather than outward appearance and the leader should show conviction and preparedness to make difficult decisions (Goldman, 2007).

Since this study is about Muslim women as leaders, it is difficult to determine whether any of the theories mentioned are particularly relevant, but similar to Eastern theories of leadership, Islamic leadership has been grounded in the prescriptions for intra- and inter-personal excellence and the actual behaviour of the last prophet, Muhammed (SAW), particularly when he was faced with

difficult circumstances and important decisions had to be made (Ibrahim, 1997). When considering leadership theory from a South African perspective, a relative gap in research has been noted (Meyer & Boninelli, 2004) and local researchers have commented on the tendency for African leadership studies to emphasise Western approaches and models and the sparse availability of literature on traditional African leadership (Khoza, 2006; Ngambi, 2004).

Current studies and leadership practices have to be more inclusive of diversity by acknowledging limited access to leadership roles and dual identities as leaders and members of gender, racial, ethnic or other identity groups (Eagly & Chin, 2010). On the whole, however, studies conducted thus far have indicated that although there may be different approaches to leadership in different cultures, there are enough similarities to allow for a common leadership approach to be built (Goldman, 2007).

3.5 WOMEN AS LEADERS, PAST AND PRESENT

Although not the norm in South African society, many women who have held positions of leadership, particularly political leadership, and this was true of South African Muslim women during the period of transformation (Vahed, 2012). However, today, at a time when gender equality is more emphasised than ever, a chasm continues to exist when it comes to female leadership in the workplace (Geldenhuys, 2011). The roles of women have advanced as the needs and expectations of society have shifted over time. Self-sufficiency was encouraged during the Great Depression and World War II, followed by passive domestication during the 1950s and 1960s. Freedom and equality were subsequently popularised from the 1970s onwards (Twenge, 2001). Other socio-cultural environmental changes, such as education and age at first marriage, had been found to affect the development of the personalities of women over time, with a significant increase in assertiveness being noted in a study of American women between 1946 and 1967, but only a gradual

subsequent increase up to 2001. A similar trend was not found for males. In psychometrics 'dominance' or 'assertiveness' is regarded as a sub-trait of extraversion (Costa, Terracciano & McCrae, 2001).

Assertiveness has also been classified under 'agency' as a set of personality traits that include dominance, independence, leadership and control (Twenge, 2001). Assertiveness has been described as being able to express opinions and being self-assured and a leader. It was explained that people of higher social status tended to be more agentic and assertive and therefore, because women had a lower status, they were less assertive. Because it was assumed that this was inherently biological, women internalised and perpetuated the 'appropriate personality' for quite some time, believing that they did not have leadership skills and that they could not be managers or leaders. It was only when women eventually moved into leadership roles that younger generations began to follow suit. Twenge (2001) therefore notes that while culture can change to present opportunities, a chance for regression also exists, with either scenario dependent on the social context and self-identity of the women.

Looking at the extent of women's progress into executive leadership roles, about a third of American MBAs are awarded to women, but only 2% are represented as Fortune 500 chief executive officers (CEOs) and they hold 8% of top leadership positions (Ely & Rhode, 2010). This trend becomes particularly exaggerated among non-white women (Ely & Rhode, 2010; Cheung & Halpern, 2010). While around a third of managerial positions are held by women in Europe, only 3% of the CEOs of the Financial Times Stock Exchange (FTSE) 250 are women (Cheung & Halpern, 2010). According to Cheung and Halpern (2010), women are better educated than ever and specifically in the United States and China, are better represented than men in mid-level management positions, creating an oversupply of potential top-level executives. However, very few women make it to the chief officer position.

The under-representation of women in leadership positions is due to a variety of reasons, including traditional gender roles and expectations (Ely & Rhode, 2010), access to education, the 'glass ceiling', the 'queen bee syndrome' and work-life balance issues (April et al., 2007). Women are over-represented at the lower echelons of management and under-represented at the top levels of the hierarchy. In the past psychological explanations have offered that good managers were typically male (Ryan, Haslam, Hersby & Bonjiorno, 2011) and naturally projected behaviours associated with leadership, such as dominance, authority and assertiveness.

Traditionally, the same characteristics would have been regarded as unattractive in women, who were expected to be hospitable, nurturing and caregivers. There is, however, increasing acknowledgement of 'female' characteristics that are characteristic of a transformational leadership style compared to more 'male' transactional behaviours (Ayman & Korabik, 2010). Positive characteristics that women exhibit as leaders in the workplace are negotiation and persuasion skills based on engagement and genuine understanding (Greenberg & Sweeney, 2006), applying an inclusive and team-oriented approach, willingness to take risks (Caliper, 2014), communicating directly and valuing relationships (April & Dreyer, 2007), being authentic, kind, embracing the diversity of others and encouraging equality and being compassionate and cooperative (Caliper, 2014).

3.5.1 Employment trends of South African women pre- and post-apartheid

The understated role of South African women in economic activity cannot be detached from the influence of the apartheid system, which systematically suppressed opportunities that would empower women and people of colour (Walker, 1990). The formal employment of women in South Africa was initiated in the last seven to eight decades, with the first female employees being black women who sought domestic employment in white suburbs

around 1913. Their placement in white homes had become a trend by the 1930s. Opportunities at the time were limited to casual and domestic work (Hutson, 2007), while black men were largely employed in the mining industry.

Walker (1990) described black women as being at the very bottom layer of South African society, subject to discrimination on the basis of their race and gender. They were not legally recognised as employees or citizens in their own right but rather were bound by the patriarchal legal system and Urban Areas Act of 1923, which only allowed black women to enter urban areas under the supervision of a husband or father. Ironically, many black women were trying to escape from the rural patriarchal homesteads and ended up being transferred from one system of subordination to another (Walker, 1990). The informal employment of black women increased after the 1950s and through to the 1970s, as the demand for domestic employment escalated, accompanied by more stringent legal requirements for a black woman to obtain a permit for employment in white areas (Ally, 2010). It was only after the political transformation during the 1980s and the new dispensation in 1994 that black women formally entered the workplace.

Apart from the regulations imposed on domestic employment, it was difficult for black women to assume industrial jobs because many were illiterate. Industrial jobs were mainly occupied by white women, who were gradually replaced by skilled and semi-skilled coloured and black workers. By 1970 coloured women constituted 50% of production workers, followed by black women at 31.4%. This was reflected in the food, beverage, liquor, tobacco, clothing and footwear industries. Because of lack of basic education there were few women in professional and clerical occupations and the two main options were teaching and nursing. Until the late 1970s there were no black female lawyers, judges, magistrates, engineers, pharmacists or veterinary surgeons. The few who were engaged in professional employment would receive less remuneration and benefits for the same work than men (ANC, 1980). Even post-apartheid, the progression of non-whites into the formal job

market was limited by the quality of education received. The quality of education was significantly poorer for black people. The highest average educational attainment among people born in 1970 was eight years for blacks, nine years for coloureds and around twelve years for Asians/Indians and whites (Fedderke & Simkins, 2006).

General growth in employment of South African females was reported by Pillay (1985) and showed a steady increase (Table 5), though differences between the racial groups were apparent. When the total number of employed females was analysed further according to racial groups (Table 6), black women were in the vast majority of employed females, followed by whites, coloureds and Asians, a trend that is representative of South Africa's demographic profile and has persisted over the decades. However, when broken down into occupational categories, the discriminatory nature of the employment of non-white women is clearer, as white women, the second largest group, occupied most professional and managerial jobs available, while black women were concentrated in lower-end jobs. Indian women formed a significant minority of the workforce and represented only 2.2% of the 32.9% employed South African women.

Table 5

Percentage of females in the South African labour force from 1951 to 1980 (Pillay, 1985, p. 25)

YEAR	% OF SA FEMALES
1951	19.8
1960	23.1
1970	32.3
1980	32.9

Table 6

Percentage of economically active women by race from 1960 to 1980 (Pillay, 1985, p. 26)

YEAR	BLACKS	WHITES	COLOUREDS	ASIANS
1960	63.3	22.3	13.5	0.9
1970	64.5	21.2	12.1	2.2
1980	65.5	20.7	11.6	2.2

Table 7

Racial distribution across occupations in 1980 (Pillay, 1985, p. 26)

OCCUPATION	WHITE	BLACK	COLOURED	ASIAN
PROFESSIONAL	50.8	35.5	10.8	2.9
ADMINISTRATIVE/ MANAGERIAL	91.9	2.6	3.4	2.1
CLERICAL	79.5	9.9	7.3	3.3
SALES	38.8	46.3	10.6	4.3
SERVICE	4.0	82.8	12.7	0.5
AGRICULTURE	1.3	88.8	9.8	0.1
PRODUCTION	5.5	58.0	28.5	8.0

From Table 7 it can be seen that by 1980 most black women were employed in the services and agriculture (82.8% and 88.8%, respectively) and constituted over half of production workers, followed by coloured women at 28.5%. White women, by contrast, occupied 91.9% of administrative/managerial jobs, 79.5% of clerical jobs and 50.8% of professional jobs (Pillay, 1985). Indian women only constituted 8% of the production force in 1980, less than 5% in other work categories, and were practically absent from the service and agricultural industries.

While the 1980s saw the height of unionisation and the struggle against apartheid, the 1990s was characterised by radical socio-political change (Venter, 2003). With the new democracy in 1994 came changes in legislation that had an impact on all South Africans. The Bill of Rights was introduced in 1996 and included clauses against unfair discrimination against any people, including gender discrimination. The Labour Relations Act 66 of 1995, Basic Conditions of Employment Act 75 of 1997 and Employment Equity Act 55 of 1998 further protected the rights of individuals in the work context by promoting fair treatment and facilitating the upward movement of previously disadvantaged employees. South African women have as a result been presented with greater career opportunities and compared to many other countries, are better represented in parliament. However, although they are more active in the paid labour market, they are also at the receiving end of unpaid work and continue to bear more of the responsibility for their households and children (Geldenhuys, 2011).

Table 8

Population statistics of South African women for 2011 and 2012 according to Stats SA (Geldenhuys, 2013, p. 38)

POPULATION STATISTICS	2011	2012
TOTAL POPULATION (SA)	47 850 700	50 586 757
TOTAL POPULATION SA WOMEN	50.9%	52.0%
FERTILITY RATE (PER WOMAN OF CHILDBEARING AGE)	2,7 children	2,7 children
LIFE EXPECTANCY	52-55 years	48 years
TOTAL WORKING POPULATION,	32 670 000	33 128 000
- OF WHICH WOMEN	16 797 000	16 995 000
- OF WHICH MEN	15 873 000	16 133 000

According to Geldenhuys (2013), as per Table 8, 52% of the population is female, the fertility rate is 2,7 children for women of childbearing age and the

average life expectancy of women is 48,45 years. Indian females constituted 2,5% of the total population in 2011 and roughly half of them were Muslim (1,5% of the total population practises Islam) (Stats SA, 2011). The mortality rate is similar to global trends, with South African women suffering more from lifestyle diseases and stress, including work/life balance and working in paid and unpaid markets. HIV/Aids contributes to 50% of deaths and is more prevalent among women (Geldenhuys, 2013). According to the last census in 2011 (Statistics SA, 2011), followers of Islam in South Africa include 0.2% of blacks, 0,2% of whites, and the majority of Muslims are from the Indian and coloured communities.

Over thirty years later, the employment trends of women in South Africa, as analysed by Stats SA, are represented in Table 9, where it is observed that there was an increase in the unemployment rate of women by 2012, but the overall employment rate for men and women in South Africa remained high. A majority of females are employed in the formal sector, a trend which seems to be increasing, while the employment of women in private households and the informal sector seems to be decreasing. There has been increased representivity of women in occupations that were traditionally male, including the mining, construction, trade and transport industries, but they continue to be under-represented in utilities such as economics, energy and information technology. With regard to gender and occupational levels, men are more prominent in managerial and professional positions, sales and services, skilled agriculture and related trades, while women are employed more in technical, clerical and domestic occupations (Geldenhuys, 2013). There was a general decline for both male and female employees in management, but there are still far fewer women than men in professional and management roles.

Table 9

Stats SA demographics of women in the South African workplace (Geldenhuys, 2013, p.32)

	BEGINNING 2011	END 2011	END 2012
UNEMPLOYMENT RATE		'000	
WOMEN	2237	2129	2279
EMPLOYMENT PER SECTOR			
FORMAL	3703	3982	3944
INFORMAL	915	874	874
AGRICULTURE	08	198	227
PRIVATE HOUSEHOLDS	255	251	236
EMPLOYMENT BY INDUSTRY		'000	
MINING	37	34	49
MANUFACTURING	629	581	557
UTILITIES	31	14	22
CONSTRUCTION	108	118	141
TRADE	1397	1469	1414
TRANSPORT	130	167	142
FINANCE	662	743	747
COMMUNITY AND SOCIAL	1621	1729	1744
EMPLOYMENT BY OCCUPATION		'000	
MANAGER	361	340	330
PROFESSIONAL	328	343	345
TECHNICIAN	811	838	829
CLERK	931	1066	1015
SALES AND SERVICES	826	886	909
SKILLED AGRICULTURE	22	21	24
CRAFT & RELATED TRADES	203	186	189
PLANT & MACHINE	178	165	147
ELEMENTARY	1188	1233	1269
DOMESTIC WORKER	842	843	828
STATUS OF EMPLOYMENT			
EMPLOYEE	4870	5125	5116
EMPLOYER	173	148	138
OWN-ACCOUNT WORKER	581	580	544
UNPAID HOUSEHOLD MEMBER	65	68	53

More women work longer hours than men and the number of women working as unpaid household members has also increased. While coloured and Indian women are a definite minority in top management positions, representing only

1.5% and 1.6% respectively, 3.6% of African women and 12.8% of white women occupy such positions. White men dominate the management sphere at 59.8% and tend to be professionally better qualified than white women. The ratio of professionally qualified men to women in other race groups is not significant (Geldenhuys, 2013).

The total representation of women leaders in listed South African companies (Table 10) demonstrates limited movement of women into executive management roles. By the end of 2012 women continued to be well represented in elementary, low-level positions, including clerical jobs.

Table 10

Representivity of female leadership in South African listed companies (Geldenhuys, 2013, p. 39)

WOMEN IN LEADERSHIP

POSITION	2011	2012
CEO/MD	4.4%	3.6% (12 women)
CHAIRPERSON	5.3%	5.5% (18 women)
DIRECTORS	15.8%	17.1% (669 women)
EXECUTIVE MANAGERS	21.6%	21.4% (1452 women)

A slight decrease in the number of senior female employees was noted and there had been no growth in female entrepreneurship since 2011 (Geldenhuys, 2013). When female employees are analysed according to higher-level positions in listed companies and race, it was found that less than 2% of coloured and Indian women were part of top management, less than 3% part of senior management and around 4% of those were professionally qualified. Most Muslim women professionals would form part of the Indian and coloured minorities depicted (Table 11).

Table 11

*Racial distribution of women in the South African workforce 2013
(Geldenhuys, 2013, p. 38)*

	<i>Men (%)</i>				<i>Women (%)</i>			
	African	Coloured	Indian	White	African	Coloured	Indian	White
<i>Top management</i>	8.8	3.2	5.7	59.8	3.6	1.5	1.6	12.8
<i>Senior Management</i>	12.3	4.5	6.6	43.8	6.1	2.6	2.9	18.6
<i>Professionally qualified</i>	18	5.1	5.3	27.7	16.1	4.3	3.7	17.5
<i>Skilled</i>	31.9	6.4	3.3	14.3	23.3	5.5	2.5	11.2

Much of the work of women in South African society is described as ‘hidden’, as it occurs in the home, is under-evaluated in the economy and absent in male-centred research (Venter, 2009). Of the challenges faced by women in the workplace, the biggest tend to be gender stereotyping and maintaining their positions and financial status when having to leave because of non-work responsibilities. Discrimination on the basis of both gender and race is still present post-apartheid and is faced especially by black South African women, as they enter the workplace in large numbers at the lower levels but are scarcer at management level than white females and black males (Venter, 2009).

Themes from South African studies on women in the workplace (Łaba, 2011) were elicited from selected databases by using the keywords ‘women, work and life balance’ and were covered in the South African Board for People Practices (SABPP) 2011 report under four broad categories, including women in high-ranking positions, career development, barriers that prevent entrance and participation in the workplace, family-work work-family balance and stressors (Łaba, 2011). The first two themes and sub-themes are briefly described, while the other concepts are included in the discussion of challenges to women in leadership in the next section. Research on women

in South Africa holding top-level positions in which they have an influence on the environment, finds that they believe they have the skills to do the work effectively, yet are under-represented in the education field in management and there is a similar trend in the corporate communication environment, where there is a relative lack of professional women occupying senior strategic roles although they are equipped with the necessary skills and abilities (Łaba, 2011). Legislation favours opportunities for women's career development, which is ideally a mutual effort between women who manage their careers and organisations, which structurally accommodates the progression of their employees. The SABPP 2011 report predicted an increase in the number of successful women if career management strategies, mentorships and personal career ownership and self-directed learning were supported (McCammond, 2008; O'Leary, 2006; Riordan & Louw-Potgieter, 2011; Yiannakis, 2010).

3.5.2 Female leadership in the South African workplace

The South African Women in Leadership Census 2011 was conducted to provide insight into the status of women in leadership roles, as they comprise 51.3% of the South African population and 45.1% of the employed population, but are a definite minority as a group in an ever-growing population of employed women (Synovate, 2011). Similar to other developing countries, industrialisation led to a great number of lower-level jobs being created and allocated to women. These jobs were typically characterised by low pay, low job security, poor working conditions and limited opportunities for career growth (Geldenhuys, 2011). Over 16.5 million women are employed in South Africa, with at least half of them being employed in the labour force, followed by the formal and informal sectors. Men continue to dominate corporate leadership roles, with only 3.6% of women holding positions as CEOs, 5.5% as chairpersons of the board, 17.1% as directors and 21.4% in executive management positions, based on a sample of 339 JSE companies' managerial positions in 2012. This trend persists despite South African employment equity legislation having facilitated and supported the movement

of females into leadership roles over the last eighteen years of democracy (Synovate, 2011). As the Employment Equity Act made female representivity incumbent upon organisations, there began a gradual increase in the number of women occupying executive positions. However, with the greater focus being on racial transformation rather than gender transformation, many companies have viewed the advancement of women as primarily a statutory requirement rather than a point of competitive advantage (April et al., 2007; Synovate, 2011) for organisations and the economy.

Women tend to deal with a more complex range of issues that have an impact on both their work and personal lives and according to Person (2003), they ascribe meaning to their experiences in a context that demands an approach to work that is challenging, strategic and enables problem-solving and creativity. Additional factors that may have an impact include the complexity of relationships between men, women and subordinates and the challenge of leaders to be able to manage a diverse workforce, facilitate delivery through teams, and avert claims of discrimination based on gender.

One South African doctoral study referred to institutional and other barriers to women's advancement serving as potential sources of stress and tension for them (Zulu, 2007). These included family responsibility and gender issues and most of the participants emphasised the need for persistence, perseverance and determination to overcome obstacles. Enabling success factors included subject knowledge, boldness, fearlessness and assertiveness, together with strong interpersonal communication skills (Zulu, 2007). Another doctoral study found that unmarried female graduates' experiences of work had indicated themes relating to an autonomous sense of self, power and authority, relationships with colleagues, serving and helping others, contributing value and being purposeful (Person, 2003). Gender-based roles and responsibilities could therefore interface with organisational factors, and place women in a position where they have to placate the conflicting interests of work and personal life.

For those women who maintain leadership roles, South African meta-analytic studies have shown that women as leaders tend to focus more on interactive and transformational relationships (Eagly et al., 2003). They encourage collaboration, empathy, support, empowerment and self-disclosure. They make use of more democratic and participative leadership styles and are also adaptable and flexible, but have lower self-efficacy and tend to be unassertive (Geldenhuys, 2011; Werner, 2003). Considered as a 'soft power', female leadership is characterised by an ability to express empathy, speak out, gain support and remain in power. In contrast, typical male leadership characteristics include being task-oriented, dominating with the use of a directive leadership style (Werner, 2003). These tendencies were confirmed in a South African study by Booyesen (2000) who found that 'masculine leadership' was focussed on dominance, competition, performance, winning and control and 'collectivism' was associated with broader-scale networking.

Unfortunately, there is insufficient research on gender differences in leadership in South Africa (Geldenhuys, 2011). Werner (2003) suggests that rather than adopting either masculine or feminine values, the integration of both could offer a contribution to organisations, though it may be difficult to achieve a desired synergy if leadership positions continue to be dominated by males. Women bring a new set of behaviours and styles to the workplace, which can complement existing leadership practices if properly understood and utilised. Multiple factors therefore need to be taken into account when examining female leadership, including the personal characteristics demonstrated by the individual and the particular challenges presented by the personal and work environments.

3.6 CHALLENGES TO FEMALE LEADERSHIP

There are challenges faced by South African women in particular, as well as more general challenges that affect women globally, including the 'glass ceiling' and gender-based stereotypes (Daya, 2011; Eagly & Carli, 2007;

Łaba, 2011). Barriers to women's career progression occur at different levels and prevent women from assuming leadership roles (April et al., 2007). According to the SABPP report (Łaba, 2011), barriers to women's progression can broadly be attributed to South Africa's social revolution, current organisational structures and cultural, racial, gender, family and personal belief systems. Because of apartheid and international isolation, racial discrimination tended to overshadow other forms of discrimination and the gender-based social revolution that took place in the West during the same timeframe bypassed South Africa. The rift created between white and non-white females consequently took precedence over the gender bias that had existed and prevented them from uniting against it (Mathur-Helm, 2002). Furthermore, South African women were subject to discrimination against them by members of their own culture because of cultural prejudices (Tabudi, 2010). Damons (2009) lists related barriers of prejudice, stereotyping, cultural beliefs and religious orders that served to maintain women's submissiveness. Further research is therefore recommended (Łaba, 2011) to determine whether there are personal beliefs that may be located in cultural groupings that encourage prejudice in the treatment of women in the workplace.

Some recent findings by Ismail and Ibrahim, cited by Daya (2011), were that women struggled to cope with their workloads, found it more difficult to establish credibility with superiors and managers and experienced family responsibility as the most significant barrier causing the highest number of associated resignations. Competition with the opposite sex, networking and establishing independence were also studied, but did not come up as significant barriers. Indians comprised 45.5% of a study of 121 female managers (white 26.4%, black 19%, coloured 9.1%) and the barriers to their careers (Daya, 2011). Societal barriers were scored by 19.8% of the sample, family responsibility barriers by 18.2%, gender stereotyping by 17.4% and organisational barriers by 15.7%. Organisational barriers were thus seen as the least influential. Combined, all of these barriers were rated positively by just over a quarter of the respondents (26.4%). Translated, it would seem that family responsibilities were regarded as a more significant barrier than

organisational difficulties when Indian females formed almost half of the sample.

When broken down further in the sub-categories measured, Indian women scored higher than the other race groups on reasons for career non-progression according to the categories of 'They don't fit in a managerial role' (overall 14%); 'Women are more suited to a supportive role' (overall 13.2%); 'Concentrating on another role (motherhood)' (overall 25.6%) and 'Not being accepted in a managerial role' (overall 47.2%) (Daya, 2011). Based on these findings, it seems that there are differences between race groups in perceptions of barriers to leadership progression for women. Studies on religious groups, gender and leadership, however, are hardly documented, specifically so in the work context.

3.6.1 A model of career progression for women

April et al. (2007) launched a study to explore the dearth of women executives and found that reasons for women being excluded from positions of leadership were not limited to the typical barriers. They proposed a model that illustrated the levels of barriers that had to be overcome in order to attain positions of top leadership in corporate South Africa. The level of education received serves as the first barrier, followed by patriarchal organisational cultures that exclude the career interests of female employees. Balancing family and career responsibilities can be particularly challenging and for the benefit of flexibility, many women have decided to be entrepreneurs. Related and more recent studies have been added to the explanations of the model's conceptual categories where these were available.

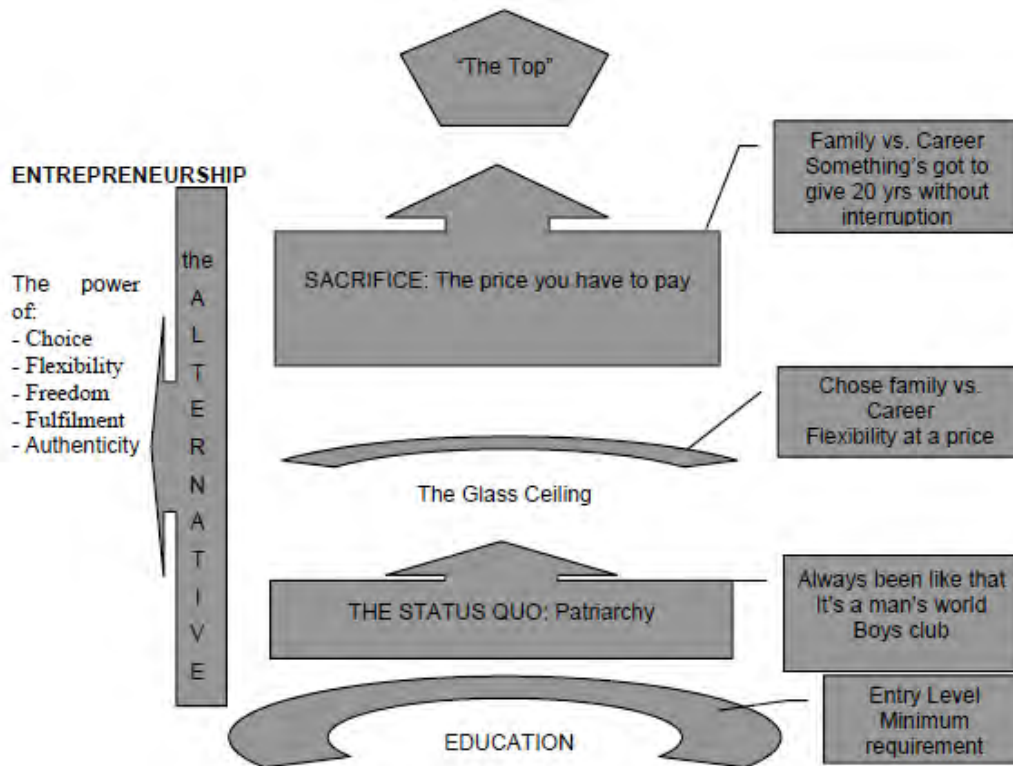


Figure 3

Model of career progression for women (April et al., 2007, p. 56)

3.6.2 Patriarchy

A South African study examining reasons for leadership impediment with women as executives, academics and independent consultants revealed patriarchy, education, work-life balance and a tendency to revert to entrepreneurship as significant factors (April et al., 2007). Patriarchy continues to exist in South African companies and male-centred attitudes and values are still evident in corporate culture. Research shows that being non-white, female or having followed non-traditional career paths, such as temporarily leaving work to attend to family responsibilities, could find women at a disadvantage. A traditional practice still commonplace today is for business deals to be conducted at 'gentlemen's clubs' and be formally concluded in boardrooms. Women typically have little access to these 'inner circles' where important decisions are often made (April et al., 2007).

Furthermore, the inclusion of women at executive level is at times simply to satisfy legislative requirements and is not regarded by senior colleagues as a competitive advantage. Some women, particularly working mothers, tend to be satisfied with a middle management role that provides both a significant work role and flexibility, while others who decide to pursue senior management roles are left to decide between career and family. Although they have the freedom to choose at this point, there are also social role expectations that may bear on their decision (April et al., 2007).

3.6.3 Entrepreneurship

A growing number of women have opted for entrepreneurial careers as an alternative to corporate careers that can be viewed as intensive and 'oppressive'. According to the research of April et al. (2007) many South African women are choosing entrepreneurship as an alternative to a corporate career, since they perceive quality of life to be more attractive than a higher salary. They do not find the time and effort invested in corporate careers 'worth it' and entrepreneurship allows them to be empowered, find meaning in their work and enjoy a degree of flexibility. In this way they can pursue careers and use their skills without compromising their health and family life (April et al., 2007).

3.6.4 Education

One of the biggest impediments to the career advancement of women is lack of adequate secondary and tertiary education, which is a pre-requisite to credibility, especially for women. Those occupying executive roles today would have needed to have received a quality education around twenty years ago and historically, this was a privilege restricted to a minority (April et al., 2007) and largely excluded black people (Fedderke & Simkins, 2006). The challenge of meeting employment equity targets for organisations has resulted in tokenism, where previously disadvantaged individuals have been

placed in positions, but lack the required skills set to deal with such roles effectively. Their ineptitude is mostly a reflection of poor access to education rather than incompetence, but a stigma is attached to women and black appointees, who are set up for failure from the outset (April et al., 2007). They may be regarded as less credible by colleagues for occupying positions not based on merit but rather by the opportunity afforded to them by the Employment Equity Act. The quality of public education in South Africa is a further aggravating factor, with the focus being on widening access at the expense of the country's ability and capacity to offer sound education in mathematics and science (Fedderke & Simkins, 2006), which are critical for skills and economic development.

3.6.5 Work and family life balance

One of the biggest challenges faced by corporate executives is being able to maintain a balance between work and family life. While many executive women believe that it is possible to have both, the demands of a corporate career often leave less time for family and personal responsibilities. In addition to the high level of responsibility associated with top positions, executive women may have children or aged parents for whom they are the primary care-giver and it can become more complicated if both spouses have executive careers (April et al., 2007). While flexible working arrangements have often been cited as the solution to balance work and family demands, a stigma is attached to using flexible work options, which results in being viewed as not being 'serious' or 'committed' to work. Women with families who have made it up the corporate ranks tend to rely heavily on a supportive home structure. Executives are typically expected to show long-term commitment and put in 'blood hours', including being on call and travelling when required. Approximately twenty years of experience will warrant a place on the board and hard work and wise career planning are necessary to achieve this. An executive career can come with extreme demands and sacrifices and although legislation has helped to make this an option for women, women also have a choice regarding whether they really want to

pursue a high-level career, an option that was not previously available (April et al., 2007). However, in addition to qualifications, tenacity and experience, women executives also require support from their spouses, family structures and other caregivers when they have families or they could find it impossible to succeed in roles with such high demands.

According to April et al. (2007) there is a pervasive, romanticised view of the 'ideal worker' as someone who commences work after their studies and exhibits commitment to an organisation by pursuing a vertical career path with no interruptions. This perception poses a difficulty for South African women, who typically take a break from work between early and midcareer to start their families, precisely the time when the ideal worker would be climbing the corporate ladder. This causes indirect discrimination against women in corporate careers (April et al., 2007). Women may not always be able to retain their positions and financial status when having to leave because of non-work responsibilities (Venter, 2009) and are likely to be the victims of gender stereotyping. South African research shows that personal demographics can affect work performance and predict family-work conflict (Łaba, 2011). Unmarried women are less likely to report family-work conflict than married women, but working, married women regard their paid work as more important than their household work and perceive their work as having a positive impact on their families (Patel, Govender, Paruk & Ramgoon, 2006). These women also tend to continue with academic and professional development and embark on second careers when resuming work after maternity leave (Geber, 2000).

The converse form of role conflict is where stressors originate from the organisational context owing to the way the organisation conducts its business or because of the nature of the work (Łaba, 2011). Women who are mothers tend to view their families as their central life interest (Franks, Schurink & Fourie, 2006; Wallis & Price, 2007), which could lead to ambiguity

and uncertainty when there are conflicting priorities. Mothers are more cognisant of the need to spend quality time with children and family and deal with structuring and planning activities, coping with guilt and establishing support structures in order to balance these dual roles (McLellan & Uys, 2009).

Depending on the work context, organisational barriers can determine the retention of female employees, such as in the science, manufacturing and engineering fields, where women in academic roles at masters and doctoral levels have to find their way through a 'chilly' climate. Once in these environments, the care-taking roles expected of women as wives and mothers compete with academic demands and contribute to the 'leaky pipeline' of women in engineering (Francis, 2009). Naidoo and Jano (2002), on the other hand, found that women may experience work and home as complementary rather than conflicting. The need for balancing multiple life-roles is therefore a necessary skill and Whitehead and Kotze (2003) recommend maintaining physical and mental health. They also suggest that creating and maintaining balance is a life process of a cyclical nature that serves as a useful tool for achieving personal growth. From an organisational perspective, Daya (2011) proposes that government could assist by reviewing legislation to encourage changes in organisational policies so as to be more supportive of women with families and initiate the empowerment of women through methods such as power sharing, skills development and positive relationships as part of organisational strategy.

In the United States, work-family conflict can constitute a significant obstacle to the advancement of women's careers, with the result that almost half of all women at top executive level or earning salaries greater than \$100 000 have no children (Cheung & Halpern, 2010). While having children is a sign of stability and responsibility for men, the identical situation for women seems to have the opposite effect. Cheung and Halpern (2010) point to the fact that

despite the many studies focussed on work-family conflict for female employees and managers, few of these studies consider females as leaders or compare women with or without family care responsibilities. Technological advancements have assisted in blurring the boundaries between home and work, making it easier for women to work from home, but also making it more difficult to say no to work responsibilities. Many have excessive workloads and the responsibility for older parents or children leaves little time to forge professional networks with mentors or take part in other social activities that men engage in to boost their careers (Ely & Rhode, 2010). Perceptions and conceptions of typical managers (Ryan et al., 2011) and 'ideal workers' need to be altered for women to experience a smoother transition to executive levels of management.

Successful top women leaders who managed to maintain their family lives while they advanced in their careers were found to adopt certain personal characteristics and strategies. These women regarded both work and family as important and instead of holding themselves at ransom to one or the other, gave up trying to be perfect at either and instead altered their internal conceptions of the demands of their work and family roles and redefined them to be more helpful and meaningful to them. Strategies they adopted included multi-tasking, flexible work/family time, gaining family and work support, outsourcing household tasks and delegating office tasks (Cheung & Halpern, 2010).

3.6.6 Glass ceiling

Particular challenges women face can hamper their career success. Structural and attitudinal barriers found in organisations are typically referred to as the 'glass ceiling' (Eagly & Carli, 2007), which describes the invisible barrier perceived by women that prevents them from progressing through the organisational hierarchy, the 'corporate ladder' (April et al., 2007). Structural barriers refer to the predominance of males in leadership positions,

differences in the composition of men's and women's social networks, lack of influential mentors and the possibility of facing isolation and exclusion, more so for females of colour. In South African studies there is strong evidence of the glass ceiling in organisations (Tokarczyk, 2008). Poor salaries, outdated company policies regarding flexible work arrangements, including part-time and flexi-time work options, job-sharing and telecommuting, as well as limited support structures and networking opportunities, compound the difficulty experienced by women in their career advancement (McCammond, 2008; Rowe & Crafford, 2003).

Oakley, in April et al. (2007), listed three causal factors for the resulting glass ceiling, including firstly organisational practices such as recruitment, retention and promotions, secondly cultural factors influencing leadership and stereotypes and thirdly structural and cultural explanations rooted in feminist theory. Other explanations for the glass ceiling as an unintentional phenomenon are biological in nature, from psychological predispositions, or due to socialisation, as gender identity is shaped through developmental life stages and processes of school and work life. Gender differences could possibly also be propagated by social and cultural structures, systems and roles to create stable patterns of behaviour based on discrepancies in status and power (April et al., 2007).

The 'glass cliff' is a related concept coined by Ryan and Haslam (2007) and refers to the tendency to select more females into positions of leadership at times when organisations are facing a crisis, moving from a mind-set of 'think manager-think male' to 'think crisis-think female'. Research on management appointments made at a time of difficulty were significantly different from when things were going well for companies, with a far larger number of female managers being employed. This trend sets female managers up for failure, impeding their career progression (Ryan et al, 2011). However, descriptions of ideal managers at times of crises were truer of average females than

males, suggesting that a need for more feminine qualities is perceived as necessary at difficult periods (Ryan et al, 2011).

In order to shatter the proverbial 'glass ceiling' it seems that organisations need to make a shift to fostering environments that enable the advancement of women to senior positions and women themselves need to shift to a mind-set of being tenacious and resolute. Only a decentralised organization, characterised by a culture that supports women's leadership positions, can assist in resolving the glass ceiling, along with women's own efforts to grow, develop, and empower themselves through academic and career development (Mathur-Helm, 2006).

Additional challenges reported more recently in the literature but not adequately covered by the model of career progression for women (April et al., 2007) include gender-role stereotyping and workplace bullying.

3.6.7 Gender-based stereotypes

Stereotypes about a woman's role or 'place' and abilities are a strongly perceived barrier to their advancement; this is a view shared by a majority of Fortune 500 female executives (Eagly, Koenig, Mitchell & Ristikar, 2011). Role-congruity theory attributes communal characteristics of sensitivity, helpfulness and kindness to women and agentic behaviours such as drive, determination and problem-solving to men (Anderson, Lievens, van Dam & Born, 2006; Eagly et al., 2007). However, the women and men in this study did not vary significantly in terms of the stereotypically masculine dimensions. Meta-analytic studies by Eagly et al. (2007) of the masculinity of leadership roles found that in addition to the agentic masculine qualities of strength and dominance, typically female qualities such as empathy, interpersonal sensitivity and warmth are becoming increasingly important, as they foster effectiveness in interpersonal roles (Eagly et al., 2011). Females in the study by Eagly et al. (2007) were rated higher on the dimensions of oral

communication and interaction, consistent with the broader literature that shows women as being more effective in interpersonal leadership roles. The contemporary working environment characterised by change, both socially and technologically, leans towards leadership transactions that are democratic, encourage participatory decision-making, delegation and team-based leadership, which are seemingly less traditional 'male' leadership requirements (Eagly et al., 2011). Gender stereotypes may be changing over time, as women's participation in the workplace increases and environmental changes favour a more transformational leadership style (Ryan et al., 2011). Gender differences in leadership-role assessment centre results show that men and women can be equally effective as leaders, but that they seem to lead in different ways (Anderson et al., 2006). When Martell and DeSmet (2001) studied gender stereotyping of leaders, they compared trends in the 1990s to their subsequent study and referred to the previous tendency of males and females to show more favourable attitudes to leaders of the same sex. More recently, however, leadership has become more feminised, emphasising cooperation, support and employee participation, which seems to be increasingly appropriate for the contemporary business environment.

Negative attitudes in the form of gender stereotyping are an attitudinal barrier encountered by women trying to attain top positions and they continue to face this form of discrimination even after they find themselves at the top. Women executives studied in 2006 in the USA and UK related that the largest barriers they faced was from society at large where the general perception was that women were not suited to executive management roles (April et al, 2007). Sometimes there is a senior female, 'the queen bee', in an organisation, who prevents the promotion of other women for fear of risking her own career. This is contrary to the assumptions of solidarity theory, which describes women as viewing and expecting other women to be natural allies and assist each other despite hierarchical differences (Mavin, 2006).

For Muslim women, gender stereotyping is a sparsely documented disempowering challenge (Ahmed, 2008) that is often experienced and can be encountered in both work and social contexts. Husbands, family members, bosses and colleagues may hold particular views about the priorities of women as mothers and wives, attaching inferior value to their professional roles. It can be inferred that Muslim women would be subject to many of the challenges that most women encounter in the workplace, as described above, but may face stereotypical attitudes with additional perceptions of Muslim women as subjugated, which may or may not be true. The implication for a Muslim woman with a progressive career could include role conflict with feelings of guilt or incompetence in roles where less effort is applied. She may feel the need to assert herself more strongly at work or work harder than others to prove her competence where colleagues perceive her as less capable because of having greater religious and family responsibilities.

3.6.8 Workplace bullying

A contemporary challenge in South African workplaces is bullying and a 2012 survey found that 31.1% of a sample of 13 911 people had experienced workplace bullying (Leo & Reid, 2013). Since research on this subject is relatively new, there is no established definition for workplace bullying, but it can be described as a gradually evolving process. In the earlier phases of bullying victims are typically subjected to discreet and indirect forms of bullying behaviour, which later progress to more direct and aggressive acts (Leo & Reid, 2013). This may include a series of actions, such as harassment, offending and socially excluding someone at work, that affect individuals' ability to do their job negatively. Gender and race seem to be prominent socio-demographic factors predisposing employees to bullying, since most perpetrators were managers, where 62% of the bullies were male and 58% of the targets were found to be women. Where females were the identified bullies, the targets tended to be women in 80% of cases, while male bullies targeted men in only 55% of cases. In South Africa, the majority of informants experienced downward bullying from superiors, as opposed to horizontal

bullying, and the perpetrators of bullying all employed verbal and/or indirect tactics to bully their targets. On the other hand, it was found that direct bullying and bullying by supervisors were more prevalent than indirect bullying and bullying by colleagues. Global research suggests that that bullying manifests differently across countries and in different industries. Drabeck and Merez (2013) proposed that the type of work done by women and the style in which they perform are significant indicators of the occurrence of bullying; the more opposed they seem to social expectations of gender roles, the greater the risk of harassment. At management and higher levels in an organisation women are also susceptible while the converse seems more apparent for men, who tend to be bullied at lower levels. Emotional abuse and professional discredit could be likely experienced by females in senior roles compared to men, who emphasise abusive working conditions when describing their experiences of bullying (Escartín, Salin & Rodríguez-Carballeira, 2011). South African academic literature points that it is more common for bullies to be supervisors who use verbal or direct tactics against their targets (Leo & Reid, 2013) and the experiences of women in more senior roles need to be further explored.

3.6.9 Work stressors

Executive women reported stress as a major theme in the SABPP report (Łaba, 2011). Stressors were described as the physical, psychological and social factors that created a demand on the individual in the work context, highlighting some studies between 1990 and 2010. Erwee (1990) described “service” as the most important career anchor for women, but van den Berg and van Zyl (2008) found that a lack of infrastructure and resources in the environment could make it stressful to fulfil a job role. Long (2008) showed that there were no overall significant differences between men and women in their perception of occupational stressors and use of coping resources, while another study indicated that mergers, increasing job demands and role conflict (inherent in the work experience of females) contributed significantly to the manifestation of stress (Bezuidenhout & Cilliers, 2010).

3.7 DEVELOPING WOMEN AS LEADERS

External variables such as educational achievement and organisational structure only account for a limited portion of the gender and race gaps in remuneration and promotions in the workplace. Discrimination has a greater impact (Eagly & Chin, 2010). About a decade ago, studies on key leader behaviours showed that female managers received significantly lower ratings than male managers and this was specifically reflective of the ratings made by male managers who were over-represented at the decision-making level (Martell & DeSmet, 2001). Interestingly, no significant gender differences were found for leader behaviours of modelling, monitoring, planning, and upward influence. Both genders rated male managers higher on delegating behaviour and female managers higher on consulting behaviour.

South African women were initially more involved in political leadership roles and studies on successful women leaders in politics, traditionally a male-dominated environment, have shown that they were able to integrate female qualities, such as caring and tenderness, with achievement and assertiveness. The leadership styles of women tend to emphasise connectedness with others (Cheung & Halpern, 2010) and access to social support enables a balance in meeting both personal and professional responsibilities. Ethnic and cultural backgrounds could also influence the leadership styles adopted by women, as seen in high-achieving Asian-American women who emphasise collectivistic cultural values, including relating to others and creating a harmonious environment (Kawahara, Esnil & Hsu, 2007). The variances in female leadership practice therefore questions the extent to which conventional career theories are appropriate, having been written by and based on the experiences of white men. These theories may not adequately explain the career adjustments of white women and women of colour since being introduced (Richie, Fassinger, Linn, Johnson, Prosser & Robinson, 1997).

Rosette and Tost's (2010) study of gender and leadership revealed that gender biases predicted by role congruity theory were more frequent at the lower to mid-level positions in an organisation, but these perceptions are not necessarily generalised to women at top management who had received enhanced evaluations based on the perception that they had already worked twice as hard to get there and a unique stereotype may exist for top female leaders, to whom both high agentic and communal abilities can be ascribed. Communal and agentic characteristics can be exhibited by women as compatible and those at the top receive high ratings on both characteristics but bigger boosts in agentic ratings. A 'female advantage' (Rosette & Tost, 2010; Ryan et al., 2011) is supposedly attributed to females who use more participative and democratic leadership styles. However, studies show that this is a gender-in-context advantage rather than a gender-based advantage. Contextual variables that lend credibility to a woman leader support the notion of a female leadership advantage (Rosette & Tost, 2010). The research suggests that women may face changing stereotypes over the course of their careers - negative evaluations may be replaced when they eventually make it through the glass ceiling, to be viewed more positively (Rosette & Tost, 2010).

According to Ely and Rhode (2010), developing women to be better leaders needs to be approached from both the organisational and individual levels. The structural barriers at the organisational level must therefore be reviewed for limitations imposed on women's advancement, while developing female leadership at the individual level should largely centre on moulding a leadership identity that may be subjected to gender biases. Further studies on women in leadership are required to explore the intricacies of their behaviour in work contexts. Littrell and Nkomo (2005) suggested that developmental programmes for managerial leadership be constructed to be inclusive of all diverse groups, since the race and gender dynamics extend beyond the black and white groups. While there is abundant research on leadership development, how these processes unfold for women is little understood (Ely & Rhode, 2010). Social psychological research suggests that people's self-

systems are formed by their personal goals and understanding these processes from the perspective of women might assist in exposing the development of their leadership identity, particularly as personal goals are related to their relationships with others, their emotional states, attributions and expectations (Ely & Rhode, 2010).

Against the demands of the modern world and the fact that South African women encounter specific social and organisational issues rooted in cultural ambivalence (Ely & Rhode, 2010), it is suggested that a comprehensive societal shift is required to achieve more balance between men and women in leadership roles in the public and private sectors. On the positive side, female employees are better educated than ever before and owing to the legislative advancements in labour law, have access to more employment opportunities. Some have even braved previously male-dominated industries such as construction, engineering (Francis, 2009) and the technical trades, becoming entrepreneurs and employers themselves. Some female leaders have been fortunate to have received support and acknowledgement from their institutions as valuable assets. However, there is a need for more women to pursue higher levels of education, for more opportunities to be created for women and for societal structures regarding the roles of men and women to be changed (Synovate, 2012).

Studies on leadership experiences of women have been carried out in different countries and some of these may have been done in work contexts other than the corporate scenario, but it is almost impossible to find data on Muslim women and leadership by searching academic journal databases. The sections that follow serve to provide a background to understanding the identity of Muslim women by explaining the basic principles of the faith and its political position as the fastest growing religion, which has also received the bulk of negative media attention since the 9/11 twin tower bombings. Many controversial portrayals of Muslim women have since been generated and the Islamic stance on the status and conduct of women is related, followed by an

overview of the establishment of Islam in South Africa. Muslims arrived in the country long before South Africa became a democracy and coinciding religious and political goals and values were the motivation for many of the early Muslim women leaders. Their activism together with other South African women contributed to the rights afforded to women in current legislation, which supports their economic activity and social upliftment. The more recent involvement of Muslim women as South African citizens and economic agents is then considered in conclusion.

3.8 THE FUNDAMENTAL PRINCIPLES OF ISLAM AS A FAITH

Islam as a faith is built upon the concept of a single, all-powerful creator of everything that exists and a Muslim is a person who submits to the will and laws of the creator. The term 'Muslim' literally means 'one who submits' and the divine laws are outlined by the Qur'an and Sunnahs of the Hadeeth (Ansari, 2002), which is a collection of the sayings, behaviours and preferences of the Prophet Muhammed (SAW). In common with Jews and Christians, Muslims believe in the same messengers such as Abraham, Moses and Jesus. In addition, they believe in the Prophet Muhammed as the final messenger and the Qur'an revealed to him is a holy book that is unaltered, divine and miraculous. The fundamental beliefs of Islam include monotheism, believing in angels, the revelation of previous divine books (Torah, Gospels, etc.) and messengers, believing in the day of judgement of all mankind and divine pre-destination (Ibrahim, 1997). As followers of Islam, Muslims are required to follow a framework of five pillars including conviction of faith, performing the prescribed prayer 'Salaah' five times daily, the giving of alms, fasting for the month of Ramadaan and the performance of holy pilgrimage to Makkah and Medina (Ibrahim, 1997) if affordable.

While the fundamental principles of Islam have remained unchanged over the centuries, these principles have been applied as strictly conservative or moderate to varying extents by Muslims around the world and their application

is difficult to detach from the associated social, political, cultural and economic context. The mainstream conservative Islamist ideology was derived from Saudi society, which vied for supremacy over secular or moderate approaches and reached a peak during the 1970s to 1980s in the context of the invasion and occupation of many Muslim territories, the creation of the state of Israel in 1948 and the collapse of states in many parts of Africa, Asia and the Middle East (Nadvi, 2009).

3.9 MUSLIM IDENTITY IN A GLOBAL CONTEXT

There has been tension and resentment between the Muslim world and the Western world, with Muslims being scrutinised since the 9/11 World Trade Centre bombings. Many governments subsequently imposed restrictions on the civil liberties of Muslims as part of defence and suspicion of Muslim people. To the Western world, the common notions about Islam are that it is anti-modern, archaic and provokes hatred of non-Muslims (Nadvi, 2009). Previous intellectual discourses, such as those of Huntington (1996) and Lewis (1988), had construed Islam as being in collision with modern thought and ideals, and had advanced the negative perceptions and political thought on a faith that has withstood 1400 years as a theological and intellectual framework. These views were typically misrepresentations based on lack of knowledge of the religion of Islam and were employed in agendas that seized the natural resources of Muslim lands. While there are indeed Muslims who follow a violent political stance in countries over land and resources, they do not constitute the majority of one billion Muslims globally. Unfortunately, since 9/11 took place, a network of Muslim militants have become the face of Islam to the Western world, casting ordinary Muslim people as potential terrorists simply on the basis of a common faith. Little acknowledgement is given to the fact that these deviant groups are a divergent product of colonial resistance or the fact that Islam condemns the use of undue force against another living being (Nadvi, 2009).

Subsequent 'anti-terrorist' behaviour entailed stringent protocols for Muslim travellers in particular, shunning of Muslim practices, such as the banning of the hijab (headscarf) in France and the victimisation of Muslim citizens, particularly in Europe and America (Abdulsalam, 1998). Although militant Islam has received much contemporary recognition, over the last few decades there has been a rise in 'progressive Islam' as a response to political violence that aims to promote a faith that is both religious and progressive (Moosa, 2007; Nadvi, 2009). It is a posture that is opposed to social, political and economic oppression, American imperialism, capitalistic corporate culture and consumerism, racism, sexism, homophobia and other forms of social injustice (Esack). Islamic conservatives, including many South African Muslims, tend to be committed to methodologies and interpretations of religious texts that have diminished in relevance over time and while the position of progressive Muslims is also based on religious texts, they have argued for Islam's compatibility with modernisation and nation building as well (Tayob, 2006). Support for a progressive form of Islam developed in the 1990s in response to the concern shown by activists and scholars globally about the trends in the Islamic world towards conservative moralism and radicalism (Moosa, 2007). For centuries Muslims followed the Qur'an in conjunction with prophetic traditions and an understanding of the world in an interpretive manner, but conservatives have deviated from this by following Qur'anic text in a very literal sense, with no due consideration for the historical context.

3.10 THE MUSLIMAH: STATUS, CONDUCT AND LEADERSHIP

The Arabic term to describe a Muslim woman is 'Muslimah', which refers to a believing woman. Islam regards men and women as equal in human and spiritual worth and as such obligations and prohibitions apply equally to both (Hathout, 2008). There is a detailed account of the rights and responsibilities of spouses, parents and children to one another, including social conduct and etiquette. The responsibility of maintaining the family is that of the husband and father, while caring for the family and home is that of the wife and mother. Women are, however, granted the right to work and contribute financially and

have independent rights in respect of education, inheritance and ownership (Khattab, 1993). Rather than being inferior to men, the Prophet Muhammed advised that women are the other half of men (Hathout, 2008). Islam honoured the rights of women by reinstating their social status as well as promoting their safety and independence, a practice that did not exist in pre-Islamic Arabia. Over and above all the rights and responsibilities outlined for believing men and women, however, is the belief and act of worship of God the creator and maintaining religious duties such as fasting and performing Salaah (prayer) as mentioned previously (Al-Hashimi, 2003).

In contrast, ancient Hindu scriptures, as well as English and Roman common law, described women as dependents or minors, incapable of acting on their own behalf. In the 17th century English common law considered a woman to be the property of her husband, including any assets she may have had at the time of her marriage. Old texts of the Christian Church refer to women as evil and responsible for the destruction of God's image, that is man (Adam) and his fall from heaven because of a woman's (Eve) persuasion to disobey God's command (Badawi, 1997). Males from both the Christian and Jewish faiths had originally disregarded women and viewed them as filthy, impure and subject to their husbands' will, with no civil rights or religious eligibility (Naseef, 1999). Islam does not ascribe to the concept of 'original sin' and instead holds that both Adam and Eve, men and women, were created in pairs from a single soul (Qur'an,7:189) but are independently accountable for their actions (Ansari, 2002; Naseef, 1999). Likewise, men and women hold rights and responsibilities, which extend from caring for one's own body, spouse, immediate and extended family, the community and neighbours, the 'Ummah' or all Muslims across the globe (Ansari, 2002), extending peace and courtesy to non-Muslims and even being responsible for the environment, fauna and flora.

The Qur'an appoints all individuals as leaders and 'shepherds', responsible for what they have been entrusted with, including other people or forms of

property (Khattab, 1993). Many of these responsibilities are decreed in Islamic law, the 'shariah', which is based on the Holy Qur'an, as well as the hadeeth, which are the practical accounts of the Prophet Muhammed's life and the lessons or 'Sunnah' he prescribed for Muslims (Ibrahim, 1997). The Prophet Muhammed's treatment and regard for women was revolutionary during the pre-Islamic period when they were regarded as little more than slaves. He demonstrated gentleness and dignity towards women, listened to them, acknowledged their right to express themselves and promoted and protected their opinions and interests (Ramadan, 2007). In accordance with the Holy Qur'an, Islam is essentially a perfect system and way of life rather than just a set of beliefs and rituals and the prescriptions are applicable to all spheres of life, from the individual level to relations with greater society, and encompasses religious beliefs, social conduct, spirituality, health, education and economic regulations and recommendations (Ibrahim, 1997).

Contrary to many non-Islamic ideologies, Islam affords women liberties and equality in status to men, with some additional benefits to which men are not privileged. Women are not responsible for providing for their food, accommodation and basic necessities, as their maintenance is the responsibility of their husbands or closest male relative. Any income, property or assets owned by a woman are solely for her personal use and there are no financial obligations on her, apart from 'zakaat' or obligatory charity, which is compulsory for men and women who can afford it (Badawi, 1997; Khattab, 1993). Men, on the other hand, are responsible for their wives, children and dependent parents or siblings. Males therefore receive a double share in inheritance from parents compared to female siblings, but wives are entitled to half a husband's inheritance. Islam therefore does not disadvantage women on an economic basis. The education of girls and women is encouraged (AlMunajjed, 1997) and seeking knowledge has been made incumbent upon males and females. A child's first 'madressa' or education is often cited as the mother's lap and so a strong educational foundation is advised for both parents and their children for the benefit of society as a whole (Ansari, 2002). Similarly, her social status is reinforced and it is the misrepresentation of

Islamic teachings and non-religious cultural norms of Muslim communities in South Africa that tend to disempower women.

Similar to orthodox Christianity and Judaism, Islam is conservative and prescribes modesty (Abdulsalam, 1998) for its believers in both behaviour and attire. While the Western world promotes the revealing of women's bodies as an expression of their liberation, the characteristic of shyness is usually associated with modest, virtuous women who guard their chastity, while boldness infers an evil and unashamed disposition (Naseef, 1999). Interesting to note is that some corporate companies prescribe strict dress codes to promote a professional image, such as KPMG of the 'Big 4' accounting firms, which favours its employees to drive higher-end vehicles and wear suits when meeting clients. Even the style of formal shoes worn needs to fit the company's culture. For Muslims, the minimum dress code or 'hijab' for men and women who are of mature age include being loosely covered between the waist and knees for men, while women are required to cover themselves completely in loose clothing with only space open for the face, hands and feet "*so that they may be recognised and not molested*" (Qur'an, 33: 59). Women are also advised to speak frankly when communicating with non-relative males and being secluded with someone of the opposite sex is prohibited (Khattab, 1993).

The main objection for conservative Muslims regarding a woman's participation in the workforce is due to the likely intermingling of the sexes and in Muslim countries there are often separate facilities for women and men (Ansari, 2002) in educational, religious and work settings. While cooperation between men and women is required for the growth of society, this has to occur within tight limits and situations that may lead to the contravention of divine law that safeguards chastity should be avoided (Ansari, 2002). It is therefore uncommon to find Muslims engaging with unfamiliar members of the opposite sex and even social events that occur within a Muslim family, such as a wedding, can sometimes accommodate males and females separately.

As there is no physical contact with male non-relatives, Muslim women often avoid handshakes when greeting others at work or may avoid working closely with male colleagues. Muslim women may also not travel long distances without a 'wali' or close relative as a guardian (Abdulsalam, 1998; Khattab, 1993). These guidelines may seem unduly restrictive from a Western perspective, but Islam encourages behaviour that promotes the respect and dignity of women and ensures their safety and well-being from the risk of exploitation, harassment and abuse.

Islam regards the primary role of a woman as that of a wife and mother, a sacred and essential core of society. A mother's role is held in high esteem as the primary care-giver and educator of moral and psychologically healthy children (Naseef, 1999). However, women are not prevented from seeking employment, particularly where it is a necessity, and no restrictions have been placed on the benefit of a woman's talent in any field. Muslim women may assume roles of leadership where these do not contravene the specifications of the shariah (Khattab, 1993). While there is no explicit prohibition of leadership for Muslim women in authentic religious texts, there are restrictive schools of thought on the inappropriateness of female leadership in the context of the Qur'an and Sunnah. Examples cited by some theologians include the displacement of Queen Sheba by King Solomon and translated Qur'anic excerpts, which mention men as rulers over women (Elias, 1993). Women are further described as being weak physically, psychologically and morally, while greater emphasis is placed on their creation as a source of comfort to men and for the propagation of mankind. Men are regarded as the designated protectors of women and women are to be obedient to men. The idea of men being led by a woman is severely refuted as being unnatural and against God's will. However, these interpretations fail to acknowledge the Qur'anic scripts that advise that the best of men are those who are best to their wives and also warns husbands that their wives are a sacred, divine trust who should be regarded respectfully and be cared for as 'gifts', as Eve was gifted to Adam as a companion, from a single soul (Ansari, 2002). The only

aspect that differentiates men and women in God's view is regarded to be the level of piety possessed by either.

Islam affords males and females an even standpoint as to worth, intelligence and rights. It does not, however, assume that they are the same and instead respects and affirms their differences in gender to reinforce their roles, which are complementary. The physical differences result in special considerations being ascribed to both genders, with women being afforded leniency regarding their responsibilities, such as being excused from compulsory prayer and fasting in relation to menses, having the comfort of observing many of their religious duties at home and being fully maintained with no liability for the financial support of their families. Men, on account of their physical strength as an advantage, are charged with providing for and protecting their families and in this respect are regarded as being 'one degree' above women with respect to their additional responsibility (Abdulsalam, 1998).

Muslims are expected to follow the examples set by Muhammed (SAW), especially where his behaviour was concerned, and emulate the characteristics that made him revered him as a leader of what is currently the fastest growing and major world religion. He had a sense of humanity, compassion, modesty and justice as a man who humbly assisted others within and outside his home, yet stood resolute in conveying the message of his faith and displayed patience and tolerance despite severe persecution. He taught his followers good manners, kindness, gentleness, respect for children and attentiveness toward women. While the successors after Prophet Muhammed's (SAW) death or 'caliphs' were men who took over political affairs and the propagation of Islam as a faith, the role models for women were the wives and daughters of the Prophet Muhammed (SAW), also referred to as the 'mothers of the Ummah' on the basis of their character and participation in the establishment of Islam.

After the Prophet (SAW) himself, his wives and 'sahaabi' as the Muslim women of that time, are regarded as role models for all Muslim women (Al Munajjed, 1997). His first wife, Khadija, was a prominent businesswoman who supported and encouraged him when he received his prophethood and for the twenty-five years of their marriage (Ramadan, 2007). Years later, after his passing, his last wife, Ayesha, memorised Qur'anic revelations and actual events and lessons as Hadith, serving as a leader of Islamic knowledge at the time, and was frequently consulted on the Prophet's (SAW) teachings (Khattab, 1993). His daughter, Fatima, was demure, hardworking and demonstrated patience and endurance in the face of very difficult circumstances (Naseef, 1999). In Arabia, women at the time were actively involved in the establishment of Islam, took part in battle and were economically active as business owners, skilled in arts and crafts and some had medical and surgical skills (Al-Hashimi, 2003; Khattab, 1993). Women were included rather than shunned from public participation, as is commonly believed to be true of Muslim women today. The wives and daughters of the Prophet Muhammed were active in public life and did not confuse modesty with abstaining from political, economic, social or even military affairs (Al Munajjed, 1997; Ghadanfar, 2001; Ramadan, 2007).

Despite the opportunities available in the twenty-first century, fewer Muslim women take the initiative in paving the way forward and setting an example for others. Some believe that striving within a leadership capacity in a contemporary context such as a corporate organisation can compromise a Muslim woman's sense of identity and restrain her from practising and complying with the boundaries of her faith.

3.11 A BACKGROUND TO MUSLIMS IN SOUTH AFRICA

The first Muslims arrived on South African shores in the 1600s as slaves and political exiles, brought to the Cape by the Dutch East India Company (Shell, 2000). They were subsequently followed by a wave of indentured Indian labourers between 1860 and 1911 who were imported to work on the sugar

cane plantations of the then Natal. Of approximately 152 000 indentured Indians, approximately 7-10% was Muslim, but this group was diverse in religious traditions, caste, language, ethnicity and culture. Indian traders subsequently migrated to South Africa at their own expense from the 1870s. A large proportion of them were Muslim and many started businesses in central Durban, while others established themselves in other parts of Natal. At a later stage, many relocated to the Transvaal, which is known as present-day Gauteng. The Muslim population of South Africa currently totals around one million; they constitute less than 2% of the population of 52 million. Roughly 90% of South African Muslims are categorised as 'Indian' or 'Malay' according to the census (Vahed, 2013). Both these communities have contributed to the establishment and growth of Islam in South Africa and have shaped the dominant Muslim cultural discourses, affecting the manner in which Islam is currently being practised (Vahed, 2004). The remaining 10% of Muslims in South Africa are of African origin and include migrants from Malawi, Mozambique and Zanzibar who have been assimilated into the indigenous community (Nadvi, 2009; Vahed, 2013).

For much of the twentieth century, Muslims were oppressed alongside other non-whites by apartheid policies of segregation instituted by successive white governments. The consequences varied somewhat for Indians and Malays and the Group Areas Act allowed Muslims to build mosques and madrassas and safely practise their faith within their communities, which were divided from others according to race. As they gained access to education, more Indian and Malay children completed secondary education and obtained qualifications from the Universities of the Western Cape (coloureds) and the University of Durban-Westville (Indians) (Vahed, 2013). As Muslims became more educated, they also challenged the faith they had been taught at about the same time that more conservative interpretations of Islam became institutionalised. The result was that the South African Muslim community became characteristically conservative. Many Muslims have retreated to an Islamic identity and according to Vahed (2013), have constructed boundaries at various points of contact with the greater South African society. This is

something that is disputed by more progressive Muslims who maintain that Muslims need to engage politically and publicly about broader issues without fear of compromising their religiosity and also prove to the world that Islam promotes peaceful processes rather than political violence and militancy, which is a common perception in the media (Nadvi, 2009).

Post-apartheid, and since the implementation of the 1996 Constitution, Muslims have been free to practise their faith openly in South Africa without any fear of discrimination. Respondents in Nadvi's (2009) study on the views of South African Muslims and integration with the political landscape revealed a general perception of tension on political, social and economic issues within the broader Muslim world, as well as between the Muslim and Western worlds. A significant view was that the Western world perceived Islamic ideology as a threat to its way of life and a sense of crisis was reported as a result of the contestations arising between the two worldviews. After a history of colonialism and secularisation, local Muslims have gained in solidarity with Muslims in other countries and have a vested interest in the challenges they face. South African Muslims may be a product of a post-apartheid society, but are also required to respond to the demands of a rapidly evolving global paradigm, with its focus on the contestations between Islam and the West, and Islam as a political threat to 'civilized' society, which are tied to the Orientalist project and broader political developments of the twentieth century to latter-day constructions of Islam (Nadvi, 2009).

An ambiguous position has thus developed for the contemporary South African Muslim and there is lack of clear guidance in the form of political and religious leadership. Unlike the 'old school' political leaders such as Ahmed Kathrada and Ebrahim Rasool of the apartheid era, there have been no prominent Muslim leadership figures to deal with contemporary issues faced by Muslim communities. In addition, Nadvi's (2009) study revealed that the Muslim sub-population of South Africa is in general not actively engaged in public participation in political and civil society matters. In a discussion

document published by the South African Muslim Network (2008), activities among Muslims were described as fragmented, with lack of collaboration and coordination, being reactive rather than proactive and attending to lack empowerment and leadership in the various communities. Religious leadership, or the *Ulema*, is the traditional, conservative and dominant form of leadership in Muslim communities, but this falls short of the support required from the Muslim community in political and contemporary matters. The broad attitude of non-involvement has contributed to the noticeable absence of women from public life, with relatively few Muslim women who have established themselves as leaders in their communities and workplaces.

3.12 PARTICIPATION OF MUSLIM WOMEN IN THE PUBLIC SPHERE

The present-day South African Muslim woman is privileged to enjoy the benefits of the country's Constitution, which affords her status and recognition, as all South Africans are regarded as equals and are allowed justice and freedom. This is in sharp contrast compared to the 'old South Africa' that discriminated against people on racial grounds and was intolerant to any faith other than the 'staunch Christianity' that was followed by the European minority at the time (Bux, 2004). South African women in general have typically been the victims of unemployment and poverty, less secure jobs, lower paid and less influential job roles, abuse and sexual violence. Until 1994, all South African women had been allocated inferior status by law and as a result were largely disengaged from the political and economic arena and socially disadvantaged. The Constitution and Bill of Rights that were established post-apartheid created opportunities for women to participate in the public sphere and be empowered to move beyond domesticated silence to express themselves and pursue activities that had previously been reserved for men, white men in particular (Bux, 2004).

Prior to the liberation of South Africa, there were a number of Muslims who contributed to the anti-apartheid struggle by actively and publicly pursuing democracy (Vahed, 2012). Of these, many were women, who bravely opposed the oppressive regime and gained their strength and inspiration from the ideals of freedom and justice from their Islamic faith. These women included sisters Zainab Asvat and Amina Cachalia, Feroza Adams, Zuleika Christopher, Ayesha Dawood, Amina Desai, Rahima Moosa and Fatima Meer, among others. They were teachers, journalists, volunteers, academics and doctors, who often partnered with their husbands in the struggle but served as activists in their own right and assisted in bringing transformation to South Africa (Vahed, 2012). Apart from political barriers, however, Muslim women have also been subjected to many years of patriarchal oppression, partly due to cultural systems and the misinterpretation of Islamic prescriptions contained in the Holy Qur'an and Hadith. As a result there has been general demoralisation and disempowerment of Muslim women in South African communities, even after apartheid, and although mechanisms and legislation have been introduced to improve the lot of women, Bux (2004) noted that poor self-esteem is probably the biggest challenge to empowering Muslim women and having them participate as active members of South African society.

For centuries female oppression was deemed acceptable (Engineer, 1992; Naseef, 1999) and the introduction of a single document in the form of the Constitution could hardly be expected to change such deep-seated perceptions of women as inferior, subservient and submissive sexual objects within a short time. With the rise of feminism and discourses on gender equality, many campaigns across the world had rallied for the equal status and access to rights and opportunities that were previously denied to women (Bux, 2004). An unwarranted consequence has been the misperception of Muslim women being viewed as the recipients of an extreme form of oppression, as Islamic culture cloaks its women and holds them to the authority of their male spouses and relatives (Abdulsalam, 1998). This view has been purported by advocates of equality for females to males in order to

liberate them from the subjugation of patriarchal systems. While Muslim women are certainly victims of abuse and oppression in many cases, this is similar to such occurrences in non-Muslim contexts and hardly as a direct result of the Islamic faith (Sayed-Iqbal, 2006).

Though the shariah has made provision for the elevation of Muslim women social standing, access to education and financial security, these provisions have not been fully enforced in many Muslim societies. Many young Muslim women successfully complete secondary and tertiary education but forsake careers in favour of marriage, raising children and running households. The role expectations of Muslim women as daughters, wives and mothers are embedded in religious and cultural prescriptions and at times can come into conflict with work-related expectations. While Muslim women in practice may not share equal status in their communities, many of them are industrious businesswomen, professionals or career women committed to excelling in the fields in which they are employed.

Many Muslim men still hold more conservative views about the role of women, but some recent studies have found a shift in attitude, with younger Muslim men who report being more willing to assist with responsibilities at home and caring for children. A study by Ahmed (2008) on the attitudes of South African Muslim men to women found that they had more egalitarian and less sexist attitudes than their male counterparts in Canada and Saudi Arabia. They were in favour of opportunities for women to participate in activities outside the home and older men tended to have more liberal attitudes to women. However, they also felt some seclusion of women was necessary and that women should not have full access to practise worship and prayer with men (Ahmed, 2008). Negotiating family responsibilities and fulfilling her religious obligations with regard to prayer and social conduct therefore need to be carefully balanced, should a Muslim woman also decide to embark on a career path as a leader. The challenges generally faced by women as leaders in addition to those mentioned above culminate in a peculiar scenario and the physical and psychological resources that enable creative solutions to

execute these various roles successfully would be of significant importance for a Muslim woman leader.

3.13 CONCLUSION

From the available literature, it can be concluded that trying to conceptualise the South African Muslimah as a leader is fairly complex and cannot be adequately understood without giving due consideration to the religious underpinnings of Islam and its implications for a woman who practises her faith in the current context and state of affairs of Islam as a point of contention in the Western world. As an employee she is subject to the gradual assimilation of the South African workplace into the practices of Western, globalised organisations. Muslim women exemplified leadership during the early days of Islam, during the apartheid era by being involved in political activism and today can be found in leadership capacities in various fields and work contexts. While the political landscape had a significant impact on the educational and economic opportunities available to women, Muslim women are also bound to social, cultural and religious expectations and there are varying viewpoints on the acceptability of leadership roles for females. A Muslim woman who chooses to pursue her career and assume a position of leadership may encounter several barriers. In general, women as leaders seem to demonstrate attitudes and behaviours reflective of positive leadership more naturally. This is valuable in today's business context, but they also experience specific challenges and obstacles to their career progression. With enough resources and support, it becomes easier for women to pursue high-profile careers and this may be more pertinent for Muslim women as leaders in order to fulfil their personal and work roles.

CHAPTER 4

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

4.1 INTRODUCTION

The research process is outlined in this chapter. A description is provided of the approach used, the sampling method and research participants, as well as the methods of quantitative and qualitative data collection. The types of analysis for the two methods are explained, followed by an overview of the reliability, validity and trustworthiness of the data.

4.2 RESEARCH APPROACH

The research methodology selected for the study is a mixed methods design with a cross-sectional approach. Usually, either quantitative or qualitative methods are selected to investigate a topic, depending on which is more appropriate and makes practical sense. Though the methods for each vary, both aim to collect data systematically and examine patterns in the data gathered. A mixed methods approach involves using both quantitative and qualitative research methods or sources that will serve to corroborate each other and for the purpose of this study, provide a form of methodological triangulation (Silverman, 2010). Since the research is being based on the experiences and psychological strengths of a specific population, a qualitative method such as interviewing would provide more detail and depth of information on a subject that is not widely studied, as well as provide insight into leadership from a gender-sensitive perspective. Psychological strengths are theoretically rooted in personality and the use of a quantitative method to assess the personality trait profiles of individual participants would allow for the verification or triangulation of both sources of data, in both a methodological and a theoretical sense.

While quantitative research systematically undertakes to test predefined hypotheses to study a case or event, qualitative research favours immediacy

(Silverman, 2011), but still emphasises maintaining the integrity of the research. This can be achieved by using standardised techniques, being neutral in descriptive statements and making measurements that are replicable (Neuman, 2011). 'Soft data' in the form of words, sentences, symbols and photos are derived from qualitative research analysis compared to 'hard' data in the form of numbers that is used in quantitative research (Neuman, 2011). An interpretive approach is applied to understanding the data and the context and a non-linear sequence may be followed, unlike the quantitative path, which is clear from the outset and predetermined. The specific qualitative method used in this research study is Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA), a method more typically used in applied psychology (Hefferon & Gill-Rodriguez, 2011).

IPA involves conducting a detailed analysis of individuals' lived experience and how they make sense of it as a phenomenological approach (Smith & Osborn, 2007) and therefore complements the positive psychology approach where individuals seek to find meaning in their experiences. IPA is also a dynamic process of the interviewer getting close to and accessing the participant's world view and making sense of the other's interpretation of events and experiences, resulting in a two-stage interpretation or double hermeneutic. While striving to understand the view of the participant, the researcher as interviewer must employ empathy and critical questioning to gather a detailed and comprehensive account of the person's story. Individuals relate meanings within a personal and social context as 'symbolic interactionism' and IPA acknowledges this, as well the links between an individual's thoughts, emotions and the facts they disclose.

IPA also converges with mainstream psychology in the interest and examination of how people think about what happens to them but diverges on the methodology for understanding how this thinking can be studied (Smith & Osborn, 2007). IPA ascribes to an approach that is idiographic, inductive and interrogative. An idiographic approach implies that individual cases are studied until closure is achieved before moving on to the next case, and cases

are only compared for convergence and divergence of themes once all of them have been analysed individually. Being inductive, the analysis method allows for the emergence of unanticipated themes during analysis and as an interrogative method, the results of the analysis are considered in relation to psychological literature (Smith, 2004). This method of analysis is also better suited to smaller samples and is applicable across the psychological sub-disciplines (Smith, 2004).

Hefferon and Gill-Rodriguez (2011) argue that IPA as idiographic qualitative research can complement rather than be overridden by quantitative methods, since focussing on the particular can provide insight into universal phenomena. The simple guidelines are in summary to include fewer participants in the sample, ask fewer interview questions and identify fewer superordinate and subordinate themes during the analysis phase. Good quality IPA provides rich information and examines the arising themes and their interpretation from the qualitative data. This is in contrast to commonly used qualitative methods, such as grounded theory and thematic analysis, which tend to be broadly descriptive but lack depth (Hefferon & Gill-Rodriguez, 2011).

Whether quantitative or qualitative methods are preferred, the research reports of either need to show that the topics covered are relevant to the field of inquiry, contribute to the existing research, possess conceptual, theoretical and methodological rigour and need to be written as clear, logical arguments (Silverman, 2011). The results of a qualitative study can contribute to the development of new hypotheses, while quantitative results can highlight trends that may require analysis and investigation of a more quantitative nature. By using a mixed methods approach, this study is able to focus on qualitative results that explore a topic with little previous scientific literature, in order to contribute to theory as well as benefit from a quantitative approach that primarily serves as a form of validation of the qualitative results obtained.

It was attempted to administer the methods over two phases for practical reasons, so as to allow for the opportunity to score and interpret the personality profiles from the first phase and present the personality feedback to the participant after the interview of the second phase. The sequence of administration of the two methods was however not treated as a specific requirement and should not have been likely to cause a significant impact on the results of either method. A fairly flexible approach meant that candidates under time constraints could be accommodated by completing both the personality questionnaires and interviews in one session.

4.3 SAMPLING AND RESEARCH PARTICIPANTS

4.3.1 Target population

Few Muslim women leaders are found in South African industries and organisations. Professional Muslim boards were therefore approached for lists of women who serve in a leadership capacity in their professions. These organisations included the Islamic Medical Association, the Minara Chamber of Commerce and the Institute for Learning and Motivation, a non-governmental organisation (NGO) that has a network of Muslim female professionals who present various topics at their annual conferences. Referrals were provided by the administrators of these organisations and rather than drawing a random sample, invitations were extended to all Muslim women who met the criteria of having leadership experience to participate. These referrals included Muslim women who were senior managers at major financial auditing organisations and within the higher education sector, who were requested via email to participate in the research. Those who responded in acceptance were included in the sample and included participants from Durban, Pietermaritzburg and Johannesburg.

4.3.2 Sampling method

As Muslim female leaders are a limited, special category of individuals, it is unlikely for studies on them to be representative of the normal population

(Cheung & Halpern, 2010). The primary sampling method in this case is purposive sampling, a method that is based on knowledge of the population being studied, its elements and the purpose of the study (Brewerton & Millward, 2006). The criteria for being included in the study were stipulated as being a Muslim female and having experience in a leadership role or senior management. Since the IPA methodology is applied for the qualitative component of the research, the sampling guidelines have been followed in accordance with the said method. A summary description of the participants is represented in Table 12.

Table 12

Description of research participants

Participant	Age	Highest Qualification	Designation/s	Industry/ies	Marital status	Children
12	33	Matric (A-levels, United Kingdom)	Journalist, PR Manager	Media/Communication, Government	Married	Yes
1	37	BSc, MBA	MBA Dissertation Supervisor	Higher Education, Health	Married	Yes
8	38	Masters (current)	Director	NGO, Media/Communication	Single	Yes
14	38	Medical degree, Master's Actuarial Science, PhD	Director	Auditing, Healthcare	Married	Yes
3	39	Medical degree, current PhD	Medical doctor, Head of School, Hospital Unit Head (Specialist)	Higher Education, Healthcare	Married	Yes
11	39	Matric	Property Portfolio Manager	Financial services/Retail	Single	Yes
15	39	BA, Post-graduate diploma	Head of Department/Manager	Insurance/Financial services	Single	Yes
2	41	PhD	Senior Lecturer, Activist/Author	Higher Education, Politics	Single	No
5	43	BCompt	CEO	Textile, Hospitality	Single	Yes
6	44	Masters degrees (medical)	Head of Department (Specialist)	Higher Education, Healthcare (public)	Single	No
10	46	Medical degree PhD	Dean	Higher Education, Healthcare	Married	Yes, adult
4	50	BA Hons	Director	NGO (Relief Services)	Married	Yes, adult
14	55	Education degree, MBA (current)	Director	Insurance/Financial services, Media	Married	Yes, adult
9	67	Medical degree PhD	Head of Department (Medical Specialist)	Higher Education, Healthcare	Married	No
7	68	Medical degree PhD	Medical specialist, Head of School/hospital unit	Higher Education, Healthcare	Married	Yes, adult

IPA research questions are usually stated broadly to explore and understand complex or novel situations faced by individuals and the way in which they make sense of these. By using a flexible yet detailed approach, transcripts are analysed case by case in order to derive descriptive themes of the particular group in question. The primary aim in sampling is therefore not to select a random participant sample and generalise findings broadly, but rather to focus dedicatedly on fewer cases of a homogenous sample, which purposive sampling allows for. This ensures that the research question is relevant for that particular population and generalisations can subsequently be made. Additional, similar studies would have to be conducted with other groups of female leaders before further theoretically empirical generalisations can be made (Smith & Osborn, 2007) and analysed in depth (Smith & Osborn, 2007).

4.3.3 Sample size

The qualitative data analysis method of IPA is an idiographic approach and Smith et al. in Hefferon and Gill-Rodriguez (2011) recommend that a sample of between eight to ten interviewees is ideal for professional doctoral studies. As a rule, it is believed that 'less is more' and preference is given to the depth of analysis over the quantity. Students who pursue qualitative research are frequently placed under pressure to include larger numbers of participants to satisfy research boards and supervisors, as quantitative methods typically dictate the requirement for larger samples. However, Hefferon and Gill-Rodriguez (2011) recommend that sample size be considered in its context. Furthermore, in order to gather quality data that has less chance of the researcher's input being included in the understanding of the data, interview questions should be broad and more open-ended and guiding, rather than leading. The schedule should be fairly short and begin with general questions that allow the participant to set the parameters of the narrative (Smith, Flowers & Larkin, 2009). Typically, the search for participants required would cease when interpretative saturation against the available literature has been achieved. For this particular research study, the doctoral requirement of an average of fifteen participants has been adhered to, according to the recommendations of the University of KwaZulu-Natal.

4.4 METHOD OF DATA COLLECTION

Personality questionnaires and semi-structured interviews were administered to the participants. An invitation detailing the nature of the research was initially emailed to female senior managers and leaders. Since two sources of information were used in this study, data collection was generally conducted in two phases. The personality questionnaires were administered individually with participants at a time that was convenient to them. Follow-up appointments were made and the interviews were conducted at a second session, with feedback on the personality profile given to the participants immediately after. Three of the participants completed both the interview and personality questionnaire in a single session, as they were not within the proximity of the researcher. Because of limited time available, another three candidates completed their interviews with the researcher, answered the personality questionnaires on their own and the personality answer sheets were subsequently collected from them. The last-mentioned candidates were provided with executive written reports and telephonic feedback.

4.4.1 Personality questionnaires

The questionnaire is a quantitative method that provides descriptive information regarding the personality of the research candidate. The 16PF-5 is an instrument that assesses adult personality according to sixteen independent traits as primary factors that are indicative of cognitive beliefs and opinions, affective preferences and behaviour (van Rooyen, 2009). Five global factors are also represented, which were derived from the factor analysis of the primary sixteen factors.

4.4.2 Semi-structured interviews

In addition to personality profiles, semi-structured interviews were held with the individual participants in order to gather information from the female senior managers on how they had applied psychological strengths in both positive and negative work situations. The semi-structured interviews (Appendix A)

conducted with the research participants were structured around their experiences of leadership as women and more specifically the psychological strengths they used when faced by opportunities and challenges. As a data collection method, semi-structured interviewing is qualitative and involves the use of both closed- and open-ended questions in order to explore a broader topic. Typically, a schedule of questions is used that is neither fixed in its wording nor very ordered, but rather focuses on issues central to the research topic. This allows the researcher to probe issues raised further (Klenke, 2008) and encourages richer, more detailed responses from the participants. The themes elicited from their responses assisted in identifying the psychological strengths in the form of themes that underlie their capability as successful leaders in the workplace.

Semi-structured interviews are a preferred method for data collection, as they allow flexibility when the researcher and participant are engaged in dialogue; questions may be adjusted as appropriate and further probing is possible. An interview schedule has to be planned in advance. The respondent is allowed the opportunity as 'experiential expert' to maximise the chance of being able to share her story in an empathic setting and unforeseen issues can be raised by the participant. When developing the questions in the schedule, an overview of the issues to be raised should be conceptualised, there should be logical flow from one question to the next, though a strict sequence is not necessary, and possible probes and prompts could be prepared to follow through on anticipated answers (Smith & Osborn, 2007).

The strategy in semi-structured interviewing is to get close to the respondents' view of the topic without leading them too much. The questions will therefore be posed more generally and followed by prompting if necessary, such as in funnelling where a more general question is followed by a more specific one based on the response given. Semi-structured interviews typically last around an hour and it is preferable for them to be conducted alone with the participant, without any disruptions. The interview should be recorded and

transcripts should note the entire interview, including false starts, significant pauses and the like (Smith & Osborn, 2007).

4.5 DATA ANALYSIS

4.5.1 Quantitative data analysis

The data generated by the personality questionnaire is in the form of individual personality profiles. Once scored, the results of the questionnaire are represented on a bipolar scale for each of the sixteen personality traits measured (16PF-5 Training Manual, 2009). The scores for each participant have been interpreted according to the guidelines outlined in the 16PF-5 manual alongside the qualitative results from the semi-structured interviews. Descriptive statistics are used to represent the results obtained.

4.5.2 Qualitative data analysis

The data from the semi-structured interviews was analysed using a qualitative method called IPA. This is a commonly used method when data is generated from semi-structured interviews and complete understanding of a participant's lived experience is sought (Smith, 2004). The use of interviewing as a research methodology requires the interviewer to be able to perform an analysis while collecting information and the interview process itself has to be focussed on to account for what is said by the interviewer and the context that is provided for the interviewee's responses (Klenke, 2008). The role of the researcher is to make sense of and capture the psychological world of the participant, belief systems and perceptions, the content and complexity of the meanings created about these. The researcher engages with the transcript text to interpret these meanings through a step-by-step process and illustrates analyses with working examples from the text. The process is different from other approaches such as grounded theory and phenomenology, but remains

a personal process and is not prescribed but rather serves as a guideline. The steps to be followed in an IPA process are outlined as follows:

4.5.2.1 Initial case analysis

When starting with the first case, the transcript should be read a number of times and interesting aspects should be noted in the left-hand column. The text does not have to be divided into segments for compartmentalised analysis, but more attention and commentary should rather be paid to sections where the text is richer. By reading and re-reading the text, additional insights may be noted and comments may be made about connections and associations that become apparent, preliminary interpretations or summaries and paraphrasing as appropriate. Even the language used by the participant may be commented on.

When the end of the document is reached, the commentary should be analysed for emerging theme titles, which are to be documented in the right-hand column. These should be concise phrases that capture the essence of what was found in the text. Expressions should therefore be abstract enough to allow conceptual connections within and across cases, but should trace back to the participant's actual response. The initial notes should be read and themes extracted for the rest of the transcript. Some of these may appear similar, with the same title being repeated. Because the contents of the transcript are still regarded as data, no passages are omitted or given special attention, but the more themes that surface, the richer the passage being read is likely to be (Smith & Osborn, 2007). The aim is not to generate a large number of descriptive themes with few data extracts to support each theme; each theme derived should be substantiated by a thorough and synthesised analysis (Hefferon & Gill-Rodriguez, 2011).

4.5.2.2 Connecting and clustering the themes

After having read, re-read and elicited the themes, they are listed on a separate page and those that are connected are identified. This is more analytical and theoretical than the previous step. Some themes will tend to cluster together and others may stand as superordinate themes. As clusters are formed, repeated reference has to be made to the transcript to ensure that they are reflective of the actual words of the interviewee. As an iterative process, there is close involvement and interpretation of the text by the researcher and detailing directories of phrases along with the themes. The next step is to create a coherent table of the themes, which lists the clusters of highest concern as communicated by the respondent and are named accordingly. An identifier that indicates where the extract is to be found, together with its page number, should also be used to organise the analysis and locate the original source. At this stage, some of the themes may be excluded if they do not fit the structure or lack richness in evidence within the transcript.

4.5.2.3 Continuing analysis of other cases and master table of themes

At the end of the interpretative process of each transcript, the final list of superordinate themes is tabulated. Themes to be focussed on will depend on the prioritisation of the researcher as analyst and are to be reduced, not specifically according to their prevalence, but rather based on the richness of the passage and the extent to which it supports the themes.

4.5.2.4 Writing up

Ensuring validity in IPA research involves paying attention to four principles, namely a) contextual sensitivity, b) commitment and rigour, c) transparency and coherence and d) impact and importance (Hefferon & Gill-Rodriguez, 2011). While the general aim of most research, also psychological research, is to be able to generalise research findings, qualitative research and IPA in

particular are more concerned with the transferability of the findings from one group to another (Hefferon & Gill-Rodriguez, 2011).

IPA involves conducting a detailed analysis of individuals' lived experience and how they make sense of it and therefore complements the positive psychology approach where individuals seek to find meaning in their experiences. The characteristic features of IPA are consistent with the aims of the research, namely that it is idiographic, inductive and interrogative. An idiographic approach implies that individual cases are studied until closure is achieved before moving on to the next case and cases are only compared for convergence and divergence of themes once all of them have been analysed individually. Being inductive, the analysis method allows for the emergence of unanticipated themes during analysis and as an interrogative method, the results of the analysis are considered in relation to psychological literature (Smith, 2004).

4.6 RELIABILITY, VALIDITY AND TRUSTWORTHINESS

4.6.1 Reliability and validity of techniques

Reliability refers to the stability or consistency of research findings (Silverman, 2011) and can be achieved in qualitative research by being transparent and detailed in the description of the research process, as well as being explicit about the theoretical approach of the interpretation. Since accounts of events cannot always be reproduced as is common practice to establish reliability in quantitative studies, reliability must be ensured by recording observations in as concrete a way as possible, such as verbatim recordings. The reliability of interviews can be enhanced by reducing the potential for inferences about the data, in other words low-inference descriptors are to be used. Low inference data can be gathered by tape-recording all interviews, carefully transcribing the interviews and presenting extracts of the interview data in the research

report. These must preferably be long extracts that include the accompanying question (Silverman, 2011).

Since IPA is concerned with the transferability of findings from one group to another (Hefferon & Gill-Rodriguez, 2011) rather than to the broader population, an additional method, the psychometric personality questionnaire, has been added to the study for the collection of data in order to expand the reliability and trustworthiness of the qualitative method of interviewing.

The 16PF-5 already has data available regarding its reliability and validity and is an established personality tool widely used by psychologists in South Africa. In assessments, reliability coefficients for test-retest were between 0.8 and 0.7 for the primary factors and 0.87 and 0.78 for the global factors. Internal consistency Cronbach Alpha coefficients had a mean value of 0.76. Criterion validity of the 16PF-5 included the ability to predict criterion scores including self-esteem and adjustment and construct validity could be derived from correlational comparisons with other inventories for both the primary and global factors (16PF-5 Training Manual, 2009). Biswas-Diener et al. (2011) further recommend the combined use of a personality instrument with an assessment of strengths in order to explain any contradictions that may occur in the data, since strengths are rooted in personality, and to further an understanding of personality-strength dynamics.

By creating a cumulative view of data from different contexts, the truth in the information yielded can be examined where the different data contributions intersect (Silverman, 2010). The use of more than one point of reference to determine whether the findings of a qualitative study are true and certain is referred to as triangulation and assists to establish whether the findings are reflective of reality and substantial enough to eliminate doubt (Guion, 2002). Another method of validation for qualitative data is analytic induction. Analytic induction seeks to uncover causal relationships by studying a case, forming a provisional hypothesis and going through a process of redefining the phenomenon being studied and reformulating hypotheses, eventually to come

to a universal relationship based on a small number of cases, while excluding those cases that no longer meet the criteria for the defined phenomenon (Silverman, 2011). Apparently complicated, this method relies on two techniques, the constant comparative method and searching for deviant cases (Silverman, 2011).

4.6.2 Trustworthiness of data

There are different methods for establishing that the accounts studied are representative of the social phenomena they refer to. Triangulation involves comparing different sources of data, often a combination of qualitative and quantitative data, in order to confirm similar trends or results from the different sources (Silverman, 2011). In order to improve the use of triangulation Silverman (2011) recommends approaching it from a theoretical model or perspective, such as constructionism, for example. In addition, the methods and data should conform to the structure and meaning of the selected perspective. Silverman warns against losing the context from which data is derived when attempting to 'aggregate' data from different sources. Instead of trying to isolate a concurring 'truth', triangulation should be used as a strategy that "adds rigour, breadth, complexity, richness and depth" (Silverman, 2011, p. 371).

Triangulation emphasises the complementary nature of qualitative and quantitative data (Silverman, 2010) and any conflicting data arising out of these two methods must be used constructively in theory development (Klenke, 2008). Around five types of triangulation can be distinguished, including data, investigator, theory, methodological or environmental. These would respectively refer to the use of multiple sources of data: multiple investigators, multiple professional perspectives to view and describe a phenomenon, the use of multiple quantitative and/or qualitative methods and lastly, the use of multiple environmental locations (Guion, 2002). The methodological form of triangulation has been employed in this study, since psychological strengths are rooted in personality traits and any conflicting information provided in the interview, a subjective method, can be probed and

clarified using the more objective personality profile data. This multi-method and verifying approach will serve to enhance the reliability and objectivity of the information provided by the participants.

4.7 CONCLUSION

When studying characteristics of a small or specific group of people, it may not always be feasible to adopt random sampling or stratified sampling methods that allow for generalising from a relatively larger sample to the general population. In the case of Muslim women who are leaders in the workplace, they are more difficult to locate and alternative, more appropriate sampling and methods of analysis have been employed. A detailed description of the qualitative method of IPA was provided, the data collection process was outlined and the implications for reliability and validity of the data were related. The following chapter exhibits the results derived from both the quantitative and qualitative methods used.

CHAPTER 5

DESCRIPTION OF THE SAMPLE AND ANALYSIS OF THE RESULTS

5.1 INTRODUCTION

In this chapter a description is given of the characteristics of the participants, followed by an overview of the themes derived from the qualitative analysis and quantitative analysis, respectively.

5.2 SUMMARY PROFILE OF THE PARTICIPANTS

Fifteen Muslim women who occupied leadership roles in various organisations and industries participated in the study. Their ages ranged from 33-68 years. Three participants were from Johannesburg, two from Pietermaritzburg and ten from KwaZulu-Natal. However, at least nine of the candidates had commuted, relocated or had lived some part of their career in another province or country.

Fourteen of the participants were Indian Muslims (93%) and one participant was a white Muslim (7%).

Seven of the participants were between the ages of 30 and 39 (54%), four were in the age group 40-49 (30%), two were between 50 and 59 (15%) and another two between the ages of 60 and 69 (15%).

The highest level of education for two participants (13%) was a matric qualification, two participants (13%) held bachelor's degrees, one (7%) an honour's degree, four held master's level qualifications (27%) and six held PhDs (40%).

Many of the participants held positions where they functioned in more than one industry or held dual/multiple roles. Seven of the participants (47%) held

occupations in the healthcare industry, of which five were in public healthcare as well as higher education and the other two were primarily employed in private institutions, but also served the private and public healthcare industries. One participant was employed in higher education with a specialisation in politics. Three participants (20%) were employed in financial institutions, of which two were in corporate positions and one was a director of her own company. A single participant (7%) was CEO of a group of companies in the textile and hospitality industries. The remaining participants were from an NGO, the media and communications field, and one candidate worked in both these industries.

Nine of the participants were married (93%), of which one of had never had children, four had adult children and four had younger children in their care. Six of the participants were single (46%), of whom four were divorced with children (30%) and two had not been married and were not parents (15%). The profile of the participants in terms of age, marital status, being a parent and occupational leadership roles was previously presented in Table 12 (page 110).

5.3. ANALYSIS OF QUALITATIVE RESULTS

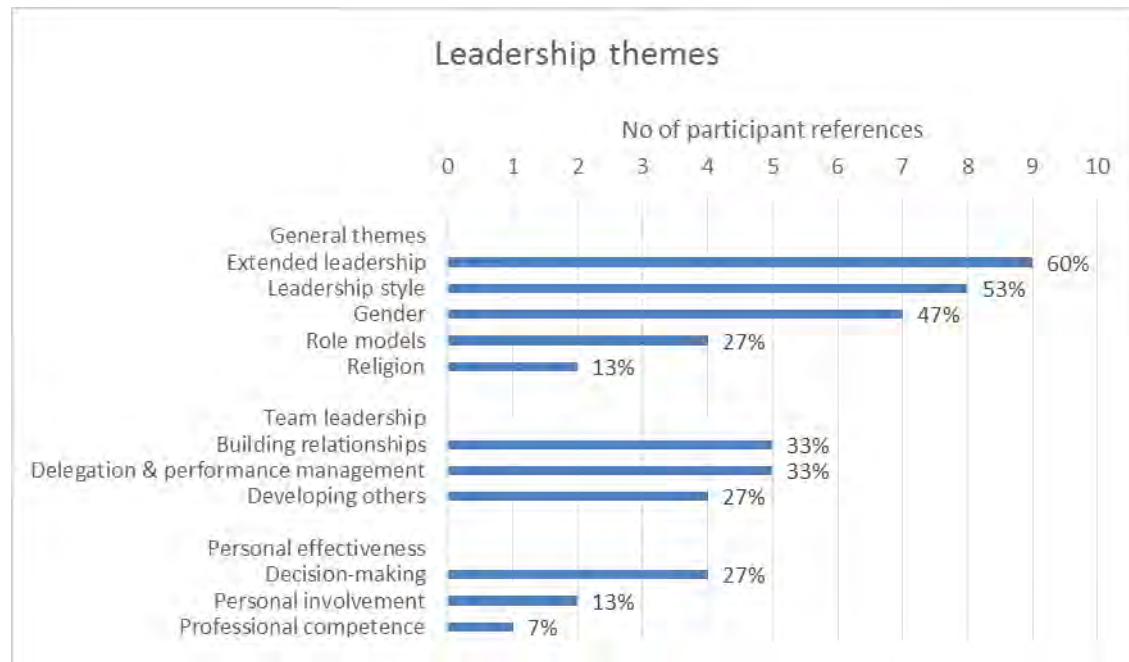
Five broad themes were generated as a result of areas investigated by the semi-structured interview conducted with the research participants. The sub-themes reflected under the broader themes provided a more detailed indication of the convergence and variances between the participants.

5.3.1 Theme 1: Leadership

Four broad theme categories concerned with leadership were generated from the interviews. Some of the sub-themes related to general concepts about leadership, while others were more specifically about team leadership or the participants' perceptions of personal effectiveness as leaders.

Table 13

Themes on leadership



5.3.1.1 General themes on leadership

Nine of the participants (60%) communicated that they held multiple or extended leadership roles. Some of these additional roles fell within their prescribed job roles and others within their fields or other areas of interest or industries. Particular preferences to leadership styles were made by eight participants (53%), which included three participants who were in favour of democratic (20%) and adaptive (20%) leadership styles. A 'rigid' leadership style was supported by one participant (7%) and another favoured a participative style (7%). Gender differences and their impact on leadership behaviour were noted by seven of the participants (47%), four participants referred to role models who exemplified leadership (27%) and two (13%) described their leadership as being influenced by their religion.

5.3.1.2 Team leadership

Behavioural themes of leaders working effectively with teams were related to building relationships (five participants, 33%), five participants (33%) mentioned the ability to delegate tasks and manage performance and four

participants (27%) saw it as important to develop leadership and capability in others.

5.3.1.3 Personal effectiveness

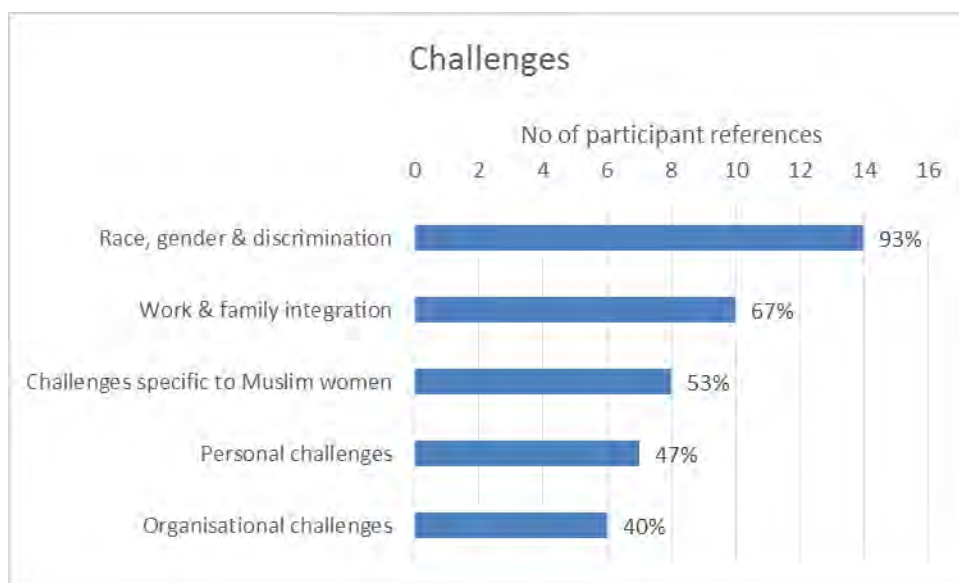
The sub-theme of effective ‘decision-making’ was referred to by four participants (27%), followed by being ‘personally involved’ as a leader in activities with staff (two participants, 13%) and one participant (7%) was concerned about being ‘professionally competent’ in her field.

5.3.2 Theme 2: Challenges

A majority of the participants (93%) indicated that they experienced discrimination in the workplace and that this was primarily gender-based. Ten of the participants (67%) mentioned difficulties in maintaining a balance between work and family. Challenges experienced by the participants in their work environments for the reason that they practised Islam were reported by 53% of the participants. Personal challenges in the form of applying effective leadership behaviours (e.g. assertiveness) were raised by seven participants (47%) and organisational challenges pertaining to job roles or the organisational culture were reported by six participants (40%).

Table 14

Themes on challenges

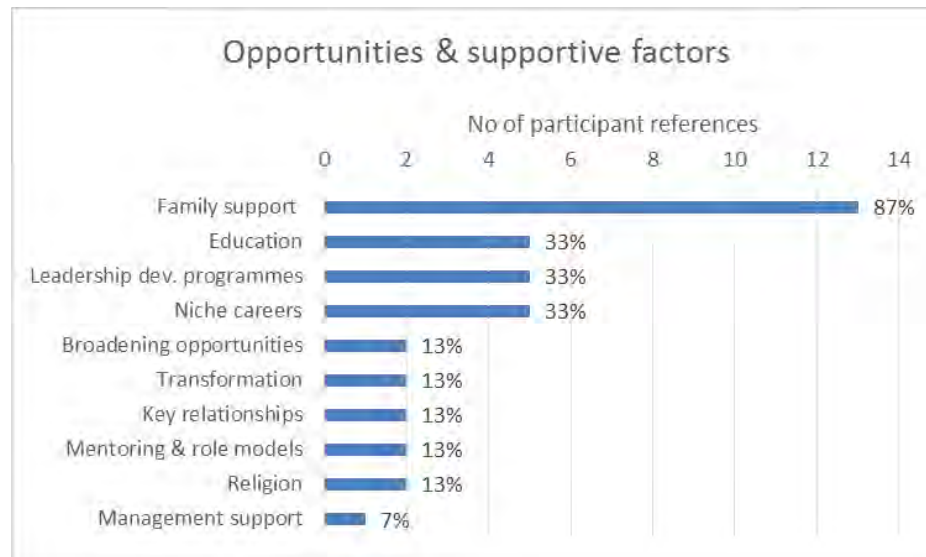


5.3.3 Theme 3: Opportunities and supportive factors

Having the support of parents and spouses early in careers and when careers are established, respectively, was viewed as a major supportive factor by thirteen of the participants (87%). Access to tertiary education, participation in leadership development programmes and establishing themselves within niche careers were each mentioned by five participants (33%) as significant career development opportunities. There were two references (13% of participants) to each of the following: broadening opportunities (additional opportunities created by exploiting initial opportunities), organisational transformation (employment equity policy), establishing relationships with key stakeholders, receiving guidance from mentors and role models and being guided or drawing inspiration from Islamic principles. Only one participant (7%) referred to having received managerial support that served to enhance her career progression.

Table 15

Themes on opportunities and supportive factors



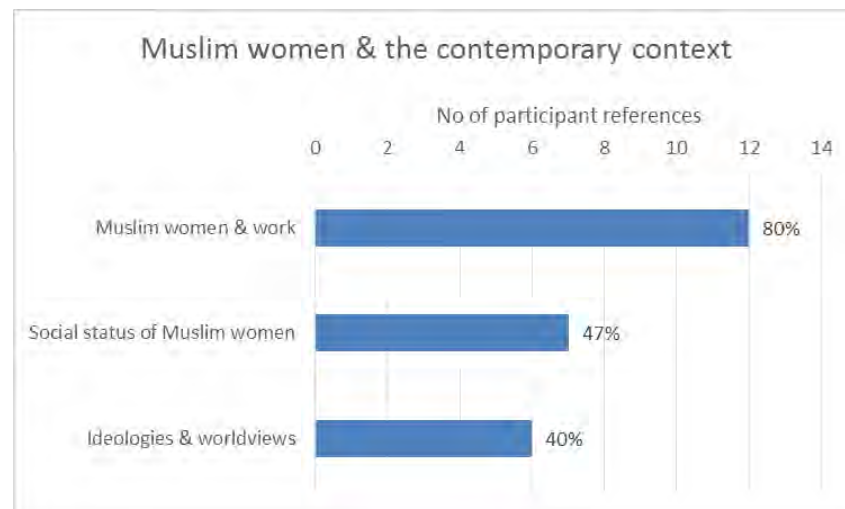
5.3.4 Theme 4: Contemporary context

References to Islamic ideologies and the impact of conservatism on religious practice were made by six of the participants (40%). From a social perspective, seven participants (47%) discussed issues related to the right to education, public participation and conformance to Islamic versus Western

ideals. Twelve of the participants (80%) conveyed topics related to Muslim women in the work context, including the observation of Islamic rituals and rules, the application of Islamic values as leaders, issues around hijab, financial security and the decision about whether or not to work.

Table 16

Themes on Muslim women in the contemporary context

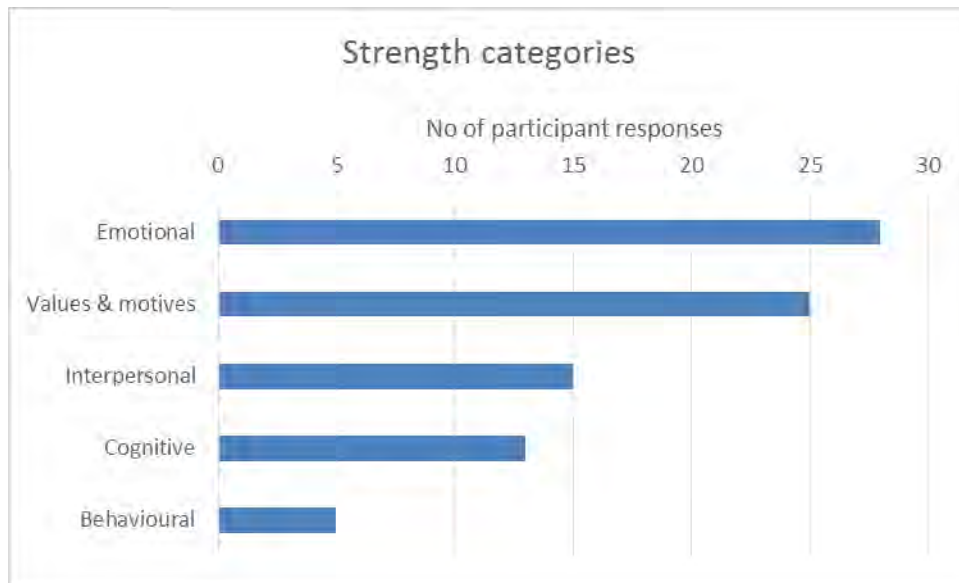


5.3.5 Theme 5: Strengths

The strengths obtained from the interviews were sorted into five conceptual categories including interpersonal, cognitive, emotional and behavioural strengths and values and motives. Emotional strengths were reported on most, followed closely by values and motives. Interpersonal and cognitive strengths were less emphasised and the lowest emphasis was on behavioural strengths.

Table 17

Total responses for strengths categories

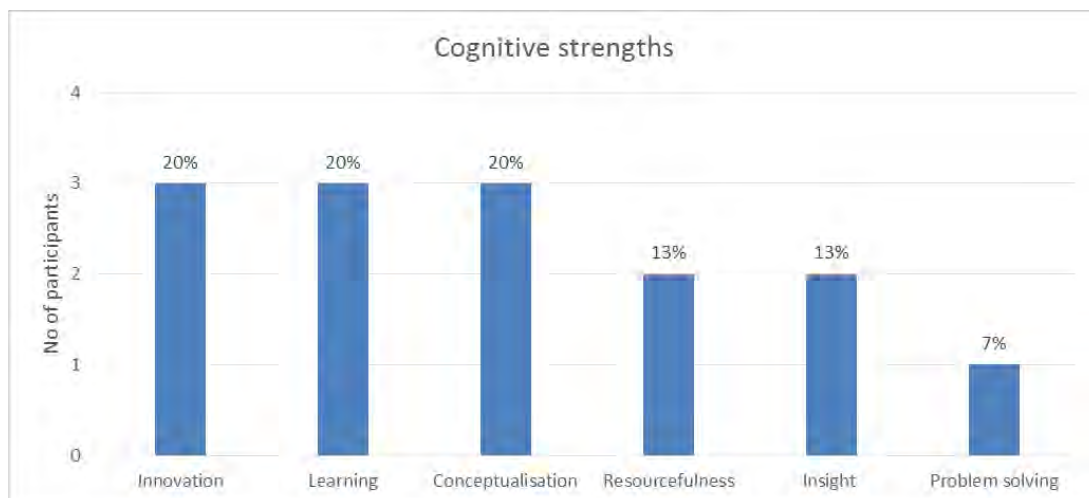


5.3.5.1 Cognitive strengths

The suggested strengths related to thinking and problem-solving were innovation, learning and conceptualisation, each offered by three participants (20%). This was followed by insight and resourcefulness, mentioned by two participants each (27%), and complex problem-solving, which was indicated by a single participant (7%).

Table 18

Cognitive strengths

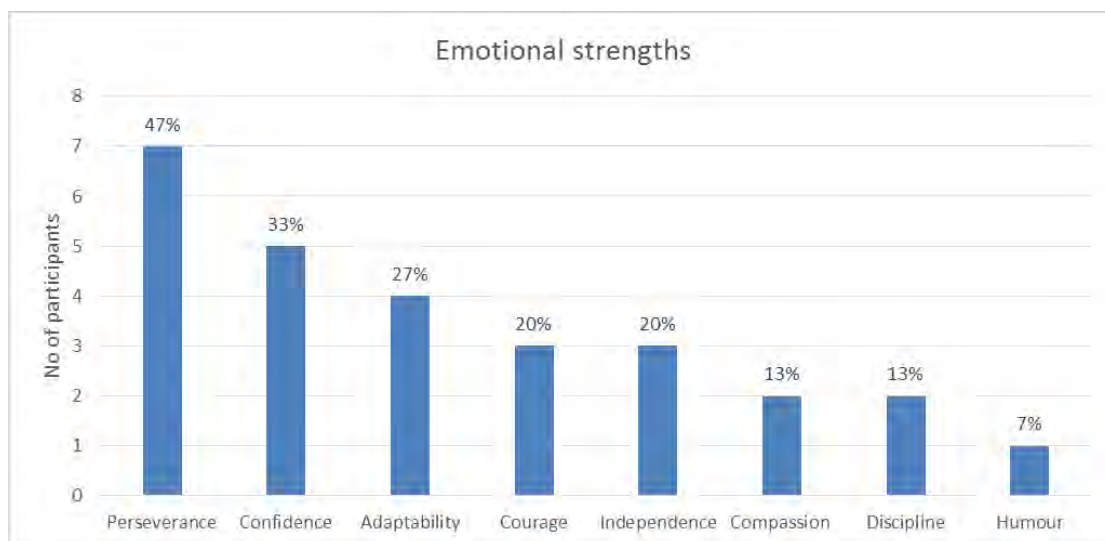


5.3.5.2 Emotional strengths

Perseverance (also described as commitment/determination) was emphasised by seven of the participants (47%). Concepts related to self-confidence featured with five participants (33%) and four supported adaptability (27%). Three responses were obtained for courage and independence (20%), followed by compassion and discipline (13%). Humour was derived as an emotional strength for one participant (7%).

Table 19

Emotional strengths

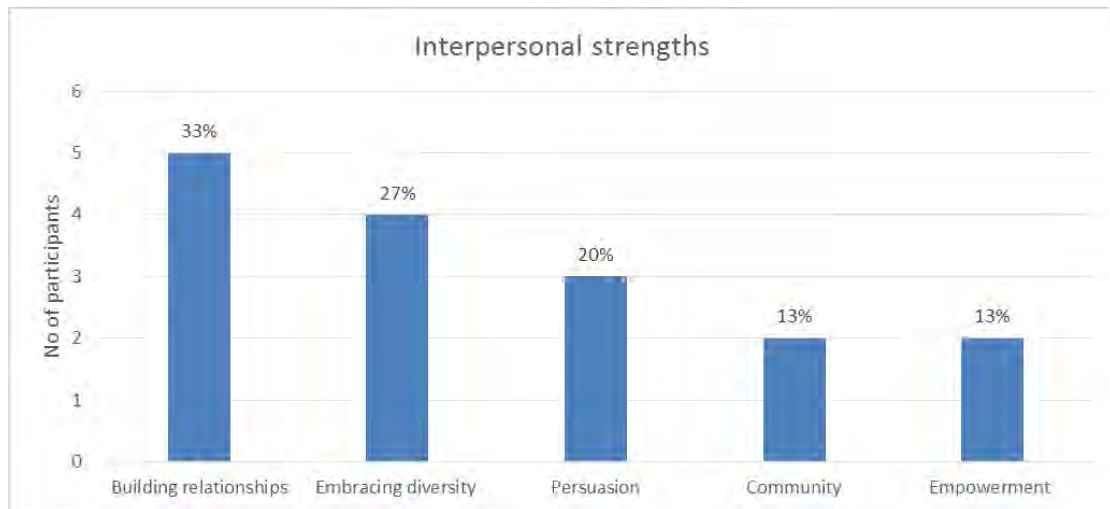


5.3.5.3 Interpersonal strengths

Of the total sample group, five participants (33%) emphasised the importance of building and managing relationships, four participants (27%) indicated diversity as a strength, while three participants (20%) offered persuasiveness. Two participants (13%) favoured being able to create a sense of community, helping and empowering others as strengths.

Table 20

Interpersonal strengths

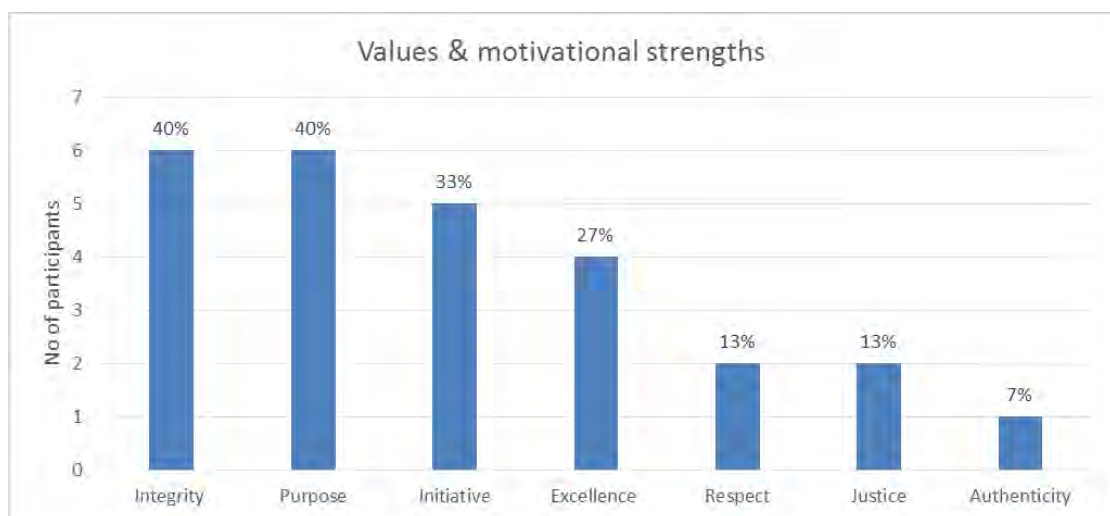


5.3.6.3 Values and motivational strengths

Themes related to integrity and having a sense of purpose were indicated by six participants (33%) for each strength, followed by initiative for five participants (33%). Four participants (27%) were focussed on achieving excellence. Two participants were mindful of applying justice and being respectful (13%) in their dealings with others. Authenticity was raised by a single participant (7%).

Table 21

Values and motivational strengths

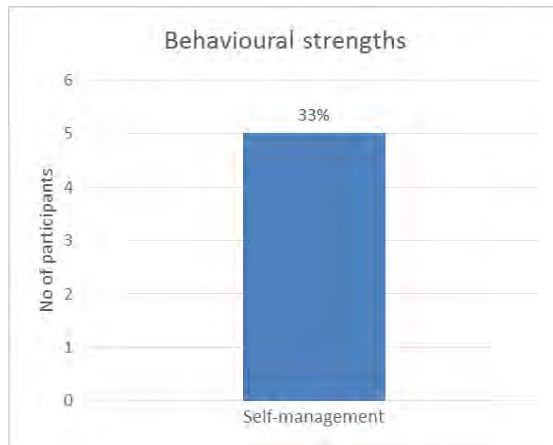


5.3.6.4 Behavioural strengths

Strengths elicited that were related to coordinating multiple activities and managing time and resources effectively were clustered under self-management and were reported on by five participants (33%).

Table 22

Behavioural strengths



5.3.6 Reliability and validity of qualitative results

For qualitative research, reliability refers to consistency in the recording of events using qualitative techniques so that the results are dependable (Neuman, 2006). Validity generally refers to the truthfulness of the data yielded and in qualitative terms it should reflect authenticity and be true to the experience of the social life of the individual being observed (Neuman, 2006). In order to maintain the reliability of the qualitative data, the interview schedule questions were adhered to, in sequence and although the questions were open-ended, they were sufficiently specific to provide a degree of structure and elicit relevant feedback (Appendix A). No additional or leading questions were asked, except for the participant to clarify a statement or explain themselves further. This also served to reduce biased interaction with the participant and is in keeping with the phenomenological tradition of understanding the subjective experiences and viewpoints of the participant (Brocki & Wearden, 2006), responses by the researcher to the answers of the participants were empathetic statements summarised and reflected back as is common practice in person-centred counselling (Grobler, Schenck & Du Toit,

2003). In this way the psychologist or counsellor's role, though interactive, is facilitative and not directive so that the exploration of the participants' self-experiences and ideas retained their authenticity. Actively demonstrating empathy requires trained listening for emotional and literal content that is narrated and responding by using keywords that meaningfully reflect such content, demonstrating respect for the individual, being tentative and avoiding assumptions or questions about how they feel and avoiding confronting the participant with conflicting information that could cause them to become defensive (Grobler et al., 2003). These guidelines were applied consistently during the interviews with the participants. During the data analysis phase the recommended guidelines for IPA were applied in working through the individual cases, deriving the themes and conducting the comparative analysis, as recommended for the method (Smith, 2004; Smith & Osborn, 2007). In addition, the interpreted themes of the individual participants were documented and made available to them for verification prior to cross-participant comparisons, as provided in Chapter 6. However, no discrepancies in the meanings and interpretations were returned, apart from minimal omissions of information that could reveal their identity, for example, the name of the medical specialisation was omitted in favour of the generic term 'medical specialist'.

5.4 ANALYSIS OF QUANTITATIVE RESULTS

The personality profiles of thirteen of the participants were analysed at an individual level of analysis as well as descriptively at the group level. Two profiles had to be discarded as invalid owing to 'infrequent' response styles where clear preferences on traits could not be determined. Descriptive statistics are better suited to smaller sample sizes over statistical techniques. A representation of the five global personality factors measured by the 16PF-5 is provided, followed by the sixteen personality factors measured.

5.4.1 Representation of global factors

Table 23

Representative sum of participants on each of the 16PF-5 global factors (n=13)

Global Personality Factors		High			Mod	Ave		Mod	High			
Extraversion	Introverted, Socially inhibited	1		2	3	1	3	2	1			Extraverted, Socially participative
Independence	Accommodating, Agreeable, Selfless	1	1	2	3	4	1	1				Independent, Persuasive, Wilful
Tough-mindedness	Receptive, Open-minded, Intuitive			2	4	2	2	1	2			Tough-minded, Resolute, Unempathetic
Self-control	Unrestrained, follows urges				5	3	1	2	2			Self-controlled, inhibits urges
Anxiety	Relaxed, Unperturbed	1	1	4	2	1	3	1				Anxious, Perturbable

5.4.1.1 Extraversion

On the composite, global five factors measured by the 16PF5, the participants varied in the degree of introversion/extroversion, with three candidates being highly introverted and three moderately introverted (six total = 46%), two were moderately and one highly extroverted (three total = 23%), with the remaining four participants scoring average on the scale factor.

5.4.1.2 Independence

None of the participants measured high on the factor of independence, with all but one (moderate). Seven participants (54%) indicated being extremely or moderately agreeable/accommodating and five (38%) had an average score for independence.

5.4.1.3 Tough-mindedness

Two (15%) participants scored high and four (30%) were moderate on receptiveness/open-mindedness (total six = 46%), while two (15%) had a high score and one (8%) a moderate score for tough-mindedness; the remaining four participants (30%) were average.

5.4.1.4 Self-control

Five (38%) of the participants scored moderately on being unrestrained and self-controlled, four (30%) had an average score, two (15%) were moderately controlled and two (15%) highly controlled.

5.4.1.5 Anxiety

Only one (8%) participant reported high levels of anxiety. Four (30%) participants scored average. The other eight (61%) were either moderately or highly relaxed/unperturbed.

5.4.2 Representation of primary factors

Of the fifteen participants in the sample, two candidates' responses to the 16PF5 had to be disregarded as invalid for having too many 'infrequent' (INF) or undecided/unsure responses where the items were constructed to reflect an either/or response. There were thirteen valid responses to the 16PF5 that could be reported on in the results.

5.4.2.1 Warmth

Two (15%) participants scored more strongly for being reserved/impersonal, five average (38%) and six (46%) positive for warmth/attentiveness to others.

5.4.2.2 Reasoning

Seven participants (54%) scored average for reasoning, while three (23%) were more inclined to concrete thinking and two (15%) were more likely to be abstract thinkers and fast learners.

Table 24

Representative sum of participants on each of the 16PF5 primary factors

(n=13)

Primary Personality Factors		High			Mod	Ave		Mod	High			
Warmth	Reserved, Impersonal, Distant		1		1	2	3	2	1	3		Warm, Outgoing, Attentive to others
Reasoning	Concrete			1	3	2	5	2				Abstract, Fast learner
Emotional stability	Reactive, Emotionally changeable		1		2	1	4	3	1	1		Emotionally stable, Adaptive, Mature
Dominance	Deferential, Cooperative, Avoids conflict			1	4	4		2	1	1		Dominant, Forceful, Assertive
Liveliness	Serious, Restrained, Careful	1	2	2	2	4	2					Lively, Spontaneous, Animated
Rule-consciousness	Expedient, Non-conforming				3	3	3	3	1			Rule-conscious, Dutiful
Social boldness	Shy, Threat sensitive, Timid			1		3	2	4	1	2		Socially bold, Venturesome, Thick-skinned
Sensitivity	Utilitarian, Objective, Unsentimental				2	2	5	3	1			Sensitive, Aesthetic, Sentimental
Vigilance	Trusting, Unsuspecting, Accepting	1	2	3	1	4	1	1				Vigilant, Suspicious, Sceptical, Wary
Abstractness	Grounded, Practical, Solution-oriented			2	5	2	2	1	1			Abstracted, Imaginative, Idea-oriented
Privateness	Forthright, Genuine, Artless			3	4	3		1	1		1	Private, Discrete, Non-disclosing
Apprehension	Self-assured, Unworried, Complacent	1	1	3	1	4	2			1		Apprehensive, Self-doubting, Worried
Openness to change	Traditional, Attached to familiar				1	1	2	1	3	5		Open to change, Experimenting
Self-reliance	Group-oriented, Affiliative		1	1		1	3	3	1	3		Self-reliant, Solitary, Individualistic
Perfectionism	Tolerates disorder, Unexacting, Flexible		1		3	1	4	2		2		Perfectionistic, Organised, Self-disciplined
Tension	Relaxed, Placid, Patient		2	2	2	3	1	3				Tense, High energy, Impatient, Driven

5.4.2.3 Emotional stability

Three participants (23%) scored higher for being reactive/emotionally changeable, while five scored average (38%) and another five were more emotionally stable and adjustable.

5.4.2.4 Dominance

Five of the participants (38%) reported being more cooperative and avoiding conflict, four (30%) being average on the factor and another four (30%) being positive on dominance.

5.4.2.5 Liveliness

Seven of the participants (54%) showed a tendency to be more serious, restrained and careful. Six participants (46%) had an average score. There were no positive results for liveliness.

5.4.2.6 Rule-consciousness

Only a single participant (8%) scored high on rule-consciousness. Six participants (46%) were average on the factor and three (23%) scored moderately for expedience/non-conformance as well as rule-consciousness.

5.4.2.7 Social boldness

Only one participant scored high on being shy/threat-sensitive. The rest of the participants were either average (five = 38%) or positive on social boldness (seven participants = 54%).

5.4.2.8 Sensitivity

Two participants (15%) scored as objective/unsentimental and four (30%) as sensitive/aesthetic. The remaining seven participants (54%) had average scores for the factor.

5.4.2.9 Vigilance

Seven (54%) of the participants (one moderate) tended to score higher on being trusting and unsuspecting. Five of them (38%) had an average score and there was one (8%) participant whose score was moderate on vigilance.

5.4.2.10 Abstractness

Seven of the participants (54%) tended to be more grounded and practical in problem-solving, two (15%) were more inclined to use abstraction/imagination. The other four participants (30%) had an average score for the factor.

5.4.2.11 Privatness

Seven (54%) reported being more forthright/genuine, three (23%) being average and another three (23%) being more private/discreet.

5.4.2.12 Apprehension

Only one participant (8%) reported high apprehension. Six participants (46%) were average and another six (46%) unworried/self-assured.

5.4.2.13 Openness to change

Nine of the participants (69%) showed higher openness to change (eight had a high score). Three participants were average (23%) and one (8%) scored moderately for being more traditional.

5.4.2.14 Self-reliance

Two participants (15%) showed a preference for being affiliative/group orientated, four (30%) were average and seven of the participants (54%) were stronger on self-reliance/individualism.

5.4.2.15 Perfectionism

Four (30%) of the participants were more likely to tolerate disorder/flexibility and another four were more perfectionistic/organised. Five of the participants (38%) had an average score on the factor.

5.4.2.16 Tension

Three participants (23%) scored moderately on tension/driven, four average (30%) and the remaining participants were more likely to be relaxed/patient/placid (six = 46%).

5.5 CONCLUSION

The quantitative and qualitative results for the sample as a whole were presented in this chapter. Some contextual factors were more obvious than others, such as the tendency to apply leadership in multiple contexts, the high frequency of discrimination experienced, the role of family support in career development and issues concerning Muslim women integrating in the workplace while maintaining their identities. Convergence on challenges was also apparently stronger among all the candidates than the availability of opportunities and supportive factors, apart from supportive family structures. Emotional strengths and values and motivational strengths were highly emphasised relative to the other categories generated by the interviews.

The 16PF-5 measures personality traits categorised as interpersonal, thinking style, consistency of behaviour and coping style. On an individual, case-by-case basis, there was general convergence between observations and themes that emerged in the interviews and the personality categories of the participant's profiles. Although no obvious discrepancies were noted, there were instances where factors or themes could not be verified against the opposite tool for triangulation purposes. A more structured interview could have alleviated this problem, but as an exploratory approach was adopted, the interview results were less refined. More detailed information on the stories behind the themes and individual personality profiles are presented in the next two chapters of the results.

CHAPTER 6

ANALYSIS OF QUALITATIVE RESULTS

6.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents the qualitative results of each individual participant as the themes derived from the semi-structured interviews conducted with them.

6.2 PARTICIPANT 1

6.2.1 Participant 1's background

Participant 1 qualified as an optometrist and has experience in managing an optometry practice at a clinic based in Durban. She completed a Master of Business Administration (MBA) degree and continued with an academic career role, successfully supervising other MBA students who hold senior positions, and sees herself as "*leading leaders*". Participant 1 has progressively held leadership roles, beginning at secondary school through to university and in her occupational roles. She is married with two young children.

6.2.2 Emerging themes

6.2.2.1 Leadership

6.2.2.1.1 *Feminine leadership style*

When asked to define her leadership style, Participant 1's responses indicated a preference to show support and involvement, "*communicate*" her ideas clearly and explicitly, extend "*empathy*" and "*compassion*" with her subordinates. She described making an effort to understand the reasons for under-performance and rather than being authoritative, tended to "*be more the friend than the leader.*" She saw it as important to communicate her ideas clearly and specifically in a positive manner so that everyone would

understand her intentions without losing respect for her. She often cited the need to display empathy and compassion, regarding these as more feminine traits compared to aggression, dominance and being in charge, which she attributed to men. Referring to her successful role with a previous employer, she stated: *“I did leave some good impression when I left. And I think it comes with being, ok I think it also has to do with personality but I think as women we are more compassionate and caring and nurturing by nature”*.

Her concern and compassion for others and wanting to uplift them was evident in her approach to leadership. Rather than an *“authoritative”*, *“aggressive”* or *“military”* style of influencing others’ behaviour, she adopted a *“participative”* leadership style by getting involved, motivating, encouraging and helping subordinates where necessary: *“I don’t think I’m aggressive, I think I’m participative because I get involved and I’m very motivating and encouraging and if something is not according as to how it should be, I try, I have empathy, I try and understand it, ok what is the reason for the delay and not ‘Why is there a delay?’ To help get the person, or the individual back on track.”*

6.2.2.1.2 Personal definition of leadership

She offered her personal definition of leadership: *“Leadership is about motivating, inspiring, bringing out the best in people, getting the job done and that’s what my understanding is and that’s what I believe I implement.”* A good leader is described as an authentic leader: *“it’s very important to be true to yourself and being positive about who you are and not trying to fit someone else’s shoes. As a Muslim one is expected to treat others well and inspire others by being a good person, which enables effective leadership as the respect of others is earned.”*

6.2.2.1.3 Developing leadership in others

Leadership also involves serving as a role-model to others and creating capacity in others to assume leadership responsibility in the absence of the person carrying the leadership role: *“a leader leaves behind someone who will be able to do their job, a leader is not irreplaceable. As a good leader you’ve got to do something where, when you’re not there, someone else can take over. That’s ideal, it’s very important”*.

6.2.2.1.4 Extended leadership roles

Muslim women were explained as being leaders in their homes, with their children and this approach of caring leadership may be extended to the workplace rather than come into conflict with work responsibilities. *“If we can just focus our energy in positive ways in our homes, with those closest to us then we can, that becomes our personality and character make-up so then we carry that in our work. Then we not in that type of work situation about being one person at home and with our family and being someone else in our career.”* However, she does maintain that a woman’s priority is the well-being and stability of her family. As a mother she is also a leader to her children and responsible for the characteristics developed in them that enables them to be good leaders eventually. This idea is similar to her view of leaders at work developing others to eventually replace them.

6.2.2.2 Opportunities

6.2.2.2.1 Opportunities created from initiative

According to Participant 1, the opportunities that were available to her were the ones she created for herself. She believed that leadership involves assuming greater responsibility, which she had begun doing since high school, throughout her studies and in her career. Employment opportunities were fewer and she was excluded from some on the basis of being female. Further work opportunities were generated as she proved herself as

competent and capable of accepting more responsibility within her work roles or in new roles she created by opening an optometry clinic where there was none previously and managing it herself. She identified the need, approached the board and prepared a proposal, which fitted in well with the vision and budget and her proposal was accepted.

6.2.2.3 Challenges

6.2.2.3.1 Gender-based discrimination

The difficulties perceived by Participant 1 were related to her gender and the religion she practises. Because of being a woman, she was side-lined by a hospital for a career opportunity even though she met all the same job requirements as a male candidate who was accepted for the job.

6.2.2.3.2 Travelling

She turned down other job opportunities because they were in conflict with the Islamic rules pertaining to Muslim women travelling on their own. According to the Shariah a woman may not travel long distances from her home without a 'mahram', a male 'representative', who could be a husband or close male relative. She declined employment in positions that required her to travel to clients and use overnight accommodation.

6.2.2.4 Muslim women in the contemporary South African context

6.2.2.4.1 Perception of corporate environment

Participant 1 expressed some conflict about Muslim women working in a corporate work environment: "*corporate world has a lot of challenges and you know there are a lot of women who are the breadwinners or are single mum who go out and do whatever has to be done ... I haven't walked in that person's shoes so I shouldn't judge them but I would just like to tell these women that you know what, just hold on to what you believe and things sort*

themselves out, in the end just be true to yourself, be patient and Allah will reward you.” Her message to Muslim women is that when they follow corporate careers out of necessity they should not lose their Islamic values and instead be patient and steadfast. In return, God will reward them. Muslims are taught that the rewards of obedience and good character will be delivered in the hereafter and the physical rewards of their lives on earth are of relatively less value. Attaining the pleasure of God should supersede any less desirable activity, such as an inappropriate job and Participant 1 turned down two job opportunities, trusting God’s plan for her and that she would be rewarded for doing so. Her view is therefore that Muslim women should prioritise their religious duties above the demands of their careers, wherever possible.

6.2.2.4.2 Stereo-types and conflicting gender-roles

Participant 1 expressed resistance to conforming to prescribed gender roles and Western ideas of how women are regarded at work. She mentioned that from an Islamic perspective, women are valued and attributed a high status and she cited the Qur’anic verse that refers to heaven being at a woman’s feet. She therefore argued that women should not try to be like men and not feel pressured to exhibit male behaviours. They should also uphold their values and principles, despite the Western view that “*women are subservient and trodden on*” and she felt that Muslim women did not need to fight to fit into the Western world.

6.2.2.5 Positive strengths

6.2.2.5.1 Initiative

Participant 1 tended to identify opportunities where changes could be initiated by successfully opening a large practice and subsequently approaching a health provider in a rural area about setting up an optometry clinic. As she had identified this as a need and put forward a sound proposal, “so /

approached the directors and put in a proposal and we setting up an optometry practice in the next six months.”

6.2.2.5.2 Achievement

Participant 1 was proud of the fact that she had successfully managed an optometry clinic for five years and had outperformed other MBA supervisors by ensuring her students delivered dissertations of high quality within the indicated time period, sometimes despite obstacles that made success seem less likely. Her success attracted additional responsibility and work opportunities, as she was perceived to be very competent, *“because of the work I delivered and the success rate of the students I was allocated, every semester there was an increase in the number of students they were allocating to me ...”*, *“I built the clinic, it’s good motivation, that even my boss said ‘When you were here you did a good job’”*.

6.2.2.5.3 Emotional maturity and confidence

The greatest challenge this participant seemed to face was her own lack of assertiveness: *“I used to see that I’m being taken advantage of”*, which she attributed partly to being female and perceived as the reason for being excluded from work opportunities. She also referred to her own nature and personality, which affected her work, family and other relationships: *“there was one staff who sort of, she wanted to be the person in charge and yet I knew that wasn’t her role, that was my role but at that time I sort of allowed it”*, *“not necessarily only the career, even outside career you know in terms of family and personal relations”*, *“I think it’s my nature of you know, being very soft by nature or being under the assumption that people could take advantage.”* She relates changes in her feelings and views about the way she dealt with various situations. As she became older she was less unsure and subject to the demands and expectations of others, feeling less of a *“need to fit in and please everyone.”* This represents a kind of metamorphosis as she describes having *“come sort of, not full circle, but I’m almost there.”* Her

feeling of self-worth and assertiveness improved as a result. She referred to being open to making changes, with challenges, *“Internally I’ve overcome those challenges”, “because healthcare is not affordable ... but I’ve adjusted my rates to accommodate because it’s something I want to do.”*

6.2.2.5.4 Self-worth

Over time Participant 1 gained greater self-awareness and improved in both her assertiveness and sense of self-worth. Where she would previously have yielded to others’ demands, she had learned to take a stance on things that were important to her: *“I have got more confidence in myself, realise that this is who I am, this is what I have to offer ... even career-wise, if you can’t appreciate or value it then I don’t want to be part of your system”, “I’ve realised that you’ve got to stay true to yourself and if you stay true to yourself people will value you for who you are.”* She believes that believing in oneself will inspire the respect of others.

6.2.2.5.5 Service as purpose

Participant 1 had taken the initiative to provide a cost-effective health service, which made use of her skills and experience, the fact that it was a profitable business was of less importance to her. Instead, she sought to help and make herself available to less fortunate people, which held more meaning for her and coincided with her belief that the purpose of people is to serve and benefit others. A sense of purpose about helping others and the greater impact it would have for society at large was a source of motivation for her.

6.2.2.5.6 Authenticity

This referred to accepting both the positive and negative aspects of oneself, being transparent about personal views and appraisals of issues and acting accordingly. Participant 1 relates being accepting of herself as a woman with ‘softer’ characteristics and that it is *“very important to be true to yourself and*

lies in the end will just lead to negative repercussions. So I think it's very important to be true to yourself and being positive about who you are and not trying to fit someone else's shoes."

6.2.5.5.7 Interrelatedness

The idea of people and events being related and inter-connected recurred; the concept was that behaviour with family and other close relationships would be reflected in working relationships as well. She described this 'relatedness' in the purpose of human beings to help one another and this was her motivation for wanting to open an optometry clinic in a rural area. *"I think our purpose is to serve others and to benefit others and in that way we benefit ourselves."* Behaviours are therefore not isolated in particular social settings, but rather the person is the same person in relation to all people and so positive, altruistic behaviours would benefit the recipients and the initiator.

6.3 PARTICIPANT 2

6.3.1 Participant 2's background

Participant 2 is a senior lecturer, researcher, author and activist working in the field of international relations and promoting a progressive understanding of Islam and furthering women's rights. She has served in leadership roles in her academic career and activism groups and currently spends significant time in her work role mentoring younger academics and students. Participant 2 is single and has no children.

6.3.2 Emerging themes

6.3.2.1 Identity and development of religious and political worldview

Participant 2 frequently described her career experiences with regard to the context as a South African and as a Muslim from a national and global perspective. Her understanding of her own role in society is tied to her identity as a South African Muslim and she has been responsive to events associated with her national and religious membership and the impact of those events on herself and others. Her 'world view' as an awareness of external, largely political, events began when she was a child as an observer of apartheid and its negative consequences for her family. Just after the abolishment of apartheid, she describes herself as a teenager and *"young activist in the anti-apartheid struggle moving into then a new kind of South African context, where you find that we are an evolving society, we are trying to discover our sort of, feet."*

The 9/11 World Trade centre plane bombings were a pivotal point for her and brought postgraduate research into sharper focus as she sought to understand the experiences of Muslims better, both as a South African and a global citizen: *"I think that (career path) was also impacted upon by what was happening in the world. You know they say that events around you do shape you ... so it kind of brought me to this point where I am now."* Much of her ideas and attitudes were focussed on overcoming discriminatory world views, coming from a history of social segregation: *"we lived in a society that was very segregated and so you didn't get to meet people from other groups and so on until you know maybe a forced context in which you could. Cause you tend to think that this is all there is with regards to your world view."* Challenging and opening her own world view was part of her journey and she seemed to have adapted her perspective to be more open and receptive to others who were different from her, *"because you're so closed off and*

conditioned people are then taught to develop, uh discriminatory ideas against, you know, other people.”

6.3.2.2 Navigating career ‘Spaces’

Relative to her ‘world view’ are the ‘spaces’ that she described during her interview, as a series of experiences she encountered in the course of her career. Early in her undergraduate studies she started with a degree in the natural sciences, which she reflected on as being inappropriate for her: “you know sometimes you enter a space and you realise it’s not really for you.” She changed to an Arts degree, which suited her better and continued with postgraduate studies and teaching in her chosen field. Her negotiation and decisions about these various ‘spaces’ as being right for her, as a fit between her own ideals and the environment where they would be applied, continued throughout her interview. Referring to her interactions with others, she mentioned, *“it’s (empathy) to be able to truly get out of your own space and you know just focus on others.”*

6.3.2.3 Conservatism and changing ‘spaces’ in the Muslim community

Referring to South African Muslims during the apartheid era, she describes the community as previously closed off from others of a different cultural background and the difficulty for those who were of a more “traditional, conservative space” to co-exist with others. These conservative spaces were also regarded as a source of security and familiarity, with the result that some Muslims were less keen on the political changes. More recently, however, Participant 2 has considered South African Muslims as more multicultural, with fewer conservative expectations: *“I used to get asked very often if I went to an interview or if I went to a public event or a conference or whatever, something like, ‘Oh, did you bring your mahram with you?’ I’m like, ‘No, I didn’t!’ so these are the things ... but that’s in a more conservative space ... because I think we’re more multicultural we’re more open now, those kinds of questions I don’t encounter anymore.”* Around fifteen to twenty years ago,

Participant 2 states that women were absent from the leadership arena but that paths had been created for them through the activism of the very few before them and that younger Muslim women should now seize opportunities to occupy these 'spaces': *"it's about women actually getting into the space you know and in their numbers."*

6.3.2.4 Leadership

The areas related to leadership that Participant 2 discussed were access to leadership opportunities, her style or approach to leadership, positive leadership characteristics, developing others and being involved in leadership roles not restricted to the work environment.

6.3.2.4.1 Inquiry and leadership

Participant 2 explained that she did not actively seek leadership roles, but that they rather 'happened' to her and she often found herself being "thrust into leadership" roles. Her assimilation into leadership was attributed to her keen sense of curiosity about events occurring around her: *"I think that my leadership really came from my curiosity in trying to see what was happening around me and trying to address those issues."* Her involvement in leadership was a result of her inquiry into topical issues.

6.3.2.4.2 Multifaceted leadership role

Participant 2 described some of the various areas in which she had assumed leadership, which were typically local and international human rights organisations. Her current leadership role was seen as multi-faceted and largely concerned with developing younger people into leaders by mentoring them, identifying potential in others and having them take over some of her responsibilities in an effort to improve the quality of leadership of younger people.

6.3.2.4.3 Responding to the lack of political leadership

“You can become a leader yourself but you need to then contribute towards growing your leadership ... I see that as a very important contribution that I can make, to create, our leadership in this country has just deteriorated to be honest.” Participant 2 referred to the lack of strong leadership in the country, people like the older generation of leaders who served with Nelson Mandela and promoted strong values.

6.3.2.5 Leadership style

6.3.2.5.1 Relational, organisational and coping skills

When asked about the nature of her leadership style, she mentioned skills that she felt were important. These included *empathy* in order to fully understand others and their actual needs rather than imposing solutions on others, *patience* to deal with many inevitable challenges that face an organisation, *optimism* as a sense of conviction about things turning out positively. A leader needs to be able to offer *support* in the form of motivation and consolation to others, have good *organisational skills* in order to support ideas and vision with structure and functionality, be *persistent* despite failures that may occur and display *courage* by not being afraid to be involved. In order for women to be better leaders they first needed access to leadership opportunities and she referred to the scarcity of women leaders: “I think there are very few women leaders unfortunately, you can name them literally on your fingertips.” She mentioned the poor representivity and progression of South African women in leadership positions in general and that of Muslim women as leaders of religious organisations as disappointing, but not surprising, given that Muslim society is “still very conservative.” Participant 2 was of the opinion that leadership could be exemplified by women even if they chose to be full-time mothers by being leaders to their children and being involved in their school activities, for example.

6.3.2.5.2 Hands-on approach

She would often be requested to lead civil society groupings or head up various initiatives, which she did, but she preferred hands-on approach where she would physically take part in the group's activities; "*as a chairperson you then go and paint a banner yourself at a march.*" She was also of the opinion that leading others needed to result in practical, observable changes to be considered effective: "*Leadership really means taking your issues, your concerns, your compassion, your empathy, whatever, and being able to translate that into a tangible outcome. It shouldn't just be about words.*"

6.3.2.6 Opportunities

6.3.2.6.1 Educational achievement

The course of Participant 2's career was rooted in her tertiary education, which began with a Bachelor of Arts degree and progressed to her doctoral studies in international relations and political science. This led to opportunities in lecturing, research and activism, in which she progressively assumed positions of leadership. The tertiary educational environment also provided the support structure and resources for her to pursue her research interests, which is a key strength in her career development, discussed in the section on positive psychological factors that follows.

6.3.2.7 Challenges

6.3.2.7.1 Patriarchy and gender discrimination in the Muslim community

Challenges to leadership included patriarchy and gender discrimination against women in the Muslim community. The majority of leadership in Muslim communities is male and post-1994 much of Participant 2's interaction with them was challenging, as they didn't react well and accept direction from her as a woman regarding social issues. When she confronted them with relevant Islamic jurisprudence in favour of women's rights in mediating social problems, she would have to endure personal attacks by male leaders: "*when*

you say that it is unacceptable for a man to beat his wife ... Islamically ... you kind of get challenged on those things ... those male pockets of leadership don't know how to actually challenge you, they then construct you as something that is evil or immoral."

6.3.2.7.2 Religious leadership, conservative and progressive Muslims

Participant 2 noted the current lack of leadership and ideological consensus in the Muslim community. She explained that some religious leaders were reluctant to challenge apartheid government, as they had been allowed to practice their religion with little interference and were afraid of having that right revoked. They were subsequently less inclined to participate in activism or encourage co-existence with other cultures and religions compared to Muslims who were politically active: *"We understood what the South African state during apartheid was doing was unethical, it was immoral and not correct and it was un-Islamic, I mean if you put a religious lens on it but some conservatives were feeling that Oh, as Muslims we mustn't rock the boat too much."* The difference in perception and approach by 'progressive' and 'conservative' Muslims could therefore be an indicator of proactive leadership behaviour that engages with current issues and other individuals, whereas a conservative approach to Islam limits participation by women in particular, on issues beyond the home.

6.3.2.7.3 Choosing career over family

A more personal challenge that Participant 2 encountered further on in her career was a re-assessment of her choice to pursue her career goals versus choosing a traditional route by getting married and having a family. *"I had to think about, should I take on a more traditional path, right? Marriage, children and so on, or engage in more community outreach, public sort of service type path, which for me at the time was, back then was quite easy to do ... and I have no regrets."* Her challenge concerned her own definition of what it means to be a woman and then more specifically a Muslim woman, but she

did not discuss this challenge in any detail, moving instead on to the need for women to be involved in their communities.

6.3.2.8 Leadership development for Muslim women

6.3.2.8.1 Correct understanding of Qur'an

Participant 2 conveyed her understanding of the Islamic teachings and how they had a significant impact on her development as a person when she undertook to understand the meaning of the Qur'an rather than just adopting the rituals taught to her as she was growing up. Having studied the Qur'an and understanding how it is relevant to the life of a Muslim in everyday activities, *"that gives me the conviction to understand that our faith is something that drives every aspect of our lives from how we greet each other to how we treat each other to how we (you know) pray, eat and the level to which we engage in our broader society."* Similarly to many other Muslims, her practising of Islam is consistent with observing etiquette, ethics and worship in personal activities and relationships with others.

6.3.2.8.2 Permissibility of activities outside the home

She takes her inspiration from the verses of the Qur'an and teachings of the Prophet Muhammad (SAW), which define humanity and grant women rights that they were previously refused: *"Once you have a correct and absolutely precise understanding of your religion, then you can embark on those goals that you set yourself because you're empowered with the tools you need to fight for those things so they privileged to actually be of the Muslim faith."* In other words, Islam guarantees women certain rights, including the right to education, to work and ownership of her income. Understanding that these rights exist entitles women to pursue their goals more confidently and legitimately, which is contrary to the conservative view of Muslim women being restricted to duties within the household, hence their need to fight for their rights, which could typically be withheld.

6.3.2.8.3 Public participation

While Muslim society is still seen to be fairly conservative about women speaking in public and literally being heard since *“a woman’s voice is part of her aura, so she mustn’t be heard speaking”*, younger Muslim women are less inclined to subscribe to this trend and women who were companions of the Prophet Muhammad (SAW), as well as his wives, were very active in public life, *“so anybody today who says that, oh well Muslim women must just stay at home and cook and clean and have babies or whatever is actually going against the spirit of Islam and what Prophet Muhammad (SAW) encouraged in the first place”*. She came across as defensive on this point in defending the right of women to be more involved in activities outside the home that affected them.

6.3.2.8.4 Employment and leadership tendencies

Although younger women tended to go out and work and become professionals, leadership was still regarded as something off-limits to Muslim women. She referred to the tendency of many Muslim women to practise Islam ritualistically under the direction of a religious scholar without understanding their faith adequately and seemed a little frustrated about Muslim women being led blindly: *“Many Muslim women tend to get stuck in that conditioning where they can’t break out of it or they get sucked up into following blindly into certain religious doctrines which aren’t necessarily Islamic.”*

6.3.2.9 Supportive factors

6.3.2.9.1 Mentoring and role models

As a young person, Participant 2 was influenced by one of her first mentors who campaigned to improve the welfare of others and she looked up to the many mentors that she “encountered” as “real mentors and leaders”. She mentioned that she was fortunate to have met “prolific” activists and

intellectuals as role models, including Nelson Mandela, who influenced and taught her: *“I met people who were powerful, profound and very, just sharp. So that inspired me to say ok, I want to be like them and that converted itself into an opportunity to sort of, well develop those kinds of qualities but also to read up more on what they were saying and taking those ideas up to another level as well.”* More recently in her career she herself has been mentoring younger people and she attaches value to passing on responsibility to younger people and views mentoring as a cyclical process of receiving and giving guidance and support, just as she received support as a young adult. She feels it is important to develop leadership in others and this allows her to relinquish some of her responsibilities that are too much for her and also enables her to take on new roles.

6.3.2.9.2 Family support

Participant 2's parents were very supportive of her interests and although fairly conservative, her father was particularly encouraging of her written political expression as a young girl. She referred to his having lived in the West and receiving a Harvard education and as a result of this, he represented her first exposure to a progressive mind-set or way of viewing the world. She describes having a very supportive family structure as an opportunity, together with the education they provided for her: *“That's one of the most important things that any parent can give their girl children especially.”* Her parents played a positive role early in her development and as an adult she continued to seek inspiration and guidance from key political figures and intellectuals and progressed academically along her career, continuing the trend she had observed as a child.

6.3.2.10 Positive psychological factors

Participant 2 was more expressive about the concepts of exploratory behaviour and being able to turn ideas into practical reality. She believed that

people are unique and that their personal attributes enabled them to achieve their goals.

6.3.2.10.1 Open-minded exploration

Participant 2 saw it as important not to be stubborn and rather to show receptiveness to alternate ideas, “*the capacity to open your mind to other possibilities*”. She was open to alternate worldviews and accepted people who had a different cultural background to herself, as well as a strong curiosity about what was going on around her and the impact on people. Her exploration of ideas, peoples’ problems and political events served as active orientation towards new ideas and experiences. Participant 2’s openness to trying something new assisted her decision to abandon a natural sciences degree in favour of an arts degree and facilitated the rich experiences she had as a postgraduate student on a scholarship to the United Kingdom, the interactions and discussions with different people she had met, her interest and research on global events affecting Muslims, such as the 9/11 bombings and Israel/Palestine conflict. Referring to her education, she said, “*so that started off, I think, a journey ... going to school, going to university and so on you meet other people, you then are invited into spaces where your worldview is opened up, you have new opportunities that are opened up to you*” It was important to her to discover the truth for herself as opposed to accepting norms or conditions imposed by apartheid or patriarchal religious leaders, without question and to explore the actual meaning of her religious beliefs and practices, rather than blindly adopting rituals.

6.3.2.10.2 Courage

Courage and strength of conviction were regarded as necessary to overcome adversities and she advised Muslim women to be vocal and not to be afraid. She also mentioned having to motivate herself when she was confronting corporate companies and corporations when circumstances did not appear in her favour: “*You encounter the might of big corporates and they are then*

basically trying to bring you down to size and you then know you've got to rethink your strategy and motivate yourself to keep on going." She spoke about adapting to a democratic South African dispensation post-apartheid, how adversity presented an opportunity for positive action and outcomes *"to fight these sort of oppressions ... even in those situations which you might perceive as being restrictive, there opportunities can emerge"*.

6.3.2.10.3 Humility

As opposed to feeling self-important, in need of others' attention, or arrogant, a leader should be a *"regular person"* who is able to relate to others at the same level.

6.3.2.10.4 Co-existence

Being able to interact openly and accepting of others who may be culturally different, Participant 2 explains, *"This is something that you know I found out about very early on because we lived in a society that was very segregated and so you didn't get to meet people from other groups ... you're so closed off and conditioned (to discriminate)"*. Being able to co-exist with others who are different also implies being able to *"break stereotypes"* and engaging with others as human beings rather than as members of a particular cultural group.

6.3.2.10.5 Initiative

Participant 2's advice for Muslim women was to become active and pursue leadership opportunities that are relatively greater compared to two decades ago: *"Those times we were engaging in these different struggles and how lonely it actually was and this was say like fifteen, twenty years ago. So a lot has changed since then ... the paths have in a sense been created to enable younger Muslim women to get into those spaces because others have done it and gone there ... but we need more, that's the issue"*. Muslim women need to develop what they are passionate about and make a conscious effort to

pursue their goals if they are serious about being leaders, but few are motivated enough or have the space away from their family commitments to do so after getting married: *“You need to develop that passion and that only comes from doing it yourself because no one is going to come and do that for you. So I find that many women who perhaps are interested, they don’t necessarily make as much effort as they could ... What I think tends to happen ... once women, Muslim women in particular, marry, there’s this sense that they’ve got to deal with ... the family home and domestic commitments they have to deal with and extended family situation and so on.”*

6.4 PARTICIPANT 3

6.4.1 Participant’s background

Participant 3 is a qualified a medical doctor and is the head of a unit consisting of six wards at a regional government hospital. She is also the acting academic head for the training of medical students and academic chairperson. She manages a range of individuals, nurses, doctors, patients and students and instructs other academic heads of schools on curricula. She is married and a mother of young children.

6.4.2 Emerging themes

6.4.2.1 Multiple roles

Participant 3 functions within multiple roles as clinician, manager, teacher, leader and researcher and her key areas of responsibility include clinical practice and academics and overseeing a range of medical staff, patients and students. Much of her responsibilities are aimed at providing quality healthcare services and teaching to undergraduate medical students.

6.4.2.2 Democratic leadership style

When asked in the interview about how she would define her leadership style, Participant 3 mentioned the use of a *democratic approach* and listed other characteristics, many of which were interpersonal in nature. Relational skills were emphasised as part of her approach and these included listening, communication, building positive relationships with staff, exercising fairness and creating a favourable environment.

6.4.2.3 Positive strengths

6.4.23.1 Adaptability and transparency

Adaptability was described as the ability to adjust positively to changing circumstances and apply new learning. *Transparency* or honesty and exercising judgement to ensure that actions taken were “*justifiable*”. She also mentioned needing to become less reserved and more *assertive* when confronting peers who had previously been her superiors. Some of the statements relating to these factors follow: “*You have to listen to views and be very open ... need to be receptive to change ... Keep learning new things and putting those into practice ... you need to make sure you have a nice, calm environment for people to work in and then you find that people give of their best, actually*”; “*The most important thing is communication in our field*”, “*You have to be absolutely fair and transparent because whenever you do things as a leader, if it’s questioned you must be able to justify it properly and I think that’s extremely important for me in leadership, is transparency and fairness in everything.*”

6.4.2.4 Challenges

6.4.2.4.1 Hierarchy

Participant 3 reported that she felt challenges in her work environment were likely to be experienced based on individual circumstances rather than membership of a segment of society or religious group. For her personally,

the organisational hierarchy and reporting structure of the academic institution determined the level of control and influence exercised, particularly by academic employees in senior positions. *“Becoming now the chairperson means that you are now telling people who may be at a higher level than you what to do and how to change and what to teach and it was quite challenging.”* With a reversal of roles of authority where she had to issue instructions to others who still remained respected teachers and having to confront peers at the same level, were regarded as a challenge. This required an adjustment in behaviour from her that she experienced as difficult, but she amended her approach to be more assertive: *“I was quite a reserved person and for me to take on those challenges was difficult, but it’s something I managed but you now have to confront people at the end of the day, when things are going wrong you can’t just say it’s ok and keep covering for everyone.”*

6.4.2.4.2 Affirmative action

Although Participant 3’s immediate head of department that she reported to had a favourable attitude towards her professional and educational development, the employment equity policies could affect her upward progression. *“You’re allowed to progress; obviously there’s affirmative action and equity issues that affect everyone ... where I progress to afterwards would be influenced by the university’s policies.”*

6.4.2.4.3 Traditional family background

Working full-time was mentioned by Participant 3 as a general challenge for women, but particularly for Muslim women coming from a traditional home environment, often with extended family members, and her role was more importantly to look after the home and children rather than to go out and work. As a result some qualified Muslim women may choose to refrain from participating as part of the general working population. However, she also refers to the change in perceptions about opting to work: *“... it allows females*

greater strengths in allowing them to go out to work and do what they want and I think it's what you want to achieve." The interplay between what is socially acceptable for a Muslim woman and her personal need for achievement is also highlighted in this context, as she differentiates between those who are "*content working*" and those "*who want more and more and want to get to the top.*" This implies a choice by the Muslim woman from a traditional background to either adopt a more conventional lifestyle or pursue her personal career goals.

6.4.2.5 Supportive factors

6.4.2.5.1 Leadership development opportunities

Participant 3 mentioned her enjoyment in teaching, which led her to join the academic portfolio. Her supervisor was supportive of her involvement in developmental courses and conferences to enhance her teaching and understanding of leadership. The leadership development course she attended enhanced her awareness and refined her thinking skills in a leadership role: "*the leadership programme was very nice, in the way we went through things, we looked at different leadership styles, we looked at different examples and actually it was more reflection on what you were doing and of where you were going and heading and it had a very positive impact because it made you review your life.*"

6.4.2.5.2 Family support

In addition to support from management at work for career development activities, family support was described by Participant 3 as very important to enable a women balance family and work commitments, particularly if the working woman also had children. In her case she had an understanding and accommodating husband who was flexible in his expectations of her and would compromise these on the days when she was busier: "... *yesterday*

was a bad day, I got home at half-past five so we bought out but that's why you need a supportive husband or someone who knows and understands."

6.5 PARTICIPANT 4

6.5.1 Participant's background

Participant 4 got married soon after completing her secondary school education and only started tertiary studies in 1984 after she had married. Because of family responsibilities, which included caring for her terminally ill mother-in-law and five young children, her studies were interrupted and were constantly disrupted by family and work commitments until she finally graduated in 2004. Participant 4 completed an early child development course and opened one of the first Islamic pre-schools in the city. Concurrently, she also founded a NGO with her husband, who had trained as a medical doctor; together they provide relief in major disaster zones across the world. Participant 4 also established a counselling care-line as a service provided by the NGO locally in South Africa. Where logistically practical, psycho-social interventions are extended internationally to conflict and disaster zones.

6.5.2 Emerging themes

The major themes in her story relate to her professional roles in the organisation and her experience of leadership within those roles. The second aspect of her story relates to the various personal and professional challenges she experienced over the years before her leadership role was formalised. The process of change she underwent as a result of dealing with these obstacles helped develop strengths that support her current role as a leader.

6.5.2.1 Leadership

6.5.2.1.1 Multiple roles

The participant's current role as a leader requires her to "*wear many hats*", as she oversees and monitors projects, looks for ways to improve upon services, upskills her volunteers and manages the general office and staff. She also tends to counsel them about their personal problems and intervenes when there is interpersonal conflict. Participant 4 had the opportunity of completing the Hajj (pilgrimage) at a young age, a religious obligation incumbent on those who can afford it and for each Muslim to attempt to achieve at least once in their lifetime. She therefore felt a sense of moral obligation to 'give back' and responded to the global need for relief work as an opportunity to fulfil this obligation, along with her husband. They started up an NGO with her husband tending to the operational aspects, usually overseas, and she independently tended to all the administrative work from their home office in South Africa.

The Care-line was initiated by Participant 4 with the assistance of other experts due to the demand for counselling services in the Indian and Muslim community related to social and family problems. She interacts frequently with the public on the services of the Care-line and offers educational talks on current problems affecting society. Care-line is one of the 23 projects of the NGO that she runs, adjacent to the NGO's general office and current projects. In addition to serving local communities, the Care-line offers employee assistance programmes to companies and sends volunteer counsellors on missions to disaster zones for trauma counselling and support. Participant 4 typically leads these teams, which comprise professional mental health care practitioners.

As the organisation's relief projects have expanded internationally and nationally, separate offices were gradually opened in South Africa and Participant 4's responsibilities include monitoring and evaluating the projects,

improving services, upskilling counsellors, overseeing the general office staff and planning and managing the organisation's public events.

6.5.2.1.2 Islamic organisational ethos

Being founded and run by Muslims, one of the principles of the NGO was to promote an image of Islam that was open and tolerant of other faiths and therefore it did not discriminate between relief recipients and assisted Muslims and non-Muslims around the world: *“People mustn’t look at us especially with what’s going on in the world- 9/11, and all the other stuff. The suicide bombings and Palestine, what they see, we wanted people to start having, you know these people were undoing all the hard work, and seeing Islam in a negative light... we realised we didn’t want to be seen as a Muslim organisation, we didn’t want people to associate us with the crescent and a star, and the moment they gonna look at you they gonna think terrorist, fundamentalist, we only do for Muslims.”* The organisation also functioned independently of other Muslim organisations that tended to have a very strong Islamic ethos and the leaders dissociated themselves from these organisations, as they were trying to promote a universal rather than exclusive form of Islam, based on the Prophet’s (SAW) teachings: *“People started recognising us for the work we were doing in mixed communities and the fact that our volunteers were also mixed. And our Sheikh (teacher, guide) said, When the Prophet (SAW) came, he came as Rahmatul-Alameen. He came as a mercy unto all of creation. He didn’t come for the Arabs, he didn’t come for the Muslims, he didn’t come for black, he didn’t come for white. He came for everybody. And I want that to be our philosophy, and that’s what we did.”*

6.5.2.1.3 Competence and confidence

Participant 4 experienced a great degree of self-doubt, which had an impact on her confidence in executing her leadership role, because she had taken longer to complete her formal studies and felt she was not quite fit for the job. Once she achieved her degree, she found that her studies and work

experience were complementary and she felt more confident as a leader, *“But the studies have definitely contributed to me being a better leader, because I did HR, I did management, I learnt a lot of the leadership stuff, there, I learnt a lot of the psychology stuff and the social work stuff in my course to give off better in our counselling here. And I’m able to give a lot off to not just the counselling volunteers but to the rest of the staff around here.”*

6.5.2.1.4 Democratic leadership style

Participant 4 expressed a preference for a democratic leadership style and leading others by setting an example, *“I believe very strongly that I must be the best of whatever I want everybody else to be. So I have to in terms of my discipline, values and principles, I must be that first. And then I expect others to follow.”* This is about empathy, and respect for other people, recognising their strengths and caring about their well-being. She does not regard herself as an aggressive or authoritarian person and feels that leadership should be carried out in a *“calm, dignified style.”* In managing relations with others she mentions having learnt to listen more, but she also finds that an autocratic or a rather more stern leadership style is preferable at times when staff come into conflict situations and are unable to resolve these *“very stupid childish”* squabbles in a mature manner. In such cases she finds that a stricter, heavy-handed approach is necessary to resolve these issues and gain the respect of staff, as a soft approach does not help to get the work done.

6.5.2.1.5 Delegation

Initially, she was afraid to delegate to others and being a perfectionist, found it difficult to hand over tasks, but developed a tolerance for mistakes and an appreciation for the learning that results; *“I’ve learnt that as I have made mistakes, I must allow others to make mistakes. And it’s in mistakes that you actually learn. And I also found that some of my colleagues may be younger but they may also be able to teach me new things. So my style has definitely changed in that I’m open to new learning and I believe that if you allow others*

to do it they will become more responsible, so moving away from that belief that if I don't do it myself it won't be right. No. I have seen things work out."

6.5.2.1.6 Decision-making

Participant 4 values dedication in running the NGO professionally as a business and as a founding member has often had to make important decisions about big projects underway, particularly as her husband was out of the country so often. However, when she informed him about a decision she found that it would initially be met with resistance because her opinion mattered less, since she was his wife, but he would eventually implement it. Her authority in decision-making in these cases was somewhat limited and undermined, although her ideas were implemented. *"I found that if I said something, it was not received as though I was not his wife. If it was another woman executive working in this organisation, he would have received it in a better way. But if I said it there would be resistance, or it would have been like, 'No I don't think so', but in the end he will go use it, he will take heed of it."*

6.5.2.2 Challenges

The personal challenges experienced by Participant 4 far outweighed those arising at her workplace, especially since the organisation began from her home and was established together with her husband, with whom her marriage was significantly strained as a result. Apart from her relationship with him, other challenges she experienced were due to financial constraints, her physical illness and maintaining a balance between work, study and family life.

6.5.2.2.1 Personal relationships

Participant 4 had worked for the organisation almost as long as the duration of her marriage and endured many sacrifices in her view, in order to fulfil the

vision that she and her husband had. Eventually he had an affair and took on a second wife, which caused her emotional turmoil and led to the re-evaluation of her personal and professional situation. Her husband's betrayal, her having to bring up their five children while he was away on relief projects, being at risk of losing their home and possessions and holding back on her studies were some of the major issues she had to deal with. The damage to their relationship led to her experiencing hurt, loss and grief and was very turbulent for a while after his second marriage. She also reported feeling listless, tired, used and abused and had to learn to cope to survive. Ironically, she describes her husband as a "rescuer" of people in distress, but also relates that he abandoned her and their children, leaving them to fend for themselves. *"I call him that, Rescuer, and I think he doesn't trust us, he doesn't want us to do anything for ourselves, but the day he left us what were we left with? We had to fend for ourselves. We had to go and do everything for ourselves. And now he knows, he's not there for us every time, we are able to do everything... I've always been independent but he didn't see that."*

6.5.2.2.2 Physical illness

The grief and depression Participant 4 went through compromised her health and ability to care for herself and she contracted a virus, which weakened her heart and landed her in intensive care. Her husband and children were initially apathetic about her deteriorating condition, until it became severe and she was admitted into hospital. Another physical "mishap" was a spinal degenerative condition that required two operations and interfered with her full-time studies.

6.5.2.2.3 Work/family life balance

Participant 4 saw her life as a constant juggle between her various responsibilities. Earlier on in her marriage, while her children were still toddlers, she had not completed her education degree and wanted to be a good mother to her children, yet still do something purposeful, and decided to

do an early learning child development course, then opened an Islamic and secular pre-school and managed to achieve both goals. She also continued to run the NGO office from her home and people would visit them to drop off donations in cash and kind or consult with her husband, but also brought their families along, who would find an opportunity to discuss personal challenges. *“He was there for the better part of those thirty-six months (Bosnia), people used to leave donations or come consult him about other issues, maybe about the hospital or about goods or about... When they used to come with their families, like with their wife and children, and because it was my house, I felt very awkward to be busy doing my thing and ignoring them. Because although it was an office, but it was also my house. So the boundaries were not very clear and I would then you know, try to be hospitable with the women and (they) used to talk to me about personal issues... I kept on feeling that I wasn’t able to help. One, I had my children in the house and it wasn’t a conducive, especially counselling you know, it’s not conducive with having a normal home environment and you talking to somebody at that level. Two, I didn’t feel that I had the skill or the knowledge, I wasn’t equipped enough to deal with them.”* When the NGO responsibilities became greater and required more of her attention, she gave up the pre-school. The projects became bigger and it became increasingly difficult to share the home space between the children and the organisation: *“The projects got too big, there was no place for the children to play, the office was in the house, papers under tables, under chairs everywhere, looking for everything, then my husband will get upset if something is missing, why I didn’t keep it properly, but then there’s children in the house, toys are all over. It was like, it was just a mess, I just felt like there was no boundary of a home and family life and a work life and it was really time that we needed to separate the both for a quality life.”*

6.5.2.2.4 Parenting responsibilities

Participant 4 carried a substantial part of the parenting responsibilities of her five children because her husband was away on missions. She found this demanding, because of having to do school rounds for the children at different

schools and being there to support and guide them, offering homework assistance and “*being there*” as a source of stability and a “*strong anchor*”, since they only had one parent available to them: “*If I was busy pursuing my career and my husband’s out and about in the world, then who was going to be there for these children?*” With her children now grown up, she believes she made the right choice because her children are well-adjusted adults. “*I believe strongly that children needed a strong anchor in their life and I’m proud to say that up to today they have a good relationship with both their parents but they come and they tell me we so grateful that you were that strong anchor in our life that today we feel that we are stable and you taught us a lot of things in that time.*”

6.5.2.2.5 Professional confidence

Self-doubt and a lack of confidence in her ability to act professionally was an inhibiting factor for Participant 4. The Care-line was her passion and she needed to develop her skills as a counsellor and manage this function effectively, but struggled with the knowledge that she was not fully qualified and frustrated because her academic training and formal qualification were taking so long to achieve, “*so I enrolled for a social work degree. Of which I carried on for at least two years, most of my first year modules were done but again my husband has always been away because projects had now the office became a full-time job, he was no longer in practice, this became a full-time, his occupation. And I am with him, I’m also the founding member of the organisation so I get involved there as well but at the same time I’m also with my children, and I’m also with my studies. So it wasn’t going fast enough and I wanted to start seeing things happen.*” If her ideas were opposed or rejected, she would take such criticism very personally initially, but as she realised that her contributions were valued, her confidence improved and she regarded this as a challenge that she had overcome. Another interpersonal challenge she experienced was confrontation and not wanting to upset people she worked with. This became easier as she learnt to become more assertive, along with showing empathy and wanting to help others.

6.5.2.3 Social status of Muslim women

6.5.2.3.1 Traditional perceptions

Participant 4 had proceeded to study when she completed matric but her father was more conservative, so she was married and only began her studies afterward. Her husband saw her as someone dependent and did not acknowledge the extent to which she acted independently in his absence. Recognition for her strengths and contributions only came about when she started engaging with organisations beyond her home-work context, whereas her husband as the final decision-maker undermined her and was less open to her suggestions, *“...he wouldn’t listen to me, he wasn’t open and receptive to my way of thinking or to my input because I was his wife and I think that that’s where, if I had worked in an organisation separate from where you working with a family member, you’ll realise your strengths more. Which I do realise when I’m at university I’m involved with other projects and other organisations because we are more open to that now. Previously it was just our organisation. Now we do forge partnerships with various organisations for various different projects and reasons. So you are engaging people and when you realise people are listening, people are respecting you. You think that you might not say something valuable or relevant because that is how you’ve been treated so you think that way but suddenly when other people like... their eyes open up wide and, “oh you know we appreciate your input”*. Apart from the partnerships she has forged with other organisations, Participant 4 also serves on trust bodies of higher learning institutions. After she had led missions herself, her husband began to acknowledge and respect her instead of seeing her as someone he had to *“look after”* and *“think for”*.

6.5.2.3.2 Islamic female role models

Participant 4 referred to the active role that many of the women during the time of the Prophet (SAW) played, as examples of how Muslim women today can contribute to society. She described how some women have taken control and pursued careers that were predominantly male or unusual, *“but there are*

still many who believe that their prescribed roles, the roles that have been socially constructed and they fit into those roles” are restrictive. Islam, on the other hand, makes education incumbent upon males and females and only discriminates between the two on the basis of piety. “That’s the only criterion that makes any male or female better. But socially we’ve been constructed to think that no, women must be submissive and they must work in a certain way.” Practically, this means that working women are still expected to “cook, see to the children, their homework, bathing, their routine...” while a majority of educated and modern husbands continue to remain uninvolved with home responsibilities.

6.5.2.3.3 Limited career options for women

Participant 4 regarded herself as a very family-oriented person and describes her career as a feminine one: *“I’m somewhat following a path that has been constructed for a lady, so to speak”, “I started off as a teacher, or a lecturer, then going into social work and now the psychology. As you can see they all are part of the caring or the helping profession and as a woman, I think that’s where we see ourselves and as I did say for me, my belief is very strong in holding my family together, keeping my house in order.”* The women from her generation did not typically study further after school or pursue professional careers. They got married and worked in their family businesses. In a sense, she was a rebel from her generation because she did study towards a degree and sought stimulation in interests outside her home responsibilities. *“I would say still, maybe in my generation, I’ve gone beyond the roles that were mapped out for us, because when I got married at that age, not many people were studying, not many people even had their matrics ... people were quite happy to do till at least up to a standard 8, then you had to learn everything in the house, how to cook, keep house, look after your family and dedicate yourself to husband, in-laws and your children. So in that way I’m different. I’m different from the role of my gender, for my time... my father was very orthodox, not now but then. He didn’t want me to study, I had to join the family business, which was the other role that women had to do, join the family*

business. I was a rebel because to me I always wanted to study. I saw women as very stuck in mundane roles and yet they had so much to offer, and I was a good student at school, also in leadership roles and involved in a lot of things apart from just going to school". Although she recognised that she had potential to achieve more, her father was conservative and wanted her in the family business. The social expectations at the time were less accommodating than they are today, but she continued to value education, 'like all traditional Muslim women, you know, their husband sort of defined them who they are, and made them who they are. But all these things sort of manifested for me and I decided I'm going back to studies.'

6.5.2.3.4 Perception of Muslim women in corporate work environments

Although Participant 4 was in favour of Muslim women working and becoming professionals, she had a pessimistic view of corporate companies as suitable work environments for them because of the risk of harassment and exploitation that women in general experience in the workplace and her modesty in etiquette and dressing could be compromised to fit in with the corporate culture. There is also potential for them to be harassed for openly demonstrating that they are Muslim through dress or practice, but she concluded that these were her perceptions and not based on personal experience: *"a Muslim woman will always have to sort of hold back because her religion for one, like I said if you had to be in the corporate world a Muslim woman doesn't have to worry about her dressing, or the way she carries herself across, for us there is that hayah, and the modesty. So in the corporate world you find that you are more in contact with males and so you find if a woman really wants to succeed at that level she would probably have to give in in that way. If she has, she can still dress properly. But even without a Muslim world, in the Western world you hear of harassment of the women, of females at work. So think about us, Muslim women, if we went into that situation and many of them are in that situation, and you are trying to be like a proper Muslim, the experience of women might tell you a different story, they might say because we dress more Islamically, we don't get people who are*

just talking to us in any wayward way or talk dirty to us or whatever, or make you know or touch us in uncomfortable ways or anything like that. The experience might be different but then on the other hand they might still be harassed because of your religion.”

6.5.2.4 Positive strengths

6.5.2.4.1 Positive reframing and adjustment

Participant 4 began to realise her personal strengths when she encountered many health setbacks that forced her to re-evaluate her life and she changed her perspective. Instead of focussing on all the things that were going wrong in her life and the things in her relationship that were making her unhappy, she thought about the things that were good, specifically her children, and found her will to survive to continue being a part of their lives. She suffered a great degree of grief and loss when her husband took on a second wife and then shifted her focus to her children which motivated her to fight and want to stay alive. In order to survive, she realised that it was necessary for her to adopt a change in perception and focus in a positive, constructive way: *“You realise it’s a tough life to live but you just make yourself strong and you carry on. And you carry on with what’s your important things in your life. So you focus back on your studies, you focus back on your work, you focus back on your ibadat [prayer], you tell yourself you know what, our only destination is Allah.”* Participant 4 learnt to sustain her independence after realising and acknowledging the reality of her situation. Part of reorganising her perception and identity involved changing the way in which she did things and she started by physically organising her environment and setting higher goals for herself to achieve, *“I started off physically by cleaning up the clutter in my office, and then organising everything in terms of the Care-line and the services we offered, adding on new services, streamlining and refining existing services and really getting it to a point where I was happy. And 2011 went like that. 2012 I decided okay I’m not happy with just my degree, I want to do more, I want to do my honours.”*

6.5.2.4.2 Self-awareness and acceptance

After her husband's infidelity it occurred to her that she had no financial security, had been very trusting, and emotionally dependent on him, "*like all traditional Muslim women, you know, their husbands' sort of defined them, who they are*", and she had to redefine her identity after completing the grief process: "*You must know two years had gone, some say grief takes two years. So I had gone through the processes of you know the whole five processes. And I had come to the realisation that it's my life, and whatever I did now is for me, not for him, not for anybody else, it's for me. And I'm also an important person, who's worthy and there's value attached to me and it wasn't now sacrificing for everybody else and mostly for him, which I did do.*"

Participant 4 stated that she was better able to pursue opportunities that came up when she developed an awareness of her own strengths. It was initially a challenge for her to recognise her strengths because of her tendency to self-sacrifice and under-value herself for not being perfect, but as she received recognition for her work contributions and obtained her degree she became more confident about the effort she was generating independently.

6.5.2.4.3 Independence

Participant 4's understanding was that essentially every human being is an independent entity; "*If we get deviated by husband, children all this, it's taking us away from our path to Allah. So that is now how I have looked at my journey, my journey is straight towards Allah. I came into this world alone and I'm going to leave this world alone. Nobody is going to be with me. And then I will have to face Allah one day. So now my destination is Him, my journey here and everything I do now is for Him.*" As individuals, people are accountable for their actions apart from anyone else.

6.5.2.4.4 Openness to learning

Participant 4 likes doing things to be the best, takes pride in her home and work activities and sees herself as a perfectionist. While this can be regarded as a strength because she offers work of a high standard, she may feel inadequate if things done are less than perfectly. She learned to balance the need to have things done right with openness to learning and growing from mistakes, which also allows others to grow and become responsible: *“I’m open to new learning and I believe that if you allow others to do it they will become more responsible.”*

6.5.2.4.5 Perseverance

Despite the various obstacles that made it difficult for her to complete her studies sooner, she persisted until she received her qualification and started with postgraduate studies. Remaining determined, patient and persevering were regarded by Participant 4 as important in a leadership role, as she had exemplified these characteristics for a number of years before adopting a leadership role: *“I think determination is one of the very important skills if you want to be a leader, constantly pushing, persevering, uh, you have to be very patient, you have to be tolerant.”*

6.5.2.5 Women’s strengths

6.5.2.5.1 Multitasking

Participant 4 believed that women in general are very meticulous and organised as multitaskers, and that these are inherent characteristics that strengthen their ability in leadership roles.

6.5.2.5.2 Resourcefulness

Specifically regarding Muslim women, Participant 4 believed that they are resourceful when required to assist with projects and do so efficiently and

creatively, even if they lack experience or knowledge, as they develop skills even while they are home based: *“If you had to get a group of women who are not in a job, just ordinary housewives, and there’s nothing ordinary about housewives, but because that’s a lack of a better term. If you had to have a project tomorrow and say Syria or Palestine or Somalia or somebody needs money tomorrow, I’m telling you those women, they don’t even know the strengths they have... the women will do everything.”* From her own experience when she had financial difficulties, she had to be resourceful and find ways to make money to feed her children: *“In the time he was not getting an income, how I let the food stretch, how I saved, how I didn’t eat meat or the luxuries... I used to go stand outside my father’s factory at four o’ clock in the morning to go and sell Turkish scarves or whatever I could do because that was when the flea market concept had just come out... they are small kids and my husband’s away overseas somewhere and I’d be standing there until 11/12 for the day, and then trying to sell whatever I can and that is my money, is going to be the next week’s milk and bread and keep us going. And I tried to do so many things.”*

6.6 PARTICIPANT 5

6.6.1 Participant’s background

Participant 5 holds a BCompt degree and was previously employed in accounting roles for various organisations until eventually joining her father’s company, which she in the end bought over. She is the CEO of a group of companies and managing director of various organisations. She is a single, divorced mother of three daughters.

6.6.2 Emerging themes

6.6.2.1 Leadership approach

6.6.2.1.1 *Authority, control and decision-making*

From the outset of her career, when Participant 5 was still young, she had an idea of her interests but had not really done career planning and her father gave her direction and guided her, establishing her in the field of commerce. Decision-making was ultimately left to her father and he arranged for her student employment, later offered her employment in his own company and at times when they had differences of opinion over decisions she made about her personal life, he disinherited her and had her bank account frozen. As pointed out by one of her later employers who valued her as an employee, Participant 5 belonged with her father in his business: *“You’re on loan, your place is not here ... your place is with your father.”* While with this employer, whose company she had joined somewhat informally, running projects but without any formal appointment or title, she experienced resistance from staff when she attempted to access resources from them to get her work done. Once her place in the company’s hierarchy had been established and her position was finalised as projects accountant, she introduced major changes by only accepting a high standard of performance: *“Yes I rocked the boat because I had a lot of people fired in the interim, non-performance more. And I don’t think it’s because I want to rock the boat because I think I’m just a very loyal person, ok? And the integrity levels are so high and I expect people to work in the same manner I work ... and my personality is wherever I go to I just take control, ok. It works to my advantage and it works to my disadvantage but I do not know any better.”*

About two years after joining her father’s business, Participant 5 began to feel redundant because of the routine nature of working in accountancy and progressively assumed more of her father’s responsibilities, taking control over many of the business accounts, as well as running her father’s hotel and

property portfolios: *“It was like the same boring thing over again so I said let me take control of this and let me take control of that ... so what do I do now? I still have complete hands-on control over my accounts and I do sales, I do buying, I do customer liaison, I run all his hotels, I run the property portfolio, there’s nothing I do not do.”*

6.6.2.1.2 Re-evaluation of need for control

More recently, Participant 5 seems to have been reconsidering her need for authority and being in control, feeling that it has limited her experience as a woman and that she would like to be able to hand over some of the responsibility of being in control: *“...recently I want to be a woman and I don’t want to take control. I’ve done it for too long. I want someone else to make the decisions.”* This is an opposite shift compared to her previous tendency to hold on to her authority, which was at risk of being undermined, particularly by older males with whom she was in contact at work: *“... as a woman I’m ... I mean sometimes they challenge me as a woman, I know they do. Especially people that have been around in my father’s time.”*

6.6.2.1.3 Masculine leadership

Having worked in a male-dominant industry, Participant 5 learnt that she had to adopt *“nasty character building”* to respond to other people’s attempts at undermining her authority. She dissociated from her softer, feminine side, reserving these traits for when she was at home with her children and presented a harder, less permissive character in the workplace. *“Don’t look for love and don’t look for compassion, don’t look at me as a woman okay cause my heart is at home where my children are and that’s where it needs to be. I’m coming to work with my steel balls and deal with it. And that’s what I said every day of my life, I’d have an issue and say what the hell, dog eats dog, let me go for it. You come here as a man and undermine me or take what is not yours.”* There seems to be a stark contrast between this aggressive stance to

ensure survival in the business world, compared to the people-orientation that she developed later.

6.6.2.1.4 Prioritisation of feminine values

Participant 5's story began with her as a young student who went to study, got a job and lived a fun and carefree life until she fell in love, got married and had children. She went through two marriages that were quite unstable and ended in divorce and had to raise three children as a single parent. She notes this 'single mother' aspect as part of her identity. As the breadwinner and provider for her children she also had less opportunity to care for her children personally while they grew up and experienced this as emotionally difficult. Her softer, more emotional and feminine side is expressed at home with her children, while at work she had to adopt a stronger masculine role in order to gain respect and exert influence in decision-making.

More recently, with her children nearing school-leaving age and her business being well established, her personal needs, which were unmet and previously suppressed, have begun surfacing as things she has not achieved. She began to build more trusting relationships with her employees with the assistance of HR training and because of seeing the value of a more feminine approach to leadership. Very pertinently, she expressed wanting to be a woman. Her work role had limited the expression of her feminine traits and she felt the need to be cared for after having cared for her family and employees for many years: *"...but recently I want to be a woman and I don't want to take control. I've done it for too long. I want someone else to make the decisions."* Despite her many achievements as an independent woman, she still longs to *"be a woman"*. *"It doesn't pay to always be right, it doesn't pay to always be the decision maker, it doesn't pay to always be completely independent, it doesn't pay. Because at the end of the day you still wired as a woman. And I've never had that, I've never had anybody take care of me ... I've done it for myself all the years, I brought up my kids, I bought a home few*

men can afford to buy and paid for, I have no debt in my life. I have a business, my kids go on holiday as many times as time can afford us. So I've got nothing to complain about, you know, shukr [thankfully] and I've done everything probably better than other men would do ..." "so yes as far as the whole leadership thing is concerned, uhm, ya, I don't know. I'm in a very different space at the moment. I want to be a woman. I've been cloned as a man for too long."

Participant 5 relates that from her experience, women who profess a desire to be in control are in denial because they would actually prefer being taken care of by a man. Men are physically enabled to endure more and by women taking away too much of their responsibility, it gives men less of an opportunity to "*do what we need them to do for us, we never going to empower them to do it, number one. And number two, we never going to be treated like the women we need to be treated like.*" Women are therefore in a position to take on more masculine roles, but as a consequence lose the benefits of having responsibilities shared and being treated as women, in the work context and at home, particularly single women and mothers.

The cost of adopting a male-oriented approach to leadership is the loss of femininity, at least to a degree, from Participant 5's point of view, "*I mean yes it's nice to be in control, it's nice to pursue your goals, it's nice to be the career-oriented woman, it's nice to earn your own money and I'm not saying you mustn't do all that okay. But don't take away what is your natural ability to be a woman. Don't let it wither away and die. Don't let it, don't not enjoy that part of yourself because that's such a beautiful side of you okay.*" So although there are "nice" benefits associated with independence, the degree to which this includes being more 'masculine' takes away from a woman's femininity, in an either-or situation that is created.

6.6.2.2 Leadership style

6.6.2.2.1 Adaptive leadership style

Participant 5 functions as CEO and managing director and humorously expressed how she was willing to be involved in anything, even as tea lady. She described her leadership style as “*firm yet friendly*”. Because of being involved with and managing different types of businesses, she had to adapt her leadership style to suit the relevant environments. Her trading business is characterised by a family-oriented approach and no rigid rules, while the hotels are managed very differently: “*In the hotel my leadership style’s very different there because I’m dealing with unions and I’m dealing with staff members, I have my managers and then I have my supervisor and so there I’m probably the older me again, like completely firm, no rules to be broken because it demands that from me. There you give in to that little and it topples the whole system ... so there my leadership style is firm, it’s almost autocratic.*” She emphasised the need to be able to moderate whether a flexible or more resolute stance was needed with different employee groups: “*If I’m walking into a management meeting and I’m exactly with my managers what I am with my housekeepers I’m going to get resistance all the way.*”

6.6.2.2.2 Hands-on approach

By being involved hands-on with tasks, it becomes apparent to her staff that she is committed and this serves to motivate them: “*My people need to see me involved in the process so they need to see I’m committed to the process a thousand times more than they’re committed, okay, because that’s where they get their strength from.*” She also communicates the *mutual benefit* of their efforts.

6.6.2.3 Leadership development opportunities

Opportunities for leadership development featured frequently during the interview with Participant 5. As a young graduate she was placed with a major

petrochemical company on a leadership development programme where she was groomed and mentored for a senior management role. As an entrepreneur she was awarded an invitation to be part of a business 'incubation' development programme by a major financial institution, which also provides support in the form of entrepreneurial skills. Participant 5 actively reads and gathers relevant information by attending shorter courses as time allows her, to improve her skill in the various business functions, including courses on HR management. She was very excited about such leadership development opportunities for other women through formalised bodies that also provided practical support services to professional working mothers.

6.6.2.4 Leadership and Muslim women

6.6.2.4.1 Transferable Islamic values

On how she felt that Muslim women could be better leaders, Participant 5 said that Muslim women bring a set of values that place them well as leaders in the workplace. From her experience she found Muslim women to be reliable employees who exhibit moral behaviour and professional conduct, are honest and overall more ethical and respectable compared to non-Muslim colleagues.

6.6.2.4.2 Leadership development and support forums

She also suggested that forums be created to support Muslim women as professionals through workshops to improve leadership skills and to serve as a support structure, with practical services such as a pick-up and drop-off service for the children of working mothers. In order to be better leaders, Muslim women need to be more willing to share what they know and learn, as well as their values. They need to stand up and be heard and strive to be better in everything that they do.

6.6.2.5 Challenges

6.6.2.5.1 Racial integration

One of the challenges that Participant 5 experienced earlier in her career was entering a previously white-dominated work environment as a senior member while being younger and better qualified than her predominantly white female colleagues. At times she struggled with getting them to follow instructions and during the first six to seven months of her employment with them they gave negative feedback on her performance appraisal. Eventually, through her friendly nature and getting to know one another better, this barrier disappeared; *“but in actual fact you know, actually I get people to like me, you know eventually they loved me and eventually we went shopping together ... Not on a professional basis you know, just by getting to know each other, finding out how they are, making time to sit and understand ... like I say it’s just because of the way I am, it’s my personality, you know. Then we were big buddies.”* She mixed easily with people from other cultural groups during her studies and considered herself to be everyone’s friend. She did not report any interpersonal difficulties when working for a Jewish employer or when managing a multi-national team in exports. However, she did eventually leave her employer for a more religiously neutral and larger organisation when the Middle-Eastern conflict was a particularly contentious point between Muslims and Jews.

6.6.2.5.2 Undermining by senior males

Despite the level of responsibility that Participant 5 eventually assumed, she still encountered resistance from men who had previously worked with her father and tended to take her less seriously. She responded to this by changing the way she communicated with them, from respecting them as seniors to dealing with them as equals, *“so if a man was sixty years old and I said Uncle growing up, after three years (of working) I realised I’m not saying Uncle to you anymore because it undermines me, it undermines my position of bargaining, my position of making the deal happen.”* The sub-theme of

undermining had come up frequently during the interview. Participant 5 felt she was undermined on the basis of being a woman, at times, and would become very confrontational with people who happened to “*talk nonsense*” about her as “*a nasty rumour like that just spreads you know and it undermines you*”, but she tended to be open to criticism, particularly if it was justified.

6.6.2.5.3 Suitable employment

Balancing home and work responsibilities became a challenge for Participant 5 when she fell pregnant with her first baby and as a consequence could not manage to complete the last two subjects of the third year of her degree. She had not planned these events and so had to make reactive decisions to cope. At a later stage during her second marriage and pregnancy, she was working as a project accountant and was presented with an opportunity to set up business in Durban for her company. She turned this offer down in favour of her father’s counter-offer to work with him. Her father’s offer would include family support during and after the birth of her second child and was appealing to Participant 5 since she had previously been estranged from her father. She also felt guilty about having to leave her first baby with a day mother to be cared for while she went to work and experienced this as a form of abandonment of her child: “*He made a counter-offer for me to come into his business but now you know as a woman and you expecting and you due in a month’s time and all those other challenges you have about not having family for a year and a half and now he’s prepared to take you back into the family unit and you think about your kids and you think about leaving your kid, your first child, at the day mother for three months and leaving there with red eyes because you leaving your kid there, you know all the challenges, and obviously being a single mother.*”

6.6.2.5.4 Lack of support structure

Of the main challenges she experienced during her career, the lack of a support structure was most difficult for her and when she got divorced with three young children to care for it was difficult for her to cope. Her strategy to deal with this was to create as much routine and structure as she could, focus her energy on only those tasks that were a priority and keep things simple. “... *I simplified things in a way in my personal life to accommodate my business and my children ... the only reason I coped was because almost taking everything and boxing things up ok, and setting my tasks for the day and working only on that ok and concentrating only on that and then having family life was completely robotic. And things were compartmentalised ... So how did I deal with it? The challenges? I don't know I just, the challenges I just dealt with it. But living a lifestyle that was completely routine-like. Completely, completely routine like. Structured.*” This was a drastic change in approach compared to when she was younger, when her life was unplanned and she would respond to things as they happened to her.

The lack of a support structure in the form of a helpful spouse was seen to be a significant cause of stress. Sharing in family and home responsibilities was described quite practically, with regard to vehicle maintenance, juggling transport and sometimes flights, ensuring the children were dropped off and picked up from school. “*I need to be at the airport at six o' clock in the morning but I also need to drop my kids off. Ok, let's see, I won't take the six o' clock I'll take the 8 o' clock 'cause the ... what the hell do you need that for? You need that person in your life, you need that male person to take care of those things and appreciate you as a woman so you can say I have a headache and I'm not feeling well and you worry about the kids and supper. I'm tired of doing it.*” Her over-extension of herself in order to maintain all the roles as she played mother, father and business owner was demanding with regard to time available for all these activities and responsibilities and she tended to feel tired and in need of assistance to get through her tasks effectively.

6.6.2.5.5 Time management

Participant 5 reported that the challenges related to raising children changed over time as their needs varied and she had to learn to manage her time better to be available to them. Being more trusting of her staff and delegating some of her tasks to them allowed her employees the opportunity to develop themselves and removed some of the work pressure for herself. She still finds that there is insufficient time and would like to invest more into developing her business skills and has not completed her studies yet because her children need her attention in the evening. Instead, she completes shorter business courses to support her business while still accommodating her family. *“Go home and my day is, my evening is filled with my kids and they only have me and they all want something from me so I went and I said I can help myself by doing these little courses, okay, which I’ve done and I realised but also to enhance my business because I came to a point where I was blinkered and I didn’t know how ...”*

6.6.2.6 Positive strengths

6.6.2.6.1 Adaptability

Participant 5 adapts to different levels when relating to others. When dealing with people at the same level of authority she approaches them with a much harder masculine leadership style, particularly if her authority is threatened. At a staff level she is much more people-oriented and her staff seem to be particularly receptive and responsive to her leadership style. Her softer, motherly and feminine role is reserved for her interaction with her children at home. Participant 5 therefore adapts her behaviour according to her environment and the nature of the people she deals with, as appropriate.

The leadership principles that Participant 5 practises herself are being the decision-maker, organisational skills, clearly communicating expectations and criteria, being approachable and available to her team at all times. She

mentioned other important factors, such as having knowledge or expertise within one's field; providing *direction*; being a *team player* and *communicating* at a level that people would understand.

6.6.2.6.2 People orientation

Participant 5 has a very lively personality, which influences her interactions with others. She compared herself to a very prim and manicured "Barbie doll" Muslim woman with whom she worked, who was very polite and reserved. In contrast she is gregarious, friendly, informal, confrontational and direct. She felt comfortable talking to her colleagues, even on personal matters, and because she was so honest about her views and experiences, people warmed to her easily, liked her and took direction from her: "... *when they went to vote I told them everything, I told them about my Granny ... and they laughed at me and I said now go in for the referendum and freakin go and vote yes. And they all came back and said they voted yes ... because we love you so much and you broke our heart with your stories.*" Although she found it relatively easy to associate with others at work, it took her a long time to learn to trust her staff and delegate more responsibility to them. Because she perceived that she was not getting the best out of her staff, she saw a consultant and subsequently began to regard her employees as an asset, which she reports as having phenomenal results. Her staff warmed to her and respected her more.

6.6.2.6.3 Conviction

Participant 5 believed a sense of certainty to be important: "*You got to know where you need to be ... if you have contradictions within yourself you not going to be a good leader so you need to know exactly what it is, where you want to be, you need to be very clear on your policies, your procedures, your goals, who you are ... people cannot see contradiction in you.*"

6.7 PARTICIPANT 6

6.7.1 Participant's background

Participant 6 completed a Bachelor of Science degree in chemistry and biochemistry, followed by a medical degree, and specialised in internal medicine and then sub-specialised. She also holds Masters' degrees from a New York university and South African university and progressed from a registrar and lecturer until she applied for her post based on her specialisation. She currently heads the sub-speciality unit at a tertiary hospital and is responsible for services rendered in her own and neighbouring districts. She is single and has no children.

6.7.2 Emerging themes

6.7.2.1 Leadership

6.7.2.1.1 Rigid leadership style

Participant 6 described her leadership style as fairly rigid, as she was clear on her expectations and expected her subordinates to follow procedures and “*get things done*”. She saw this approach as necessary to her environment, because the nature of the work requires an approach that is thorough, structured and precise. Risks and consequences to patients' lives and colleagues were high and mistakes due to negligence were “*unacceptable and I don't tolerate all of it.*”

6.7.2.2 Challenges

6.7.2.2.1 Family background

Participant 6 was raised in a fairly conservative family and when she completed her secondary education her parents discouraged her study choice

of medicine. She initially conceded and started studying for a Bachelor of Science degree, but later changed to a medical degree, continued with postgraduate studies locally and overseas and specialised. Her parents had not completed their schooling and were not fully aware of the requirements of medical training, but felt strongly that it was not a suitable role for a female because the lifestyle involved more travel and would be less stable than “*physiotherapy or pharmacy*”. They were also fearful of her leaving the country and not returning.

6.7.2.2.2 Leadership challenges

Most of the challenges experienced by Participant 6 in her workplace were related to gender roles and discrimination, as well as difficulty integrating religious and professional duties. Some of the challenges become easier to negate once an individual is in a senior job role and has more decision-making authority. She stated that women in general, rather than just Muslim women, experience challenges when having to fulfil leadership roles when they also have family commitments. Although she described them, she also de-emphasised the challenges faced as not “*being that difficult*” relative to the challenges of apartheid, which were comparatively much worse, yet had been overcome.

6.7.2.2.3 Masculine working environment

Participant 6’s experience of having practised medicine is that it is dominated by males, particularly in certain sub-specialties. Urology, for example, would typically not have female practitioners and training would be contentious for a Muslim female who would be prohibited to examine male patients.

6.7.2.2.4 Halaal/haraam activities

The availability of halaal (permissible) food was an issue while studying and she noted that there was a difference between Johannesburg and Durban

universities when it came to the availability of food and salaah (prayer) facilities. Later, when she was qualified and was practising, she would not attend social outings with colleagues because they would be drinking alcohol. She only attended if it would be an educational gathering or was compulsory. However, this could have a negative impact on opportunities for career progression, as those who excluded themselves from haram (non-permissible) social activities also tended to miss out on information that could be relevant to further career development: *“Well I think it takes a longer time to progress because of the, because you not in the social context all the time you know. Because you not, not attending all the social issues, the other thing is that lots of things happen at odd times. Like they would have a meeting during salaah time, so you have to make that decision to say that you sort of not going.”*

When travelling she would restrict her diet to vegetarian options. There was some subtle pressure from Muslim male colleagues who would drink alcohol and condone eating meat that was not certified halaal when travelling but she would reason that no harm would come to her by temporarily adjusting her diet. *“But I must say when I trained as a specialist mmm these, now everybody is older and making their own decisions, they were challenges in terms of interacting socially with your colleagues, in the context of alcohol etc. I mean other Muslim doctors drank and did everything, but I sort of stand out.”* *“When I travel internationally I just go vegetarian, because it’s safer and easier. I mean a lot of my male colleagues will tell me that you can eat if you travelling, but if you really think about it in the context, I won’t die if I don’t eat meat for five or ten days.”*

6.7.2.2.5 Inconsistency in observing religious obligations

Muslim colleagues would differ in the manner in which they observed obligatory prayers while at work, leading to inconsistency across Muslim doctors and difficulty in accommodating these prayers during working time.

Some would observe the basic requirement of prayers and spend minimal time away from work, while others would extend the time away for mosque to include non-religious activities such as Friday lunches during working time. Some Muslims are therefore very rigid about prioritising religious duties and can become sensitive if this is not accommodated, but at the same time there are others who use this as an excuse to spend less time on their work duties.

There is an implied accusation that colleagues in the workplace can be insensitive about a practising Muslim employee's needs to accommodate religious practices, yet also an acknowledgement of the fact that there are Muslim colleagues who do not abide by their religious principles. This causes some conflict for Participant 6, especially where there is abuse of the allowances for these practices. Some Muslim colleagues also assert a degree of social pressure on other Muslims to conform to their preferences: "*... the other thing is that lots of things happen at odd times. Like they would have a meeting during salaah time, so you have to make that decision to say that you sort of not going. Like once they had the sub-speciality meeting during Ramadan (fasting month) ... I feel in some context you need to compromise but like I feel like these certain situations where you can sort of raise the things. So say like if we went to a conference now and they didn't have sort of halaal facilities, don't make an issue there, you can raise it at a proper forum the next time. I find that people tend to overreact at the wrong moments, you there now, eat vegetarian and raise it afterwards. So that's one of my main challenges, when I know people are raising an issue that's not really valid but at the same time I don't want to not support my Muslim colleagues.*"

6.7.2.2.6 Gender roles and discrimination

Participant 6 experienced resistance and lack of recognition when having to deal with male colleagues, particularly when having to give instructions to indigenous African and Indian males. She believes the reason for this to be the cultural backgrounds from which they come. The trend has subsided over

the last ten years, but she still experiences it, although infrequently. She also found that patients would first look to her junior male colleagues, especially when she previously had worked with a predominantly Indian male patient population, but this trend has also died down over the last ten years.

6.7.2.2.7 Choosing career over family

A Muslim woman in a medical profession would have to make choices about accommodating her religion, family and work roles and demands, as trying to fulfil all these roles simultaneously is a big challenge: *“She is central to the family and the core of the family in Islam, and I am not so sure if I agree with the context that women should not work, but I understand why they say that women should not work. So, and part of it is the society that we live in, men are less accommodating. So I think that women can work if males accommodate them appropriately. But I have also seen situations where you know, my colleagues who are doctors, their kids suffer”. “Your attention is divided, your commitments are divided, I am, I am not sure ... I often wondered in an Islamic country if sort of the demands and support will be different on women, but I haven’t really. My sister lives in the Emirates, so I am often in Emirates and I haven’t really seen it in Emirates. I mean they have lots of caregivers, which is other women neglecting their children to look after your children. And I don’t agree on that also, so I am not really sure what the answer is. But I can understand both sides of the story but I am not sure of the solution.”* From her disapproval, it can be ascertained that rather than ‘dividing her attention’, a woman should decide on her priorities and focus more on those, particularly if she is a mother, so as not to disadvantage her children.

The participant mentioned an American study that showed women to favour family commitments, while men were more concerned about professional achievements. Participant 6 made a conscious decision not to get married and have a family because it could not be accommodated by her lifestyle,

which is determined by her work. She travels frequently and her work role is quite demanding. She also felt that settling down was not worth the risk for her and her perception of other people's marriages was pessimistic, because many of her friends and other doctors were in unhappy marriages. She also values her work role and consciously chose to pursue it over that of a family role, *"and I am not so sure if I agree with the context that women should not work, but I understand why they say that women should not work."* Because family commitments would have restricted her career progression, she felt that this was a sacrifice she had made to pursue her career and as a result was ahead of her married colleagues. Just being a woman and not necessarily a Muslim woman makes it difficult. Some married women who were also leaders had supportive husbands, but their husbands' career needs still took precedence over their own. Women who had surpassed their husbands academically ended up with their *"relationships sort of almost destroyed ... most of them are kind of just staying together."*

6.7.2.2.8 Conflicting work and religious expectations

Working with patients, particularly at a junior level where there is more clinical work, can be challenging for a Muslim woman when she has to examine male patients. Other difficult areas of decision-making include euthanasia and abortions, for which the terms are quite strict from an Islamic perspective and students are not generally made aware of what is and is not acceptable in practice. There is a shortage of Muslim women in medicine, even to serve the women of the Muslim community, *"... these challenges, and I don't think its particular to Muslim women. I look at other women that are in leadership roles, and if they have a family there's always sort of competition between the commitments."*

6.7.2.2.9 Hijab

Unless her name is mentioned, it is not instantly apparent that Participant 6 is Muslim because she does not adopt hijab in her workplace. Some of her

colleagues wear their hijab (headscarf), some even completely covering their hands in gloves and then later choosing to be less covered, possibly because it is a challenge when examining patients. She also mentioned that many of the younger medical students trained while in full hijab and parda (face covering). She did not seem to understand much about the reasons for their choice of hijab and changing how strictly they observed the practice, nor did she feel it necessary to enquire about it.

6.7.2.3 Comparative Islamic practices

Participant 6 had the opportunity to continue her postgraduate medical studies in New York and interacted with Muslims of various nationalities. Their practice of Islam was different to what she was used to, less rigid and segregated on the basis of nationality, religion or gender; *“that was a totally different context of Islam ... the way they practise Islam is very different to us, ours is very more rigid compared to theirs and the separation of males and females and it was also nice to see people in lines of professorship interact with the Muslim students which doesn’t happen that often in our university ... they had interactions with other societies like the Jewish society, the Hindu society ... it wasn’t like the divisions we have here ... that’s the way it’s supposed to be ... this is what we need to have here.”* She compared the situation of Muslims in the United States after 9/11 and their sense of cohesion, which was unlike the South African Muslims who practise their religion freely but are disunited, *“yet there, they have sort of challenges also, at the time I was there it was post 9/11, so they were also being targeted, under surveillance etc., but they dealt with it together. You know, it was a very unified response and also they sort of link to other universities also.”*

6.7.2.4 Positive strengths

6.7.2.4.1 Organisational skills

When having to make decisions Participant 6 prefers to know what her options are and prefers working in a structured manner, where her

expectations are clearly defined and mistakes are eliminated. Her approach at work is much more strict and disciplined compared to how she behaves socially and she keeps the two strictly separate.

6.7.2.4.2 Self-discipline and independence

Participant 6 tended to keep a social distance from her colleagues, even Muslim colleagues, preferring instead to focus on her work responsibilities and maintain her principles and independence from others, *“There is (pressure to conform) but you need to stand your ground and you need to maintain your goal and maintain these.”* When asked to attend meetings in the evening, she would turn these invitations down because alcohol was likely to be consumed and she would exercise discipline by focusing strictly on work-related activities when required after working hours, *“I don’t attend because firstly it’s in the evening, and sort of the main reason they have it, is so that they can have a drink. So I was asked by a few reps, why don’t I come, so I said to them that, you know that’s not my lifestyle, I mean I am not coming there for a drink and I have other means of getting educational updates, so it’s not an absolute for me to come. So when they invite me to present, than I will go and present, but I don’t stay ...”*

6.7.2.4.3 Determination

Participant 6 believes that she demonstrates determination by working extremely hard, being clear about what she wants and seizing opportunities that arise.

6.7.2.4.4 Persuasion

When having to negotiate terms at work, it helps to have a persuasive approach, particularly when having to deal with senior members of the organisational hierarchy. She also had to persuade her parents to allow her to continue with studies in medicine and overseas.

6.7.2.4.5 Assertiveness

Participant 6 explained that it became easier to assert herself as she progressed to more senior roles and although she did not discount individual strengths and personality attributes, she felt the environment needed to change, as it did not accommodate women. Based on her own working environment, assertiveness was considered a more masculine trait.

6.8 PARTICIPANT 7

6.8.1 Participant's background

Participant 7 completed her undergraduate medical degree and postgraduate fellowship and PhD. Her responsibilities include oversight of the hospital units in her speciality and training nursing staff, doctors and medical students. She has researched and implemented numerous healthcare programmes to improve service delivery in the public healthcare sector and authored numerous academic publications based on her area of specialisation. She is married and has adult children.

6.8.2 Emerging themes

6.8.2.1 Leadership

Assuming a leadership role was something that had not happened intentionally for Participant 7. Being committed to her specialist field in medicine and wanting to do her best in her job were her priorities. As a result of her initiatives and expertise, she was appointed as head of her department. The work she is currently involved in is less clinical than her previous roles and more focussed on research and academic administration.

6.8.2.1.1 Inclusive leadership approach

Participant 7 works with a team of various specialist supervisors, academic regional doctors and post-graduate administrative staff and adopts an inclusive style of leadership by paying attention to people's similarities rather than their differences in encouraging teamwork. When making decisions, issues were discussed at meetings and various reasonable options were open to consideration. If Participant 7 took a final decision, it was often at the request of her colleagues and they would support and enforce her decisions. When disagreements arose with her male registrars before she became head of department, she would point out their work behaviour and trends in their activities, avoiding any personal attacks. She conveys to others that she is as accepting of due criticism as she is to acknowledging work well done and explains that communication should be an open, two-way process.

6.8.2.1.2 Trust and transparency

Viewing people as inherently good, Participant 7 regards others positively, considers opportunities for developing others and allows them to progress, as she places trust in them and respects their capability. Members are constructively open about their opinions in meetings and everyone was kept abreast of activities: *"we have developed a system in our department with the other senior members of how to run the department so that everybody became aware of what was going on."*

6.8.2.1.3 Individual development

In her management of her administrative staff who work very closely with her in assisting with the coordination of undergraduate programmes, she attempts to find the value that they contribute, acknowledge this and encourage the administrative staff to take up personal development courses. She also encourages the nurses to take on leadership roles by delegating efficiently and engaging them in mutual problem-solving, where they are guided to solve

problems. They are also prompted to take up additional training in subjects that may be of interest to them and enhance the service they provide to patients. Participant 7 finds that the interest in her staff's individual development raises their motivation and benefits the patients.

6.8.2.1.4 Managing relationships with male colleagues

Participant 7 often encountered resistance when dealing with male colleagues and as the first female head of department, was not immediately accepted. The following observations of men's behaviour were noted by Participant 7 in her workplace:

- They tend to feel threatened by females in positions more senior to theirs, to whom they have to report.
- Married doctors feel it is acceptable for them to pass on work responsibilities to unmarried females because their personal responsibilities take preference over those of a 'single female'.
- Men tend to be pushy and forceful about achieving their goals.
- Younger males are defensive and adamant about the accuracy of their actions, even if they have made mistakes.

6.8.2.2 Challenges

6.8.2.2.1 Racial discrimination

Early in her career, when she completed her undergraduate degree at another University, there were no work opportunities for people of colour and she completed her postgraduate studies in KwaZulu-Natal, where more employment was available. However, most of her medical colleagues at the time were white males. *"When I wanted to sub-specialise there was no place for me because at the time we still had apartheid so I couldn't train at the [training hospital] of my mother university because they said they had no place for me. I felt more opportunities here (KZN), the colour issue was always such a powerful issue. Not that it wasn't here. But the academic*

opportunities were better here ...One has to make at least three attempts at applying for promotion. One is turned down for what appears to be trivial reasons. Any snide comments and I would say you can see my CV and why I got it.” Post-apartheid, career progression was still affected by her racial designation: *“I can’t help it if I’m female, if I am Indian. Because in this faculty they want blacks and it cannot work if the training is not appropriate. I also came from a disadvantaged background and very disadvantaged schooling. I had to have bursaries all the way through high school and university. So what I mean is, put your butt onto the chair and get on with it.”*

6.8.2.2.2 Working with men and gender discrimination

Being accepted by her male colleagues was challenging and Participant 7 found that she was *“almost penalised”* because she was Indian, female and married to a non-Muslim. *“The prejudice to females was very strong so even when I had a promotion, academic promotion from senior lecturer or associate professor, comments would be made by the men”* and *“if you see a male colleague or if you go with a male colleague to a meeting you, whooo! You having an affair, I used to just ignore it ...”* Having no choice but to work with men, in a field dominated by them, she did not take any criticism personally and regarded their discomfort at dealing with her with humour. *“I went to the first specialist conference and I was the only female and the only one of colour there and the rest was all men and a lot of Afrikaans men and a lot of English men and very few Indian or black people and they didn’t know how to respond to me.”* When she was appointed as professor and head of department and received enquiries, people would be shocked to deal with a woman in that position and actually verbalise their surprise. *“You see there were women working in medicine but not at the top level. If you look now, they are lots of women working in medicine but they don’t get to the top, and that is the problem. The problem is partly because of their family etc. etc.”*

There had previously been a male head of department and when she took over, Participant 7 would have people come into her office and shout at her, even becoming aggressive, and she would deal with them calmly and refer to the university's procedures, *"talking down to me and raised voices. 'You have to be giving me this post or I will be going'. I then would say, 'Would you speak to Prof so and so like this? And as you know that if you want a post there is a procedure for you to get to that post. But if you feel that you don't want to work here, you have every right not to work here and you can move, it's your choice. Obviously we would like to keep you, but if you don't get the post then there's nothing that I can do because it's a formal procedure. So that happened a number of times and slowly it just kicked out and that was it, yeah ... but I never became angry with them and I would be annoyed actually ... And once or twice when people were aggressive the secretary would walk in because she heard the noise."*

6.8.2.2.3 Balancing home and work responsibilities

Participant 7 found it somewhat difficult to balance her time attending to work, home and children, but her husband was very helpful in this regard, assisted her wherever possible and shared responsibility in caring for their children. Particularly difficult for her was to withdraw from her work mentally and emotionally and she had to learn to change over from the role of doctor to being mother at home and attending to her children's needs, *"Sometimes we would spilt up and one would come to meetings in the department and the other will go for another lot so we could be with the children. So that was sometimes difficult and time-consuming and the other thing I found that when patients are not doing well I would be affected and struggling emotionally but I have to still go home and do everything. But eventually got over it and sorted myself out. I had to decide that I have to leave, I am going home and have to look after my own children, so there was a cut off where you have to turn and say you mum now and you have to go home and have to be mum. I can't be the doctor and carry the doctor home. So I had to learn to do that and eventually it worked."*

6.8.2.3 Support factors

6.8.2.3.1 Family support

Participant 7's husband is also a doctor at her workplace and she described him as very involved with their children and the fact that he was supportive of her career as a huge advantage. They planned their activities for home and work as a team and coordinated sharing attendance at work meetings and watching over their children. She also got her children to understand what she was involved with at work by taking them to the hospital so they understood why she needed to go out for call-outs. Sometimes she would meet with her husband and children at work and they had a set family time for sharing evening meals and weekend outings, making sure that they maintained a stable home life.

6.8.2.3.2 Religion

Participant 7 regarded her faith as a source of support, which enabled her right to education and according to her understanding of Islamic texts, *"Principles are everything and obviously mmm, these a great emphasis on education that people don't see. On knowledge, acquiring knowledge and using the knowledge appropriately, so I think that, that was basically what it did for me. And that is why I made sure that I understood the Arabic and not just learnt the Arabic, but I understood what the interpretation was so I would use it for my own development."* She experienced no conflict between her work and religious expectations and having worked with a colleague who was a doctor and an Imaam, had access to information about the permissibility of medical practices from an Islamic perspective. For example, a medication prepared from porcine origin was regarded as permissible for Muslim consumption because it had been purified in the laboratory. Furthermore, the practical implications of Islamic principles served as a source of structure and stability for Participant 7. *"I found that religion taught me how I should behave, what should be correct and how it should be correct, what was important to achieve in life. You get guidance from teachings for children, you get*

guidance for daily life, and you get guidance for your academic life. If you look for it, it's there."

6.8.2.4 Perceptions of women

6.8.2.4.1 Religious regard for women

Participant 7 compared Islam to other religions as being supportive of attaining knowledge, which empowered her as an individual and did not hold her back, as the faith is portrayed in the media. Having studied other faiths she had concluded that women should not be deprived of opportunities "... *keeping women in their place ... is not correct. It's inappropriate.*"

6.8.2.4.2 Social treatment of women

For having married someone from a different faith, Participant 7 experienced negative attitudes from people in the community as well as those she worked with, Muslim and Hindu colleagues alike. In her view her decision was a personal choice but people felt justified to treat her rudely and would deliberately ignore her and refuse to greet her although she worked with them. While she and her husband showed respect for each other's opinions, she saw that as lacking in many marriages where husbands would overlook the opinions of their wives and undermine the effort it takes for a wife to run all the activities of a home. In her own family background, seeing to children was regarded as the mother's responsibility while fathers remained uninvolved.

6.8.2.5 Positive strengths

Personal strengths mentioned by Participant 7 included coping strategies, determination and humour, while those more specific to her leadership role were mentioned as innovation, initiative and respect.

6.8.2.5.1 Positive reframing

In order to resolve the challenges she was confronted with, Participant 7 applied certain coping strategies. When criticised or having to deal with negative attitudes, she would ignore and deflect anything negative, not take it to heart and regard such information as a projection of the other person rather than a true reflection of herself: *“I just ignored everybody who was negative, I dismissed the negative comments, and I didn’t hold it against the person. I treated them like I treated everyone else and said look, they have to learn and it’s their problem and not mine.”*

6.8.2.5.2 Determination

Regarding challenges as opportunities for growth, Participant 7 applied a determined attitude to problem-solving and would drive herself to rise above any criticism. *“So as more people will try and block or say something unpleasant, the more determined I became that I will overcome it. I didn’t let it crush me. I always tell (the same to) so many girls that come to talk to me...”*

6.8.2.5.3 Humour

Regardless of the seriousness of some of the challenges Participant 7 dealt with, such as people becoming aggressive with her in her office, she would talk about these events with her staff and they would laugh and joke about what had happened. Participant 7 commented that life could not be taken too seriously and being able to depersonalise and laugh about an event helped to put it behind her; *“A gentle no got them sorted out [Laughs]. You must see the funny side of life as well.”*

6.8.2.5.4 Innovation

Improving service delivery to students and patients was a strong emphasis for Participant 7 and she would consistently look at ways to enhance

improvements and growth; *“I always looked at how you could improve the service and how you could change the attitudes of people.”* Investigating actual problems through her research, identifying trends and coming up with viable solutions that could be applied to healthcare in a South African context was the approach she took in initiating changes in her service provision.

6.8.2.5.5 Initiative

Being able to identify opportunities for innovation and development and implement changes through physical changes was the first stepping stone that directed Participant 7 towards a leadership role. The training programmes she implemented in hospitals early in her career, paved the way for greater research and development and led to her expertise in her field: *“You initiate something and you find it is successful. For example I initiated teaching of [staff] in the [hospital] and I found it to work very, very well.”*

6.8.2.5.6 Respect

The attribute of respect came up frequently in Participant 7’s interview. Basic respect for other individuals as human beings, not judging them for their opinions even if these were negatively directed at her, having respect for people’s ability and capability and respect for her patients were derived from her responses. Self-respect was also evident, as she recognised her own value and stood by her principles when challenged. She communicated an intent to treat people fairly and respectfully regardless of how antagonistic they may have been toward her and engaging with them on only the objective aspects of their work. To neutralise conflict she avoided personal evaluations and referred to university policy and procedure where necessary to justify her decisions if they were challenged.

6.8.2.5.7 Persuasion

Participant 7 influenced her staff by getting them to recognise their own capability and verbalising her confidence in them. She used a gentle approach to guide their actions by conveying information in a kind rather than authoritative manner, highlighting what they had done well and suggesting areas that they could improve upon. Wording her messages positively also made it easier for her to gain buy-in and acceptance; *“I get their buy-in all the time, I think it’s being kind. I think they are young people who are struggling to do this work, they are battling in difficult circumstances and we have to see through all that.”*

6.8.2.5.8 Behavioural insight

In her understanding, people are different, *“there are so many types of people so you just have to deal with different types of people and see how it goes”* by communicating with them at a level they relate to. She noted gender differences in behaviour and these are described under the challenges related to working with men and in the next section about specific behaviours that women may display in the workplace.

6.8.2.6 Perceived behaviours of women at work

6.8.2.6.1 Receptive to assistance

In her experience, women tend to be more willing to ask for assistance and female students are more open to corrective action when being evaluated.

6.8.2.6.2 Naiveté

Participant 7 mentioned that women tend to be more innocent and that their naiveté could land them in unanticipated problem situations if they became involved in personal relationships at the workplace.

6.8.2.6.3 Flirting

Flirting with male colleagues in order to get their attention and her way can backfire and damage a woman's credibility. Participant 7 mentioned that women are naturally charming and do not have to make an extra effort to be noticed. She stated that such behaviour had typically been responded to with expressions of disgust by her male colleagues.

6.8.2.6.4 Confidence

Participant 7 believed that women generally lack confidence in the workplace and felt they should believe in themselves so that they could exercise greater assertiveness rather than succumb to social pressures.

6.8.2.6.5 Investment in personal well-being and development

As a doctor Participant 7 found it concerning that many women neglected their physical health and well-being by not going for regular medical check-ups and that education on health and nutrition was generally lacking. In the work context, Participant 7 suggested that women needed to learn to be firm but not pushy in their interactions and decisions. They needed to continuously upgrade their education and "*apply their intellectual capacity*" instead of wasting their skills. For Muslim women in particular, she recommended that they improve their knowledge of religious texts to empower themselves.

6.8.2.7 Opportunities

6.8.2.7.1 Challenges as opportunities

Participant 7 regarded difficult situations or obstacles as opportunities for problem-solving and making improvements to the way things were done at work. She would communicate to her staff that there was nothing too difficult that they could not do and they needed to see what they could improve.

6.8.2.7.2 Leadership development opportunities

Participant 7 reports not having intended to become a leader, but rather to be the best that she could within her job role. She had a number of opportunities, however, which assisted her development as a leader and these included writing a number of publications, travelling in Africa and overseas, taking sabbaticals in India and Canada. The different environments and experiences helped her grow and develop skills that she applied in her leadership role.

6.8.2.7.3 Bursaries

Coming from a disadvantaged background, Participant 7 could not afford medical studies, but produced good academic results that got her bursaries awarded throughout high school and university.

6.9 PARTICIPANT 8

6.9.1 Participant's background

Participant 8 is a journalist who writes for a mainstream news house and is the owner of an NGO that imparts knowledge and skills to empower women and disadvantaged communities. She also teaches children and adults on Islamic subjects and Arabic and has recently started a marketing and communications company. She is a single mother to a 10-year-old son.

6.9.2 Emerging themes

Participant 8's interview covered a range of factors that roughly fitted into three overall contexts. The first was her sense of identity and perceptions of herself based on introspection and her interactions with others. The second aspect was her ideological journey that formed and shaped her current worldview and was essentially rooted in her experiences with Islamic ideologies and how they are expressed in South African Muslim society. The

last aspect is about her current role as a leader, the lessons she has learnt through the challenges experienced and the strengths she has developed and applies as director and founding member of an NGO.

6.9.4.1 Identity and hijab

Participant 8 tends to be introspective with regard to challenges experienced and in order to make sense of these and find meaning in them, she evaluates them from a spiritual perspective. Having been brought up by parents who were “*practising Muslims*” and “*morally upright*”, her religious identity was established but they did not follow any particular religious movement and her exposure to these varying ideologies influenced her own perspective as an adult. Having adopted the Muslim attire of hijab (headscarf) was a strongly perceived part of her identity and served as a predictor of how she would be accepted in different social contexts.

Since her work involves a high degree of social involvement, her headscarf sometimes created false barriers, particularly earlier in her media career and when she dealt with non-Muslims; “*he wanted to offer me a job at the Mercury which is quite a thing for you to get offered a job, but there’s just one problem, the scarf on your head may be a problem. I said why would the scarf be a problem? He said, “Look, people may be uncomfortable with it at work and why can’t you be like...’ And he mentioned another journalist. ‘She only wears that when there’s some kind of a big occasion in the Muslim community and uh this other guy only wears his religious garb on a Friday.’ And I said well I wear it every day, this is my choice,” “I was the only Muslim woman in the entire (newspaper group) who wore a headscarf.”* At the time Muslim women were grossly under-represented in the media industry and less likely to be showcased because their modesty had to be protected, the Tabliqi view being “*the women who are really good wouldn’t want to be interviewed.*”

The participant had meant to interview girls in nikaab (face covering) who were scholars within a very conservative madressa (religious educational institution) and they challenged her view of the work she was doing as Islamically unacceptable; *“They had told me that if you don’t have a Sheikh, Shaytaan would be your guide and that you need to be, covering the face is compulsory, and working in the environment that I’m working in is wrong, is haraam, I shouldn’t be travelling with a ghair mahram, a photographer, and whatever, whatever, whatever. And I obviously assimilated all of this and started to feel I was doing something wrong and this as Islam in its greatest form and that this was what I wanted to be”*. She subsequently began to feel “restless” and after an altercation at work regarding her refusal to cover a horse-racing story, as any form of gambling is considered forbidden in Islam, she resigned, began to wear the nikaab and started attending the same madressa.

She subsequently got married to her first husband and relocated to a strictly conservative suburb and madressa, but was divorced within a few months: *“My mother-in-law was waiting for me and she sat across the room for me and played this story about how she has to guide me because I’m educated and educated girls don’t know how to make a home and her son is very unhappy and miserable.”* Later when she attended Arabic classes at another madressa, she described the Muslim women: *“It was fairly moderate, because not all of them were in nikaab, a lot of them were professionals coming to study Arabic, there was a lot of conservatism as well, like the teacher would teach from behind a purdah, like totally enclosed but it was purely Arabic, there was no ideology, no Tabliq ideology so or anything like that. It was just Arabic, a very strong grounding in Arabic and I really enjoyed it.”*

6.9.4.2 Ideologies and leadership

The main movements or Islamic ideologies that Participant 8 was exposed to were the Deobandi, Tabliqi, Sunni and Salafi. The main difference between

them is the manner in which Islamic religious texts, the Qur'an and Sunnah, are interpreted and actioned. Participant 8's early exposure to particularly conservative Islamic ideologies, which are largely Indo-Pak in origin, began to lose favour with her when she went on the Hajj pilgrimage to Saudi Arabia and interacted with Muslims of various nationalities. Having learnt Arabic, she was able to converse easily and was introduced to a more intellectual Islamic Salafi movement, which advocated a version of the faith based more strictly on Qur'anic principles as a more concise yet still conservative version of Islam without any cultural influence.

6.9.4.2.1 Conservatism and the Tabliqi tradition

The majority of South African Indian Muslims follow either Sunni or Tabliqi traditions, both conservative, but many also incorporated the teachings of a famous moulana (religious teacher) who has successfully assisted to reform many Muslims who were engaging in haraam, 'forbidden' activities and was a revered figure and a household name in the Muslim community. Participant 8 described him as an "*enigma*", a community leader whom she had followed at the time of meeting him at his madressa and later persuaded her family to attend his lectures and become his followers; "*It was like a clan almost but at the same token it had a lot of positive effects on people ... through his guidance and through his help and maybe at that time in my life that was what I needed.*" However, Participant 8 also encountered specific challenges, including being "*brainwashed*", "*You felt that no ideology was being forced down your throat although subtly it was, right*". She also did not agree with the girls of the madressa being fed the moulana's left-over food and tea and while she felt a sense of camaraderie with them initially, they made her feel guilty about the nature of her work, as it involved travelling and working with a 'ghair mahram' (non-relative) male, which was haraam.

The hypocrisy she perceived served to push her further away from this following, since they were contrary to her own values, as the female teachers

would use discriminatory terms to describe black people and gossip about the girls they taught in their absence, particularly if they had been observed without their hijab. Any differences in opinion or perspective were discouraged and reprimanded: *“When they heard I was reading his (Tariq Ramadaan) books, I mentioned it innocently, the aapas (female teachers) were like ‘Oh you know, he’s deviant and he’s this and he’s that’ and they got really angry , they got really worked up about it and I noticed that there were a lot of hypocrisies at the madressa like the aapas would refer to black people as kaaryas, which I felt was a derogatory term and they would be very judgemental about girls, talking about them behind their back, you know so and so girl was not wearing her scarf and her cloak and her pardah outside madressa”*. While the ritualistic aspects of the faith are emphasised, Participant 8’s concern was that *“there’s no one teaching you how to be a better Muslim in your interactions with other people and we feel that’s very, very important, and that is a gap that needs to be filled in the community.”*

At the Tabliqi institute she *“lasted about two days”* because she disagreed with the moulanas’ treatment of the girls there, their mocking them over how some of the girls conducted their prayers and the syllabus, which promoted their ideology. On challenging their leadership, she was told that the funders were ultimately the decision-makers and she had to *“toe the line”*. Her *“rebellious streak”* against religious authorities in both madressas resulted in her being rejected and also led to the breakdown of her first marriage. In addition, she elicited severe resistance and received personal threats from the Tabliqi and Sunni sects of the community when she conducted a live interview on radio with a Salafi scholar who presented alternate views of Islamic history.

6.9.4.2.2 Salafi tradition

Participant 8 described the Salafi tradition as being more inclusive and chose these international scholars to speak at conferences she hosted annually, which turned out to be very successful. *“I wanted to look at how we could*

apply the teachings of the Prophet SAW regarding societal relations most of which were grounded in Medina not in Mecca, Mecca was more about aqida and beliefs and Medina was about interactions and how we could apply that to today's time. I was very passionate about eliminating things like racism and class prejudice and gender-based prejudices within the community and it was very successful, it was free, we got sponsors. I would say about 200 to 300 people attended. We brought down one of the most famous Saudi scholars who was in jail for a while for revolting against the Saudi government and he is phenomenal, he's very liberal and very moderate in his outlook."

A magazine she launched for Muslim women looked at issues facing Muslim women from this framework and also served as the foundation for the values of equality promoted in the activities of her NGO; *"Our ideology changed, our evolution still continued in terms of ideology because one day we heard of Tariq Ramadaan doing a lecture at UKZN and we went to listen to him ... and we were really amazed by his thinking and how contextual he was and how open he was towards dialogue with people from other religious groups and how non-prejudicial he was and how intellectual in his thinking and his opinion and ethics and ethics is like the cornerstone of Tariq Ramadaan and his beliefs and his character. I'm not saying he's flawless, he definitely has his flaws, he does but he was very attractive to us on these levels and so we invited him to South Africa ... more people started to come and many women were like 'Wow! We've never heard of this man' and his books became popularised ... made a huge impact and got us to rethink our strategies as well"*. Participant 8 therefore did not integrate easily with her first place of employment because she was too 'Muslim' and later was not Islamic enough, if she did not conform to the ways of the madressas she attended. She did, however, identify with the teachings and values of Salafi scholars and adopted their philosophies, particularly their regard for the treatment of human beings with equality and with respect.

Regarding the authenticity of Salafi traditions, Participant 8 mentions, *“I had started to read books which didn’t conform to what that particular environment found acceptable so I was now reading books by a Salafi scholar called Bilal Phillips and at the time he was unheard of in South Africa, apart from very few people and he in himself is quite extreme right, at that time, he’s evolved now but he was very anti-Tabliq Jamaat and anti-following a madhab and anti-salaami and moulood [forms of prayer] and whatever. And I liked his books because they were very, very well referenced and sourced. And I didn’t find that Indo-Pak books were like that. Every book of his had a list of Hadith and told you whether the Hadith was authentic, fabricated, weak. And all of this was new to me, I didn’t even know that there was this in the world of Hadith and he used a lot of Qur’anic ayah to show that there were differences of opinion about things that were taken for granted in the community.”* The Salafi tradition therefore allows for moderation and differences of opinion, being more inclusive in comparison to the more conservative movements that had been established earlier in South Africa. Non-conservative Muslims may typically be labelled *“modernists”* for not conforming to stereotypical attitudes. Some international Islamic academic institutions from this ideological framework would refrain from interacting with South African Muslim educational institutions because of the stricter level of conservatism, *“They were like no you know, we don’t want to come to South Africa, don’t know the community, seems very conservative. We do a lot of research, we very professional, we don’t just go into a community like that.”*

6.9.4.3 Leadership

6.9.4.3.1 Leadership roles

Participant 8 initially worked as a freelance journalist, but currently owns a marketing and communications company. The NGO she established initially intended to provide Arabic and Islamic educational programmes and events, then went on to host conferences, which were very successful. At present it continues with similar projects, some smaller-scale programmes to empower

women, as well as various humanitarian projects in the region, which aim to uplift communities from an Islamic ethos.

6.9.4.3.2 Adaptive leadership style

Participant 8 considered her leadership to be characterised by clear communication about her expectations, which can sometimes be perfectionistic, and she can become annoyed if these standards are not met. She describes herself as compassionate and understanding regarding the personal circumstances of her staff. Rather than adopting a fixed style, her behaviour with her staff is mixed and adaptive: *“It’s very complicated. I don’t know how to define it, it could be autocratic in some ways but then on the other it’s not always autocratic. If I’m busy with something, like ya, I don’t know”, “But on the other hand I can be very soft, I feel sorry for them like ag shame you know, their situations are not so good. Let’s give her a raise.”* She had not clearly defined her leadership style and rather adapted her behaviour as situations arose. She also described the contributions and value that individual staff members brought to the organisation, giving them recognition for this and treating them fairly in order to discourage stereotypes about different national, racial and cultural groups.

Where decisions needed to be made, Participant 8 believed she was inclusive of others’ views. She uses prayer to seek guidance but still likes to maintain ownership over her own area of expertise. *“I believe in the tool of Salaatul Istikhara with a lot of the decisions that we have to make and I also like, I also believe that a leader should consult but there are certain things that I am very possessive about. Like when it comes to the media side of the organisation I don’t like to ask what do you guys think of this advert and what do you think of that advert. I feel like that’s my baby and I can do it. But if there’s something else I like to ask them what do you think about us doing this particular programme at this time and calling it this and taking inputs and whatever.”*

6.9.4.3.3 Networking

Having to interact with a lot of people, meeting with key or targeted sponsors, is something she would do personally rather than delegate. *“I MC most of our stuff, anything communications-related I will do and basically giving directives.”*

6.9.4.3.4 Delegation

Communicating with and monitoring employees became necessary as Participant 8's tasks were increasingly delegated. *“I'm now more and more taking a backseat from everyday involvement to more a directorship and overseeing role so giving instruction, drafting contracts of employment, uhm stipulating employees' rules, keeping a check on them, their hours, that they fulfilling what they supposed to be doing, checking the output what's coming out.”* She learnt to differentiate between the work roles of herself and her employees and would personally attend to those tasks that required greater skill or accountability.

6.9.4.4 Leadership strengths

When asked about leadership strengths she believed to be effective, her response coincided with the responses she gave about leadership style and emphasised relational aspects in respect of those she works with. Being a 'peoples' person', being assertive and exercising justice and equality, were offered as strengths. Being able to relate to people at their level, yet at the same time being firm about the expectations associated with designated roles and responsibilities and receiving respect, were also mentioned.

6.9.4.4.1 Peoples' person

A leader's strength, according to Participant 8, lies in being able to relate to anyone regardless of their status in the work context. *“Ya, so I think that a*

leader should be a peoples' person, and not up there and somebody who people are afraid of but someone who they feel they can come and talk to but they can also have an element of respect for them. They know, you know what, she is leader and we need to respect the particular terms of the contract by which we are bound to whatever it is she is leading, uhm but by the same token she's our sister, she's our friend and we can talk to her."

6.9.4.4.2 Justice

Justice and equality, were promoted over an organisational hierarchy and Participant 8 was conscious and careful about the type of language used to communicate with employees so that they would not perceive differences between each other and encouraged working together rather than underneath each other.

6.9.4.4.3 Breaking barriers

For Muslim women as leaders, Participant 8 emphasised the importance of being able to break down barriers and relate to people who come from different backgrounds. This requires a set of strengths including empathy, kindness, justice, assertiveness, accountability and fairness. *"Being a South African Muslim woman and being a leader, you have to know how to break down barriers because there are a lot of them in our community, whether it's between women in parda and women in hijab or women in hijab and women who don't wear hijab or uh black people and white people or white people and Indian people or, there are so many barriers, ideological, racial, income-based, age-based, and in order to break down these barriers you need to be a very understanding person, you need to have a lot of empathy, you have to have a good listening ear, you've got to be kind, you've got to be just, you've got to be non-oppressive have to have a but you also have to be firm and you have to be accountable and you always need to hear both sides the story as well (fair) and you always have to really think things through."* She regarded empathy as a stronger female characteristic and being firm or assertive as

easier for some females than others, while justice and fairness were seen to be gender neutral.

6.9.4.4.4 Ethics

The way in which the organisation operates and the manner in which it serves its stakeholders are also based on Participant 8's values of non-discrimination and promoting Islam through the organisation as a universal religion rather than reserved for Indians. The exposure to Tariq Ramadaan's lectures on ethics influenced her employment practices and the appointment of staff was "*strategic*", as she deliberately employed a multiracial staff complement in order to "*demonopolise Islam*" and recognises her staff for their merits rather than the colour of their skin.

6.9.4.4.5 Self-management

Positive qualities and skills that Participant 8 believed were essential to effective leadership included self-management, which consisted of time management, prioritisation and delegation. These were important to her as a mother, as she found there was a lot to do and initially she took on all the responsibility but was still struggling financially. "*I used to do everything for the organisation initially, the marketing, the admin, the fundraising, everything, and it took its toll on me because as a mother I found that I didn't have time to do a lot of things and also I didn't have the time to make enough money to sustain myself because I felt uncomfortable about taking ... So essentially I'm director, I'm also trustee and I'm the founding member right, and uhm basically currently my roles have evolved so as I take on new staff my roles become reduced.*" Because women have multiple roles as "*mothers, wives, career women ... it's not possible to do everything all the time*", so women need to be able to recognise the limitations regarding how much they can actually do and it is essential for them to be able to delegate with accountability. This also frees up time for her to focus on core business and liaising with stakeholders for new opportunities.

6.9.4.4.6 Passion for writing

Participant 8 had made study choices within the field of humanities from the outset and planned her studies to fulfil what she described as her passions. The first was cricket, since she came from a close-knit family of avid cricket lovers and she planned to cover the team her family supported as a sports journalist. Her second, significant passion was writing and she decided to abandon university studies after completing her first year very successfully in favour of a Technikon diploma in journalism. This decision was somewhat difficult for her to come to because of her own and perceived social pressure that a university was preferable, since she was an academic achiever, *“And uhm, it was not seen as being, you know politically correct if I can use that term, if you got an A aggregate to go to Tech. So there was kind of subtle pressure not from my immediate family but from within myself and society to go the University route as opposed to the Tech route”*. Following and developing this passion has resulted in her establishment as a regular freelance writer for a national newspaper and more recently she has also founded a marketing and communications company. The last passion she mentioned was the elimination of prejudices and discrimination on the basis of race, socio-economic status and gender, which she actively promotes in her NGO activities.

6.9.4.5 Leadership development for women

Participant 8 encouraged openness to experience, good or bad, whether in the form of criticism or opportunities to work with others. All agreements about working relationships with others need to be written and formalised, in keeping with Islamic ethical conduct. Furthermore, Participant 8 believed that Muslim women could be better leaders by spiritually connecting with their creator, engaging in prayer when decisions need to be made and linking all their efforts for his pleasure rather than to link it back to the person's ego.

6.9.4.6 Challenges

6.9.4.6.1 Lack of assertiveness

Challenges Participant 8 experienced in her leadership role included giving instructions and dealing with confrontation, because of her lack of assertiveness, *“a lot of the time I don’t like giving directives because I’m not an assertive person in terms of that, I get [Faiza] to do the dirty work so to speak. Like if there’s a problem with someone, the organisation, I’ll tell [Faiza] to handle it because she’s fine, it doesn’t bother her afterwards. With me it will be like no. I did something wrong, I shouldn’t have done this, I shouldn’t have done that.”* Her response to conflict with individuals at different levels provokes an emotional response and she tends to doubt herself and her actions.

6.9.4.6.2 Delegation

She also described having to let go of some tasks and delegating them to others as difficult, as she felt that by not being involved she was not exercising good leadership. Over time she came to the conclusion that ownership of those duties belonged to the appointed staff and her own role was limited to oversight of the activity, *“A leader should consult but there are certain things that I am very possessive about”, “And I think you also have to be willing to let go, because I find that very difficult. To cut back on involvement, I feel like if I’m not involved everyday then I’m not a leader. But you need to realise that’s not what leadership is, you have your finger on the pulse, you know what’s going on, but you don’t physically have to be there every day. You have to be there for important occasions, to convey what you about or what the organisation is about but you don’t need to be there every day from 9 to 12, like the administrative assistant is.”*

6.9.4.6.3 Stereotyping

Other organisational challenges she dealt with were securing funding for ongoing projects and the communication barriers created by stereotyping and intolerance in the Muslim community. Misogyny and being side-lined as a leader because she was a woman were some of the reactions she had to deal with from the Muslim community: *“There was a woman who mass distributed pamphlets about what a disgusting person I am because I’m doing this salaah (prayer) and I’m interacting with all the men.”* The lack of confidence among people about accepting the views of others, the intolerance, such as the statement by a religious scholar who *“once said on radio that I am part of the party of Shaytaan (Devil) because of my views on Eid salaah”*, and her friendships were strained because of the religious conflict encountered in her work, *“those kinds of challenges and not only that, the Salafi side as well will say oh you know, like one of my friends is not allowed to be friends with me anymore because her husband says I bring down Tariq Ramadaan so until I make taubah (repent), we can’t be friends anymore. And I’m friends with an activist and as long as I accommodate her I can’t be friends anymore because they modernists and whatever, it’s basically stereotyping and intolerance”*. If a Muslim should adopt a standpoint on issues that is different from the majority of the community, it may therefore be met with severe criticism and hostility.

6.9.4.6.4 Business partnerships with men

Conducting business with male partners was also challenging when partners who had invested in a common interest at a later stage decided to leave or deal with new or different stakeholders. These ventures typically started off very well, but later disintegrated, particularly if financial rewards were perceived by Participant 8’s associates to be better elsewhere. Dealing with these disintegrating relationships was difficult for her and she would often feel disappointed and used. When she came up against Muslim men in a conflict of interest over a business interest or religious matters, their advantage of being “funders” and male undermined her ability to change the situation and her gender was used against her. *“And then, some Muslim guys who came*

from a wealthy background, started to express an interest in (the venture) and started to talk about how they would like to be involved in it and whatever. And they spoke to (the partner) and he started to speak about how it's not appropriate for women to run this organisation and (female colleague) and I are like men trapped in the bodies of women and it should be men at the forefront of Dawah, not the women and we started to feel a bit affronted and my brother also warned us that it looks like this man is going to be using you guys, he is just piggy-backing off you and when push comes to shove he's just going to dump you guys and ya, I feel that's what happened ... he started to suggest that these other people be brought in as trustees, people we didn't even know very well but he would say well they've given your organisation money so based on the fact that they have wealth you should bring them in. And there were a lot of other character discrepancies about him and a lot of people didn't like him, like he was very business minded in the manner which he ran his organisation, so it fell through, okay {sounds a little emotional here}. It was a very hard time for me, I took it very, very badly. I was actually gutted. He also poached one of our employees."

6.9.4.7 Supportive factors

6.9.4.7.1 Family support

Having a supportive family structure that stood by her in the often unpopular decisions she made helped buffer the impact of some of the criticism and challenges. Her father and brother also encouraged her, even if the public disagreed with her views, *"and all this happens, it doesn't bother me because I have a really strong support system ... My father will tell my mother, "Good! Tell her to carry on. They don't like it, let her carry on giving it to them." And my brother as well, "good, give it to them", then on Facebook as well, my brother will give it to anybody who says anything that's whatever."*

6.10 PARTICIPANT 9

6.10.1 Participant's background

Participant 9 studied medicine on completion of secondary school and subsequently specialised. She is responsible for the academic and clinical services of her department and the training of new specialists.

6.10.2 Emerging themes

6.10.2.1 Leadership

Participant 9 described her leadership style as fairly informal, *"I'm a very easy-going person, and I believe in democracy and always consulted with my staff,"* She described her department as close-knit and visitors would experience the department's atmosphere as friendly, often asking about internship opportunities. Regular monthly departmental meetings took place to facilitate communication and training. She did not perceive any significant challenges in executing her role as a leader and attributed this to being just in all her undertakings, as described in the later section on strengths.

6.10.2.2 Career opportunities

6.10.2.2.1 Studying on bursaries

As a high-achieving student, Participant 9 was offered a bursary and she took up studies in medicine under the recommendation of her school principal. She continued to excel at medical school and was subsequently awarded two further bursaries, completed her studies and specialised in a niche field with fewer specialists that allowed her to grow and develop the profession within the province with little competition from peers. She had access to and would apply for vacancies as they came up and progressed from being a consultant to eventually becoming head of department and professor. As a practising but

not “*ultra-conservative*” Muslim woman, she felt that her religion and gender played no significantly negative role in her career development.

6.10.2.2 Workplace transformation

Her being an Indian female was a supportive factor for promotion, “*once I assumed the post there were no challenges because the university was also transforming and the government had transformed. They saw the need for females and of another colour you know.*” What she was recognised for was her professional contribution through her broad experience and advancing clinical practice in the geographical region. Her responsibilities included founding the specialty syllabus, academic and clinical supervision of interns and medical staff and she served on the executive committee and specialist examination board. Where previously the public only had access to a specialist at a central government hospital, her training of qualified specialists led to clinical services being extended nationally and to the rural areas in the province where people typically have no access to these services and have to wait six months to be seen to at a central government hospital.

6.10.2.3 Supportive family structure

Early on, Participant 9’s father encouraged her to continue her studies after high school although he was very poor and could not afford to pay for her studies. Socially, it was also the norm for girls to leave school and assume domestic responsibilities “*So I studied mainly on bursaries because my father was very poor, he was a shop assistant. He couldn’t you know, pay for education, but he really encouraged us and he wanted us to study. Because in those days girls had to leave school but my father was progressive enough to keep me there, you know continue at university.*” Later on in her career her husband supported her career by encouraging her and relieving her of her home responsibilities. “*I didn’t have any children so that made it easier and my husband is not ultra-conservative, you know he isn’t a conservative Muslim so he encouraged me totally and he stood by me 100%. In fact he*

freed me of certain household obligations so I could go to any postgraduate exams, postgraduate meetings without him coming in the way, you know. I didn't have to get special permission. He saw it as part of my job and he allowed me to do so. He was 100% behind me." Neither Participant 9's father nor her husband was conservative with regard to religion and from her perspective this allowed her a greater opportunity to attend to her career.

6.10.2.4 Challenges

6.10.2.4.1 Service provision to patients

The challenges Participant 9 reported were related to having to provide medical services to patients at a government hospital, in terms of being accessible and seeing to large volumes of patients. She responded to the shortage of specialists in her field by proposing a syllabus and training additional specialists.

6.10.2.4.2 Discrimination and political transformation

She had experienced discrimination on the basis of her race on application for a vacant post, as but still got the position because there were no other applications; *"Until 1994 the university itself was run by whites and you know, they were looking for whites. In fact the Indian dean phoned a white specialist from Johannesburg to come and take over this department you know, so that was the challenge of overcoming those racial barriers."* The situation later reversed with the implementation of employment equity policies, which promoted her suitability as a female candidate of colour.

6.10.2.4.3 Changed policies and procedures

The transitional period did present its own procedural set of challenges and increased the workload and red tape involved when resources needed to be procured. *"That was a big challenge, providing service with the load of service*

work at the hospital was tremendous and also another challenge was the Department of Health wanted to do everything in the new democratic way and we had to do a lot of paperwork for training and new guidelines for managing the major diseases and that took a lot of time ... When I took over in '94, you know the new government wanted to do everything in a new way ... I was really writing motivations for extra staff, for extra trainees and new drugs and current drugs and it was a very busy period and I also enrolled for my PhD and my PhD had to take a back seat because there was so much to do as head of department." As head of her department she was one of the first to diversify its staff composition while the other departments continued to employ male Indians or whites.

6.10.2.5 Positive strengths

6.10.2.5.1 Achievement, initiative, courage, honesty, persistence and justice

From her interview the positive psychological strengths derived were her tendencies to be an *achiever* by consistently achieving top grades in her studies and showing *initiative* by creating a syllabus for herself and others, when she found that this was lacking. Compiling the syllabus made a significant contribution to her speciality in her field. Participant 9 believed that in order to be an effective leader, the qualities of *courage and honesty* were important. She also emphasised the quality of *justice*, as "*staff must not see you as being unjust then you will never get their cooperation.*" When asked about how she managed to overcome the racial barriers she had faced prior to the political transition, Participant 9 stated that it was necessary to be "*persistent*" and maintain a sense of self-worth.

6.10.2.5.2 Gender and compassion as a strength

While Participant 9 regarded courage, honesty and justice as gender-free strengths, she emphasised honesty and justice more and in addition ascribed

compassion to women, while she regarded men as ambitious. *“I think women have more compassion and as doctors, make excellent doctors ... I think in general women have a great inner strength, not super-ambitious as men are ... you know it’s a female characteristic to be fair in your dealings and be honest. Because you’re not super-ambitious, you’re not going to step on other people’s toes to reach where you want to be.”* When questioned about her supposed lack of ambition by her male superior because she was taking longer than expected to complete her PhD study, Participant 9 explained that service to her patients was her priority. His focus was academic ambition, whereas hers was compassion for patients.

6.10.2.5.3 Islamically based strengths

The religiously based strengths that Participant 9 mentioned were *justice* and *discipline*. She specifically referred to justice as an important strength in her leadership role: *“Islam teaches you to be just and [in] my role as a leader I was just in all my undertakings, so that helped”*. However, she acknowledges that other religions promote similar values. On the Islamic value of discipline, she stated, *“you know we have to be disciplined to follow the rituals of our prayers and I think that the five pillars are so important in Islam and nothing about Islam is unjust or something that you can’t do or difficult to do, it’s in the capability of all humans to do the basic requirements for Islam.”*

6.11 PARTICIPANT 10

6.11.1 Participant’s background

Participant 10 completed a pharmacy degree, served her internship and went on to simultaneously pursue her master’s degree and work in academia as a junior lecturer. She was awarded a PhD fellowship in the United Kingdom and continued with a broader academic portfolio (under- and postgraduate) when

she returned to South Africa. She attained her PhD and progressed through academic promotions to professorship, became head of school and was the appointed dean at the time of her interview.

6.11.2 Emerging themes

6.11.2.1 Transition into a leadership role

Participant 10 serves as a leader in her job role as dean and also chairs/sits on various national health committees. She went through a step-by step progression of roles and felt that a strong foundation and knowledge base was important before being appointed in a leadership capacity. She gained experience in her own speciality, became familiar with the generic academic rules, regulations and procedures and her research supervision role exposed her further to the other health disciplines at the university and enhanced her multi-disciplinary insight. Initially linear and specialised, her educational knowledge expanded to be broader and multi-disciplinary, which led to her appointment as dean. Because of employment equity opportunities being opened up to women, she had the opportunity to apply for more senior jobs, but was aware of the competition for better positions and insisted on being appointed on the basis of merit rather than gender. *“They were trying to ensure that there were women representatives in leadership. I was quite adamant in saying give it to me because I earned it on merit and not because I am a woman, however I applied for it and was given the position. This was a position that others wanted so I had a challenging time at the beginning to get everybody on board and to accept my leadership style.”*

6.11.2.2 Leadership style

Participant 10 regards herself as a *“transformational leader”* who attempts to bring about positive change in others and her environment.

6.11.2.2.1 Communication

In her interactions with peers she prefers to address issues “*tactfully and diplomatically*” and believes that leaders are in a position to apply their power positively or negatively. She prefers to help and take people along with her. “*I prefer to hold the hands of people, they are some very nice leaderships sayings like, you either move up pulling people up or stepping on people, so I prefer to pull people up.*”

6.11.2.2.2 Influence

Her staff is cohesive as a group and she stated that she gains their buy-in and support by motivating the benefits of a course of action rather than directing others.

6.11.2.3 Leadership strengths

6.11.2.3.1 Nine E's of leadership

Participant 10 applies a list of strengths she defined for herself, called the Nine E's of leadership. These include excellence, example, empathy, ethics, equity, emancipatory and enabling, “*I have, I think 9 “E's” now... as the qualities of my leadership and what I try to live by, so that's the 9 E's. Excellence is not an event it's a habit, leading by example, empathy, ethics, equity, emancipatory that's the latest one that I had added on because someone told me that I am emancipating other people in what I am doing... enabling*”. The list she provided follows:

1. **Excellence** – Aristotle said “We are what we repeatedly do. Excellence then, is not an act, but a habit.” Excel in everything you do and make excelling a way of life.
2. **Example** – Albert Schweitzer said “Example is not the main thing in influencing others, it is the only thing.”
3. **Empathy** – Treat the whole person and not just an employee in the workplace.
4. **Empowerment** – Empower your colleagues with the knowledge and skills to take responsibility for their progress personally and professionally.
5. **Enable** – Enable your colleagues with the tools and resources to reach their highest potential.
6. **Embrace** and respect diversity –Treat every person equally, irrespective of race, gender, culture or religion.
7. **Ethics**, integrity and professionalism – Ensure sound principles, values and ethical behaviour in all respects.
8. **Education** - Become a life-long learner and seek knowledge from the cradle to the grave.
9. **Emancipation** – Free yourself to explore your fullest potential.

Nine E’s of Leadership (Participant 10)

6.11.2.3.2 Multi-tasking

Being able to coordinate multiple activities concurrently, was an additional strength conveyed by Participant 10.

6.11.2.3.3 Passion

Participant 10 advocated being emotionally driven by passion as necessary in order to advance as a leader. She advised that women needed to be passionate about excelling, influencing change and making a difference in their fields. She needed to be self-motivated and willing to put in the effort. *“It’s also women looking at the opportunities and taking them on, going after them and really doing well. I suppose you need to want to be a leader and just get on with it.”* When describing how she felt about her own work she stated, *“I think academia was the place to be irrespective of that fact that if I was in private or public professional practice the salary would have been much higher. I love what I do and sometimes I can’t wait to get to work, so it’s great here.”*

6.11.2.4 Role models of leadership

Participant 10 believed that her religion as a Muslim provided an example of leadership to follow in the Prophet Muhammed (SAW). *“I think that my Islam has allowed me to be the type of leader that I am because you have the example of Prophet Muhammed (SAW) and how he led. By the word and not the sword”*, to win over the hearts of people rather than using force. As a Muslim woman leader, she sees herself as setting a precedent for female leadership based on Islamic principles, including generosity, magnanimity, forgiveness and tolerance. She has gained international recognition and believes that she serves as a good role model for Muslim girls by advancing in science at an international level. She receives a lot of positive feedback from students and the public for having achieved in education and academia while maintaining her identity and practising as a Muslim woman. Participant 10 mentioned that Muslim women need to acknowledge that that it is acceptable for them to be leaders from a religious standpoint, as the wives of the Prophet (SAW) were leaders themselves in education and religion during the establishment of Islam.

6.11.2.5 Increasing leadership trend

In her view, the trend of Muslim women occupying leadership roles is on the increase compared to the past when Muslims were typically very traditional and felt that the place for a woman was at home. More recently more women have been working without compromising their religion. *“I think that more people are becoming aware that we are not compromising our religion in becoming women leaders and that as long as you are true to your religion you can do both things.”*

6.11.2.6 Integrating career and religion

Participant 10 does not view her faith and work as a scientist as opposing ideologies, but rather as science being one aspect of the Islamic faith. As an

integrated individual she accepts empirical, observable phenomena as well as submitting to the unknown, since submission is a pivotal aspect of Islam. *“So first and foremost you are a Muslim and I feel I had a good grounding and I think first [about] who I am, as well as all the scientific knowledge but together with Islam, together it makes me a whole person. It’s all integrated and I hope I am not compromising one for the other.”* Maintaining her religious identity and sustaining career achievement were mutually possible goals, with neither having to be compromised because of her field of work, religious beliefs or her conservative attire. She continues to wear her hijab, which identifies her as a Muslim woman and does not limit her functional competence in any way.

6.11.2.7 Support structure

Opportunities and support for women’s advancement are more common than before, so although women who are mothers may take gap years to care for their children, they could still succeed at work. With opportunities, drive and passion and a good support system, Participant 10 felt that women were also able to achieve in the workplace and as leaders. Her own family was supportive of her career. Participant 10’s father was uneducated and her mother had been a teacher, but both of them valued education and encouraged her to study further to postgraduate level. Her husband gives her the freedom to pursue her career goals and continuously encourages her.

6.11.2.8 Challenges

6.11.2.8.1 Broad scope of learning

Having progressed from heading up a school of her own discipline to being dean of the faculty required additional learning about the other health disciplines for which she was responsible. *“I had working knowledge of university policies and procedures as they pertained to me as a staff member and as they pertained to a small department. So when I became the leader and I was going to lead 13 different disciplines all with their own uniqueness,*

it took a lot of time and effort to really understand the disciplines and it was a huge learning curve for me. It also was for me a, I just felt that I had to lead from a position of knowledge and intimate knowledge of whatever I was doing.” This challenge was a positive one for Participant 10, as it allowed her to expand her expertise of the various health fields, the areas of institutional management related to policies and procedures, student support, human resources, and Health Professionals’ Council of South Africa accreditation, as well as promote the faculty’s research capability and teaching practice, *“at the same time trying to forefront the academic endeavour, excellence in teaching and learning ... (the university) didn’t have such a big research focus, but to get everybody on board and to go for the I PhD, publish papers, I undertake research etc. so there was a lot of learning about different disciplines, trying to lead on the basis of broad and intimate knowledge and take it forward.”*

6.11.2.8.2 Discrimination

Participant 10 experienced a degree of discrimination because of her age as she was promoted to the position of dean when she was only 37 and her peers considered her to be young and inexperienced. To an extent she overcompensated for this by excelling in her knowledge. She also had to deal with stereotypical notions from her national and international peers, of Muslim women being oppressed and subjugated because of her conservative dressing. Over time and as people got to know her, they were surprised at her sense of humour and outspokenness and learned to identify her less with the stereotype and more with her professional and personal contributions. *“I dress this way because I am true to myself and I am true to my religion and it doesn’t prevent me from doing anything that I wish to do while still being true to myself and true to my religion. So I think that at first you stereotyped but when people get to know you and they hear you speak and they know you coming from a position of knowledge, it’s not what you look like that matters anymore, it’s what contributions you making and what knowledge you have. I guess it takes a little bit of time but the world is changing.”*

6.11.2.8.3 Religious restrictions

Participant 10 experienced internal conflict about having to travel for work without the company of her husband as a mahram, which is an Islamic requirement for women when travelling further than a day's distance from home. She also found it uncomfortable to observe social niceties that involve physically touching the opposite gender, such as hugging and kissing. While she will sometimes succumb to a handshake, she is very conscious of it being Islamically inappropriate, *"two of the examples I struggle with, the greeting and the travel. I do both, but my conscience, I sort of reflect on it and bother on it a bit."*

6.11.2.8.4 Conservative culture

Participant 10 noted that cultural issues and not religious requirements served as a significant barrier preventing Muslim women from progressing within leadership. In Muslim countries and patriarchal societies this obstacle is more pronounced, but in a democratic country such as South Africa where gender equity and women's empowerment exist, *"I think that culture and cultural issues really preclude women from taking on the leadership they would or otherwise be destined to take on. And its breaking those types of barriers, it's easier in a democracy in a non-Muslim country, were democracy, equity, women's empowerment etc. is fore fronted. Whereas in other countries it's not that easy."*

6.11.2.9 Opportunities

6.11.2.9.1 Education

Having chosen to study pharmacy to post-graduate level, Participant 10 had the opportunity to accept a doctoral fellowship overseas and gain international experience. However, she also felt that in lieu of the opportunity received she needed to give back to the university on her return to South Africa and chose to take on work on various committees. This opened up further opportunities

for her, as she learnt more about how higher education works and her previous line manager gave her the opportunity to attend leadership development programmes on topics such as higher institution management, financing and performance management.

6.12 PARTICIPANT 11

6.12.1 Participant 11's background

Participant 11 worked and studied simultaneously, in a field that was related to her line of work and enabled her to specialise in a niche area in property management. She was successively employed at three major financial institutions and worked her way up the corporate ladder as she gained experience and “*grew from the lowest position through to the most senior.*”

6.12.2 Emerging themes

6.12.2.1 Leadership role

Participant 11's leadership developed from firstly being a “*follower of a leader*”. She then began ‘leading’ by teaching others what she had learnt. As her leadership roles progressed and her responsibilities were extended, her role as a leader became more complex. At lower levels she had to guide subordinates on running operations and at a higher level, her subordinates were senior managers and specialists who were “*basically smarter than you*”. Her leadership also evolved from focusing on overseeing operations to identifying opportunities to grow business and establish strategic relationships through networking. Consultation with key stakeholders became a core function and detailed routine functions were eliminated from her role. Her current management role is temporary and involves micro-managing rather

than working with other managers who need little guidance, so she has had to adjust to working with employees who want to be managed.

6.12.2.2 Leadership style

6.13.4.2.1 Results-based teamwork

Participant 11 appears to enjoy teaching others and describes her leadership style as being particular and driven towards results, but not autocratic. When relating to her staff she can be hard on them to achieve, but she has also been persuading and encouraging a mental shift to help them understand the value of teamwork and how they contribute to the larger team and organisational success, as they had previously been working in “*segments*” or silos.

6.12.2.3 Leadership challenges

6.12.2.3.1 Racial integration and organisational culture

Participant 11 experienced resistance from other staff and stakeholders when she accepted her more recent position, as they had favoured the white person who was previously in her role. Things were established and they were uncomfortable with the change in leadership, yet also curious. Managing their expectations of her was a challenge and she worked “*through a lot of hurdles*” in terms of these expectations until she managed to establish a family culture. As people got to know her, they learnt to respect her knowledge and experience and she learnt to establish boundaries and assert what she considered to be allowable when it came to decision-making.

6.12.2.3.2 Working with men

Participant 11 frequently had to interact with male peers and stakeholders and while they would be hesitant to deal with her in the past, over time they became used to her and would eventually be willing to listen to her opinion at

a meeting, even if they did not follow her ideas. She regarded their open attitude as an improvement in their acceptance of her as a leader. When having to deal with Muslim men in a business context, they would typically be dressed in a Kurta and observe Islamic regulations about not making eye contact with women or shaking their hands. They tended to be very “*prestigious, wealthy*” and “*will sit across for me, because they are forced to do business with me*” but would eventually “*get over it*” and realise that her intentions were strictly business-related.

6.12.2.4 Opportunities

6.12.2.4.1 Key relationships

The opportunities that Participant 11 conveyed were the potential to form new key relationships and work together towards establishing new property developments, particularly with other people with authority.

6.12.2.4.2 Female empowerment

Another opportunity she raised briefly was that her company was supportive of empowering its female employees.

6.12.2.5 Challenges

6.12.2.5.1 Parenting responsibilities

As a single parent, some of Participant 11’s main parenting concerns included the type of school her child attended. She would have preferred a Model-C education but settled for an Islamic school because pick-up and drop-off between a separate school and madressa were practically difficult for her during working time. She compares Muslim homes to other cultures and describes Muslim children as over-protected and prefers her own child to be more independent: “*I think kids, we very different from other cultures, we very protective of our kids, and I think we just need to allow them to grow up. And*

we need to realise everyday lived is a day gone, and they will grow up, they will get married and they will live their lives, and we wasted 20 years of our life. So that's what's important to me, but at the same time, you need to also spend time with them and everything else. But mmm ... no, not be overly involved ... I don't want to raise my child in that kind of way, I want her to be independent."

According to Participant 11, Muslim women need to learn that they do not have to do everything by themselves. Assistance from family and domestic workers is acceptable. Participant 11's mother assists her with some of her home responsibilities, such as cooking and caring for her daughter. Coming from three different generations, the Islamic ideology and practices they are exposed to vary somewhat and she has to intervene when her conservative mother tries to influence her daughter's perspective. She asserts her position as leader at home as well, believing that leadership begins in the home context. *"I have to come in and say hold on, this is the way it's actually done. So it's very hard and leadership is not limited to your career, leadership stems at home as well."*

6.12.2.6 Muslim women and the decision to work

6.12.2.6.1 Religious practices (salaah, hijab, fasting)

According to Participant 11, Muslim women may perceive that it is difficult to uphold religious practices if they are employed full-time in corporate jobs. However, in her experience she found that the acceptance of religious practices in the corporate world was fairly easy, as they may adopt their Islamic attire, many companies have salaah facilities and Muslim employees do not face discrimination on the basis of their religion. Companies have become more open and accepting over time so Muslim women *"need to be strong enough to make that change."* From her own experience, she adapts and accommodates her religious and work responsibilities and she chooses not to wear hijab at work, although she comes from a family where all the

women wear a headscarf. Where there are practices that need to be observed while at work, such as fasting, she does not find any conflict between the two commitments and being willing to adapt makes it easier to accommodate both. *“As far as my work is concerned they very flexible. Like in Ramadan its easy, finish early and that sort of thing. Meetings still go on, meals still go on, dinners still go on, so you just got to adapt, mmm yeah that’s kind of about it.”* The corporate environment is also fairly open to Muslim women coming to work with their Islamic attire and also provides facilities for prayer.

6.12.2.6.2 Financial security

She implies that they are less inclined to adapt to the opportunity to work because many are comfortable with depending on their husband’s income; *“Many wealthy wives that rely on their husbands mmm, I don’t know how they do it, because I don’t know if they have a character, or any sort of independence or any sort of personality, because I have met quite a few of them and they seem to just do as the husband says and it’s a great life because they get to shop all day. I mean I watch them. And they happily shopping and spending all his money on coffee and this and that. But then its go home and cook and clean and all of that, I just don’t know, my life was just not meant to be that way. I was meant to suffer and work hard all my life, so I just don’t know.”* It would therefore appear that wealthier or a higher economic status of the husband could be a determining factor as to whether a married Muslim woman would pursue a career. The trade-off for being submissive to a husband’s demands would be financial benefits. Participant 11 does not approve of having to trade or compromise who she is for a spouse to support her and prefers instead to have her independence by working hard.

6.12.2.6.3 Marriage and work/life balance

For married women in leadership roles, Participant 11 believed it would be helpful if husbands *“played a stronger role”* and be prepared to *“meet halfway”* with regard to home responsibilities. She acknowledges that this is not the

case in many cultures, not just Muslim homes. As a single mother, she did not feel prepared to meet the expectations a potential husband would have of her. For example she would be limited if there were networking dinners to attend or travelling required for work. She would also be expected to “*spend time with kids and homework and all of that and not to be crazy about the iPad and laptops and all of that. It’s just different you know, and you know.*” She also had a pessimistic view of marriage, based on the experiences of her peers who were married because of social pressure but were not happy in their marriages. “*I was chatting to somebody yesterday who was divorced and re-married, and she’s got now two kids and whatever ... she says to me ‘you know I am going through hell’. And she kind of said to me ‘you best the way you are’, and she is married to a very, very staunch Muslim man, while she is not (staunch). I sometimes think Muslim women marry staunch men because they feel it’s the right thing to do for society or to be seen in society. Or like one woman said to me, you know, she is not crazy about her husband or whatever, it’s not nice to talk about, but she says that she lives with him because he reads his salaah and he does everything else, and he will take her to Jannah/heaven. And I thought to myself, but you don’t love him. You know, and I think, I don’t know if I could do that, and maybe that’s where I am liberated, because that’s not my way of thinking.*”

In addition to financial reasons, as discussed earlier, social pressure and a partner who practices Islam “*staunchly*” are likely to influence a Muslim woman’s decision to marry and not pursue a career. In order to accommodate her lifestyle, Participant 11 chooses not to marry a Muslim man, since he would not accept her lifestyle choices.

6.12.2.7 Contemporary context of Muslim women

6.12.2.7.1 Contrasting Muslim cultures, South Africa and Arabia

When meeting peers at work who are Muslim, Participant 11 is regarded by them as family even though the relationship is purely professional. , Participant 11 regards Muslim women as comfortable with depending on their husbands' wealth. In comparison, she describes Saudi Arabian and Emirate women as oppressed and the men as arrogant. There is also discrimination against Muslims who are non-citizens in those countries and they are typically treated with contempt: *"They look down upon you as if you are trash even though you Muslim, they wouldn't even look at you ... and you not white, so these culture shocks in Islam, there's a lot to be changed in Islam ... our religion is so ... that's were leadership should start, and we don't ever have proper leadership."*

6.12.2.7.2 Lack of unified Islamic leadership

Participant 11 refers to the general lack of leadership in and beyond South Africa. She believes that this affects the practices people adopt at home and she adds that for a child, leadership starts in the home environment; this is her focus in her parenting. Age also has an impact on the Islamic perspectives adopted in a South African context, as different generations are exposed to teachings of the religion that relate to issues that were prominent in society at the time. As a consequence, within a family the different members may adopt different theological approaches. *"And I just find that we're all going in different directions, and I said to my mum because my mum is very conservative, and I see my mum changing and I try to adapt to her, because in my home we have three generations of women. My daughter is little, I'm there, and then there's my mum and my mum sometimes tries and influences her differently and I have to come in and say hold on, this is the way it's actually done. So it's very hard."* In Participant 11's case, she is also mindful of the Islamic practices that are being adopted by her mother and

daughter in the time that she is not at home and feels she needs to be aware of these and evaluate which teachings are appropriate for their home.

6.12.2.8 Positive strengths

6.12.2.8.1 Achievement

Much of the successful changes that Participant 11 had put into place were due to the fact that she was “*driven to perform*” and had “*direction*”, expressing pride in her achievements.

6.12.2.8.2 Building strategic relationships

It is important to her to be able to communicate with key stakeholders and persuade them to uphold the strategic intent and objectives of the organisation.

6.12.2.8.3 Adaptability

In order to balance and accommodate both religious and work responsibilities, there needs to be some flexibility in approach. Her work environment enables and allows Participant 11 to fast and observe her prayers. In return, she makes herself available and still attends meetings and dinners.

6.12.2.8.4 Organisational skills

From her experience, Participant 11 finds that women generally demonstrate better organisational skills than men and that these are particularly important to executing leadership effectively: “*if you’re not organised, you’re not a leader.*” Organisational skills include being able to prioritise and being precise, so that work done is processed efficiently and without errors.

6.12.2.8.5 Persuasive communication

She found it important to be able to relate strategic ideas to others and give direction to the team, as well as communicate to gain team buy-in and boost morale. In the home context, she favoured negotiation skills for defining commitments and responsibilities with partners.

6.12.2.8.6 Confidence

It needs to be apparent to others that a leader has confidence in order to gain their trust and support: *“your staff look to you if you display confidence, when you stand up to do a presentation and if you’re not really clued up or you’re not really good at it, there’s no confidence at all. And when you’ve got self-confidence and when you display those characters you also gain a lot of trust, your colleagues and everybody else.”*

6.13 PARTICIPANT 12

6.13.1 Participant’s background

Participant 12’s secondary education was partially based on the South African curriculum and partially on the United Kingdom’s school curriculum, for which she achieved A-levels, which were the equivalent of an NQF level 5 or a university entrance qualification. She could not afford a tertiary education, having left home at a young age, and began work in administration, working her way up and landing her first job in newspaper editing by chance. The jobs she accepted were not based on a planned career path; rather she stayed within a role if she liked it or left if she did not. She *“just got bored”* with bookkeeping, really enjoyed editing, being a personal assistant *“was not what I wanted to do at all”*, until she established herself in roles of more responsibility, where she looked at the contribution of her work to the

organisation, rather than her preferences, as she did earlier in her career. She worked in journalism and public relations (PR) roles in South Africa, London and the Seychelles, working her way up to a PR manager post in a government ministry. Participant 12 is married and has one child.

6.13.2 Emerging themes

6.13.2.1 Leadership role

Being in charge of managers of divisions, Participant 12 described her responsibility as, *“when you are in PR you are responsible for everybody and yet responsible for nobody because in every company structure you have your different divisions and you have managers of those divisions. PR is sort of all-encompassing and sort of on the side. So it, so you not directly responsible for everybody and what they do.”* Having freelance writers reporting to her required careful management, as she needed to ensure that they adhered to their deadlines because they self-managed their time. She also had to allow them opportunities to grow in experience and *“make sure that their standards improve.”* However, her subordinates tended to work independently and were essentially not obligated to the organisation; if they did not work they were not paid.

6.13.2.2 Leadership style

6.13.2.2.1 Autonomy and responsibility

Having subordinates who required a degree of autonomy to be able to write creatively, Participant 12 did not like having to use a ‘micro-management’ approach. Instead she felt it was important to establish mutual respect and accountability so that *“people should be left to, to explore their creativity and to grow into their role uhm in the way that they feel is best for them, mmm and yeah, I don’t believe in checking up on people every five minutes and saying what are you doing now, what are you doing now.”* Employees were expected

to work as responsible adults and she reported having no tolerance for the opposite behaviour.

6.13.2.2 Gender and leadership style

Participant 12 reported on the differences in leadership style as practised by her own senior managers and saw her preferred style of leadership as similar to that of her female superior. She described men as firm leaders who tended to make quicker decisions, were stubborn and unwilling to adopt others' ideas. In contrast, her female boss was more open to listening, easier to get along with, allowed people to develop individually and did not micro-manage her subordinates. The level of job satisfaction consequently improved when Participant 12's male boss was replaced by a female. There had previously been more staff complaints and staff turnover had been high. In a field where constant innovation is necessary, investment in staff development is pertinent, *"that's why it's always important to, to grow your employees because if you, if you micro-manage you employees you don't let them develop and then you don't get innovation out of them."*

6.13.2.3 Challenges

6.13.2.3.1 Promoting transparency

Working within PR, part of her job is to promote transparency and she had difficulty with top management and executives who were apprehensive about using social media and making company information available: *"There's also a lot of fear from top management and executives, that we can't divulge too much information and there's a fear of social media, there's a fear of transparency, mmm so, so all of those things you know, are consistently being battling with these managers. Because they tend to be older and they tend to be men and they seem to be set in their way very much. So, so you know things like social media and PR are kind of an alien territory to them."* She attributed the challenge of persuading them to the fact that they were older

men who preferred known and established ways of doing things. Even having worked in major media houses in journalism, these employers, who were responsible for delivering news and information to the public, were reluctant to innovate their own communication medium because of the possibility of critical feedback from stakeholders: *“It’s always been sort of my crusade to get companies and organisations to open up and be more transparent and not be afraid of what, what is out there you know, sort of opening themselves to becoming more personal, more approachable and stuff like that. So, so I think that if I had to pinpoint a single challenge, it would be that.”*

6.13.2.3.2 Gender and work relationships

Social activities attended by male colleagues or ‘boys’ clubs’ were cited by the participant as the context in which business is discussed and *“... women are not invited into that sphere into that round. So there is that challenge I think that it’s not really getting better, no matter what we seem to do in terms of empowerment and education and so on. So I don’t know about that one, mmm I always found it to be a challenge.”* Although she found that establishing relationships with individuals was helpful, as a female employee she could not get too close to older men especially. And *“you don’t develop that fraternal bond that maybe other male workers would have.”* She added that it was easier to maintain a professional relationship between men and women if they kept some distance between them.

6.13.2.3.3 Muslim employers and gender-based discrimination

From her experience of having worked for many Muslim companies, Participant 12 commented that they don’t compensate employees enough and that they discriminate against female employees: *“the glass ceiling is actually lower.”* There are fewer opportunities for women to be in leadership roles and have input into decisions. She describes her employment at a conservative media organisation, *“and I think a lot of my ideas, well sort of ways of though was not appreciated by them. Mmm so we had clashes, big clashes over that,*

and that was one of the reasons that I left. Mmm you know, very discriminatory towards women and mmm not open to, to you know debating women's issues and, and being more fair to women in the workplace and generally in an Islamic sense." Women who worked without a scarf were made to feel unwelcome in the organisation. Participant 12 had also experienced sexual harassment by one of her colleagues who incited the other men at work to harass her: *"(he) was sexually harassing me and when I rejected his advances, I mean he, he basically started a hate campaign against me with all the others and all the other men. And I, I started getting like hate smses and all sorts of things. It was horrible, so based on that after I said you know, I will never work for a Muslim organisation again."* Participant 12 compared how she was treated when working for a Jewish employer organisation and felt that she fitted in better with the culture of the Jewish organisation, which was more *"open-minded"*, since she considered herself to be liberal and tolerant. She was able to relate to her Jewish bosses on a personal level while still maintaining professional etiquette, which made it easier to socialise with them outside work.

6.13.2.3.4 'Queen-bee' syndrome

When asked about how women can be better leaders, Participant 12 proposed that self-confidence plays an important role and women leaders who lack this tend to have a *"chip on the shoulder"*, with something to prove, are *"bitchy"* with colleagues and try to emulate men by being *"hard"* and *"abrasive."* They also clash with other females more frequently, possibly *"because of a perceived threat to territory."* She recommends instead that they learn to be confident about their skills and abilities and relax in the knowledge that these are sufficient without having to undermine others around them. *"I don't like people who have egos in the workplace, so I, I'm very much a believer in being on an equal footing with people."*

6.13.2.3.5 Masculine work environment

Participant 12 suggested that a more feminine approach be encouraged and that this is acceptable, *“They can be women, they can be just women, and they can be themselves and they don’t have to make it tough for themselves or for others.”* The workplace is typically ‘male’, which is more self-centred than inclusive and there is general lack of understanding, *“like I said maybe a softer approach, maybe that is generally what’s lacking in a lot of leaders now, you know, just generally. It’s sort of a lack of empathy mmm, a lack of being able to learn from others and take advice from others and so on. Mmm I think these a lot of macho, testosterone fuelled, you know, we going to go out, we going to do it my way and, and it’s not always the best approach, I don’t believe that. And there’s a lot to prove, you sort of like, want to make your mark on the world. So mmm it’s not always sustainable, it’s not always sustainable.”*

6.13.2.4 Opportunities and supportive factors

6.13.2.4.1 Niche career

She regards understanding one’s own niche and being proactive as more important than competing with others, *“and I think it’s not so much about watching what the competition is doing, as it is about finding your own place and your own niche, uhm and, and knowing and understanding what makes your company tick, and what’s special and important about the company. Mmm so I think that understanding that is very important because if you constantly chasing the competition you always going to be a step behind.”*

6.13.2.5 Strengths

6.13.2.5.1 Innovation

Participant 12 perceives herself to be *“ambitious”* in her keenness to move organisations forward by identifying obstacles and limitations and using technology to change how things are done in order to reach a more positive

result. *“I have always had the ability to mmm, sort of identify what the obstacles are and then problem solve and see how we can get around it and uhm, sort of utilising innovation and technology to, to break those barriers and take the company forward. So that for me will be the positive issue or aspect.”* Allowing employees the room to be creative and refraining from a micro-managing style are also seen as enhancing innovation.

6.13.2.5.2 Insight

Leaders need to be open to taking advice and learning from their interaction with others, as well as being attentive to the business to identify core issues and behaviour affecting the organisation’s effectiveness, *“getting feedback from everybody, clients, from employees’ from suppliers, you know. So I think that listening and mmm being attentive mm to where you are as a business. That’s one of the most vital things because if you don’t listen, you won’t know how to take your company forward. You, you going to quickly become stale or you going to become irrelevant or the competition is going to be one step ahead of you.”*

6.13.2.5.3 Resolving stereotypes about being Muslim

Participant 12 conveyed that in her view, perceptions about Islam and being Muslim are somewhat of a challenge until people get to know her better and any curiosity and misconceptions they may have had are resolved. People accept stereotypes about violent Muslims that are portrayed by the media as true and generalise these to other Muslims. *“They have a stereotype and a lot of people don’t understand that they are people who are misfits and don’t fit in that kind of box. Mmm, so I mean even though for me often, most of the time I wear a scarf at the work place, or I have will have certain rules about what I will eat or will drink or won’t drink, mmm it doesn’t limit me in terms of, of my capabilities or in terms of let’s say networking, or you know, I can go to a party where there is drink and I’m not afraid mmm, because I’ve, I’ve been exposed to all of that before.”* She makes a point of mentioning that choosing

to wear a headscarf, follow a halaal diet and avoiding alcohol have no impact on her capabilities, as she is still able to work and network without compromising her religious values.

6.14 PARTICIPANT 13

6.14.1 Participant's background

Participant 13 is a qualified medical doctor and actuary who works in an advisory role in the health sector as associate director of an auditing firm and leads teams on national and African projects that serve the private sector, public sector and intermediaries such as the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation and World Health Organisation (WHO).

6.14.2 Emerging themes

6.14.2.1 Leadership role and responsibilities

Her responsibilities include meeting with key stakeholders in establishing commitment to national healthcare programmes in African countries, achieving results in healthcare projects, maintaining the reputation and image of the firm she works for and serving as a leader to her teams and in the broader healthcare sector. Her position is fairly independent; she plays an objective, scientific, ethically responsible role and functions in line with the firm's principles.

6.14.2.2 Leadership strengths

6.14.2.2.1 Strategic alliances

Participant 13 works with governments across Africa to transform healthcare, private hospitals and medical aid schemes and with international donor funders. Maintaining relationships with these stakeholders is multi-faceted and complex. *“I mean it’s a huge thing it’s very complicated, involves complicated relationships with the doctors, with the professionals, it’s a financially very complicated system and socially and politically it’s also quite an important system”, “... WHO, UNICEF and we are directly in the middle of all of them, so we currently doing huge projects ... We’ve got a lot of international organisations who want to enter into Africa and they don’t know how to enter, so we do market access studies for them, we do a lot of strategic work with different healthcare boards and ya every day is different and it’s quite a complicated political environment, healthcare is a very political issue for many countries, so it’s a huge part of the economic upliftment of a country and the social upliftment. So it’s quite a challenging job. There’s also a huge public responsibility component as well. We have to speak at lots of conferences, we do a lot of media work ... there’s a need to always be in the media, always be writing articles, thought leadership.”*

6.14.2.2.2 Niche career

Participant 13 identified the gap between the clinical and managerial functions in the healthcare sector and specifically pursued a *“specific form of training”* in order to position herself as a bridge between the two and come up with solutions that balance financial projections with the actual healthcare needs of the country’s people. *“It’s useless being an actuary and making decisions on what the financial projections look like for the next ten years when it doesn’t meet the needs of mothers and children in the townships. So I always sit, I feel I’ve got a double responsibility, and that’s my leadership role in the country. It’s my niche.”* Her ownership of her role was emphasised; she

stressed the “*my*” in her sentence as an internalised part of her contribution and responsibilities.

6.14.2.3 Maternal leadership style

Participant 13 described her leadership style as maternal and inclusive. She explained that she showed genuine care and concern for the colleagues reporting to her and compared her treatment of them to her treatment of her children, by regarding them with respect and wanting what was best for each individual, as well as facilitating their development. By being inclusive she implied taking others along with her in her pursuit of growth and innovation. She also regarded herself as a consistent person who applied the same standards across the different aspects and roles in her life. *“You cannot have inconsistencies in who you are as a person. So I don’t see myself as a mother, a wife, a corporate career woman and a leader. I see myself as one person and I try and stay consistent to that person so I don’t have uhm different standards in different sectors of my life. I have one standard, and it’s the same standard and I’m consistent as a person so my leadership style is the same with my children, with my family, with my team and with my sector.”*

6.14.2.4 Leadership as passion realised

Participant 13 described leadership as something that is a constant work in progress, not an achievement in itself, and involves continuous growth and self-development and connecting with others despite having many responsibilities. Essentially, a leader is responsible to others and the output of a leaders’ efforts is not always directly observable or quantifiable, but rather involves helping others and creating opportunities for them. Leadership is directed towards realising a person’s passion and integrating the experiences into one’s life, *“it’s being passionate about something, having something that you are absolutely passionate about and understanding what it is, finding what that is and then, developing your life layer upon layer upon layer around that and integrating it into your life ... So I think it’s understanding what that*

passion is and staying true to it, that's my view on leadership. And the leaders I've interacted with, I mean it's funny because many of them don't even see themselves as successful or as leaders, they just good at what they do and they love it and that's about it."

6.14.2.5 Leadership development for South African women

Recommendations for South African women to function as better leaders were to master skills in an area they were passionate about in order to be the best at what they did. In addition, South African women needed to learn to mix and connect socially to people who are different from themselves. She observed that South African women in general, including Muslim women, tended to stay within close-knit groups of the same race group and family or a few close friends. Her personal development needs were based on her analysis of skills she felt she still needed to acquire, and she stated that she needed to improve her analytical ability and learn to take more risks in order not to limit her growth, since she usually adopted a very calculated approach.

6.14.2.6 Positive strengths

Participant 13 saw her values as being shaped by her upbringing and religion and related the strengths described below:

6.14.2.6.1 Inter-connections

Participant 13 tended to apply a systems approach to understanding how issues related to one another as “*overlaps*” and was able to identify patterns in information and data and draw meaningful interpretations from them. She was also skilled at “*connecting different people*” to unlock opportunities through their interaction and sharing of ideas.

6.14.2.6.2 Community and collaboration

Participant 13 favoured conducting her relationships in an inclusive way to foster a strong sense of 'togetherness' and believed that harming another person equates to harming oneself, as both form part of a greater whole: *"It's the commitment to sort of, collaborate to a oneness. And to understand that people can do bad things and they might get away with it, they actually might succeed. But at the end of the day you defeating yourself because there is a sense of oneness, there is a sense of we are all here together, if we could only see it."*

6.14.2.6.3 Integrity and courage

Participant 13 regarded it important always to be conscious of what was right and to have the courage to stand up for it. Failing this, the full buy-in of those being led would be problematic. *"People are not fools, they may succumb to leadership because they may be afraid of leadership but they will never be truly motivated by a leader who is not consistent and who doesn't display integrity ... If you look at the great leaders of our times, the one thing that has always come first is their integrity, their consistency. The fact that they are one person, whether they sitting with government, with private sector or labour, they carry the same voice and I'm thinking of Mandela because he's the greatest example of integrity so that I think is a male and a female thing, and it's not to say that most leaders don't have integrity, but integrity needs to be backed up with courage and that is what a lot of our leaders lack, a lot of our leaders are scared to live their integrity because they fear that they will be persecuted or they will not be allowed to grow on their path of growth if they are courageous and they stand strong to their integrity."* Consistency, or being the same person across situations, was also mentioned when Participant 13 described her leadership style.

6.14.2.6.4 Innovation

Participant 13 reported being highly driven by innovation and creating a better future for the younger generation, which she was particularly passionate about, *“I’m not looking for a fat salary, I don’t need it, I’m not looking for a title because it doesn’t really excite me at all. I’m looking for innovation, I’m looking for development, I’m looking for change.”*

6.14.2.6.5 Problem-solving

Participant 13 enjoys being able to engage in problem-solving in complex situations. When discussing the socio-economic environment and how it affected her work, *“a whole lot of different conflicting forces in our economy and that has direct impact on healthcare. And I really think that it’s quite a complicated interesting environment. And as complicated as it is, it’s always exciting because there’s such huge challenges in it, so that’s what really drove me towards, uhm always working towards the most difficult and most complicated place I could be.”*

6.14.2.6.6 Passion

Being passionate about her ideals, she was intrinsically motivated to persist and push forward even though she constantly faced uncertainty. *“Sometimes you don’t decide what your passion is but you are given a passion. And you can either ignore it or you can follow it. And I think that force, that passion was so strong within me that it almost, it overcame the negativity, the doubt, I mean the doubt and uncertainty did get me down a lot of times but there was that constant push internal push ... constant desire to push forward and that was quite powerful.”*

6.14.2.6.7 Future orientation

As a mother, she wanted the best for her own children and the future generation as a whole and carried her commitment to improving the future into all of her activities. *“Women are far more invested in the success and the strength of the future generations because as a mother that is what you want, you want a better future for your children, no matter where you sit in this world, or in society, no matter what religion, all mothers want the same thing. They’ve been through hardships themselves, they’ve had to sacrifice, they’ve had to suffer and it’s just natural that they want better for their children. And I think that is a root desire.”*

6.14.2.6.7 Helping people

On the whole, Participant 13’s motivation was more purposeful rather than directed at the achievement of a goal or end state. Her aim was to help people but the way she approached this changed from wanting to do so from a clinical setting to attending to the larger economic factors that contributed to health problems. *“I felt that as a clinician, yes we can provide brilliant care, but we just scratching the surface, we not actually changing the root of the problem, and that’s what drove me towards economics... I wanted to understand. And you know with healthcare the hardest part for many people is when they are encountered with a disease or their children are and most people are ‘can we actually afford this treatment?’”*

6.14.2.7 Challenges

6.14.2.7.1 Uncertainty

The challenges that Participant 13 perceived as she developed into a leader were experienced at different stages. Clarifying her professional role was difficult earlier in her career as she had completed her medical training but instead of going on to specialise, chose an unconventional and ambiguous career path by taking on actuarial studies. The uncertainty of an uncharted

career path was an uncomfortable experience for her and she was not readily accepted in either the medical or actuarial fields at the outset, “*so the first challenge for me was taking a different path, which was very frightening not just for me, for all involved and also not knowing what that path was.*” Although her family was supportive of the decisions she took, organisations were sceptical of where she fitted in because she had qualified in two very different fields of study, “*So it sounds all very great now and now everyone wants me to work for them, work with them but for many, many years it was undefined, I was undefined and people don’t like undefined. They prefer the defined. So for many, many years it was a difficult lonely path ... uhm always working towards the most difficult and most complicated place I could be and that was a great challenge for me because no one could support me ’cause nobody knew what and I didn’t know what I was doing either.*” In general, the challenges she experienced served to motivate her to perform better and she tended to select career options that were more difficult.

6.14.2.7.2 Gender-based discrimination

Within a corporate context, Participant 13 found it particularly trying when working with white males in leadership roles, “*White males in particular are very difficult to work with, I don’t know if I just had them ... (Interviewer: In which environment?) Participant 13: In most of the corporate environments I’ve been in and I don’t like to generalise because you can’t generalise, but just, I found maybe because they were predominantly in leadership positions, I really found I had a few very bad experiences with managers or leaders or it uhm, it could have halted my career but because they were so frustrating and so negative it pushed me to become better.*” She did not give further details about the nature of these negative experiences but chose to rise above them. Participant 13 had also found that in the corporate environment, the systems and incentives could potentially bring out the worst in people, causing them to be selective in their value systems and in the way they treated others and behaved. Gender-based issues are prominent in the corporate context and discrimination is dealt with negatively by women who fall into “*gender traps*”

and conform to stereotypes in order to be accepted: “some women are happily submissive and docile and happy to not challenge or not hold others to account because it’s comfortable or whatever.” The few women who do hold respect in the boardroom tend to be “the typical sort of corporate bitch who tends to walk all over other people and is very self-centred, very selfish, for themselves, and I think that neither of them are the right way to be. I think women have a very important role to play in healthcare and in business and I think that the role has to be defined.”

6.14.2.7.3 Time management

Finding enough time after balancing her family and work commitments was experienced by Participant 13 as difficult because of the frequent travelling and many responsibilities she had. She also preferred tending to her children’s needs personally, such as doing their school pick-ups and drop-offs when she was not travelling and alternating this with her husband, rather than acquiring the services of au pairs. Maintaining family values in her household and still performing at a professional level were physically exhausting and left less time for her to devote to studying, so some sacrifices were necessary.

6.14.2.8 Gender differences in decision-making

Participant 13 noted distinctive differences between men and women in the workplace when it came to their motivation and relationships with others. In her experience, women are linked to the future, before and more so after having children. They are amenable to suffering and sacrificing in order to provide a better future for the younger generation. For her personally, motherhood reinforced her prioritisation of life being important and meaningful, grounding her in reality but also elevating her to act on the future. She saw women as motivated by a commitment to the future and applied this maternal frame of reference when making decisions and in her relationships with others. In contrast, she described men as being vested in the present, being more motivated by power and targets and “susceptible” to company

incentivisation. Men were not faulted but rather acknowledged for their contribution to an organisation's objectives and both male and female behaviours were seen to be complementary when they are balanced, *"so I think we need each other. It's just that the problem is the balance is not achieved in the corporate environment. We haven't had enough of women who are able to stay feminine, stay motherly, stay down-to-earth, stay rooted."*

6.14.2.9 Motivation and career progression

When questioned during her interview if her religion or gender had affected her career development, Participant 13 indicated that her motivation had a much stronger influence on her career development. Gender and religion played a less significant role. Although she stated, *"I think that we have multiple layers of what builds up our motivation and that's traced back to our childhood, back to our environment, back to our upbringing"*, she did not delve further into the formation of her motivation but mentioned charity and helping others to become self-sustainable as causes that were meaningful to her, which were rooted in her religious values and her upbringing.

6.15 PARTICIPANT 14

6.15.1 Participant's background

Participant 14 completed an education degree and worked as a teacher for 17 years, studying up to master's level (current). While working as a teacher she initiated community development programmes, featured on television and radio programmes as a reciter of Islamic naaths (songs) and hosted her own religious shows. She changed career paths and has been working in financial services for over 13 years, initially employed with major financial institutions and later heading up her own financial services company as director, where she currently works.

6.15.2 Emerging themes

6.15.2.1 Personal concept of leadership

Participant 14 believed that leadership develops in response to an individual's circumstances, environment and contact with other people. Leadership qualities are moulded over time; people are not born with them.

6.15.2.2 Development of leadership

6.15.2.2.1 Early exposure

While she was growing up, her mother was the first role model of leadership to whom she was exposed. Having been widowed at the age of 39 with five children, she fulfilled multiple roles as a single parent and encouraged her children to assist her by earning an income, doing household chores and developing life skills *"She was thrown in a leadership role, mom and dad, provider, caregiver, all in one. And we took our cue from there. So at the age of ten and eleven we were already in little roles of leadership where we helped mom to survive. We worked, from the age of eleven. We worked on weekends for our bus fare, we worked on holidays for our uniforms."* She described running errands, organising tasks and assuming responsibility as a child as *"grooming"* for leadership and they learnt early about working in the *"big world from a small age. So those leadership qualities became inherent as we grew."*

Taking part in leadership activities started early, with her being part of the secondary school debating team as a teenager. Involvement in leadership progressively increased as she subsequently started teaching and became a leader of the children she taught. *"And as I blossomed out from debating teams and speaking very well and being given an opportunity to become a teacher after that, and the first lot of children that I was given with, and I sat with them and I said to myself here am I, shaping the lives of thirty young*

children.” She considered the teenage years as particularly important to leadership development, when young people tend to be more impressionable; *“if there’s no impact in the teenage years, in the growing years, then you will never get good women leaders.”*

6.15.2.2.2 Education

Participant 14 also felt strongly that leadership opportunities should be created for girl children, starting with a full education for them, the same as for boys. She mentioned that in the past *“our girls were given standard six education, they were put in a parda and sent away. Now they have Islamic schools, they have girls’ schools, they have lots and lots of home teaching and I say to myself, if we are spending money on our boys and sending them to this hostel, that school, that course, that overseas thing, why aren’t we doing the same with our girl children?”* In the event of them becoming single mothers later on in life, just a matric qualification would be insufficient to secure their employment and they needed to be equipped to bring up a future generation of leaders.

6.15.2.2.3 Role models

Participant 14 had observed her mother being thrown into a leadership role at the age of 39 when she was left a widow with five children. She fulfilled the roles of mother, father, provider and caregiver and was a constant source of support and motivation to Participant 14, particularly during her teenage years, *“And I do believe that the mother is the role model for that child and I feel that if you go back, go back and look you go and have a look at the women who are leaders, I would say that 90% of them have had it with them as they growing up.”* Apart from her mother, Participant 14 mentioned Princess Diana and the Prophet Muhammed (SAW) as role models of leadership who were both compassionate and displayed genuine love and concern for people. She believed that girls needed good role models as examples to follow.

6.15.2.3 Multiple leadership roles

Participant 14 currently fulfils leadership roles in different contexts. Debating at high school and working as a teacher was followed by increased responsibility as an educator and a leader in community-based projects in the area where the school was based. Concurrently, she nurtured her talent for singing and trained many women as professional naath reciters as another leadership role. To date she has remained a public figure in the Muslim community who plays a leading role in the programmes that are aired on radio and television. She is also the director of a financial services company where she oversees her staff and deals with various clients. The first key leadership role in her opinion is that of a leader in the home and then in the external work environment. *“In my mind being a successful leader of your household is the first. A successful household leader, and then the rest to the world, you be a successful mother, a successful wife and mother, that’s a leadership position in Islam as well and I think that it’s a leadership position we will be judged on one day. So I think once we get there we can look at all others as well.”*

In the financial field Participant 14 educates groups of women because she identified the need for Muslim women in particular to be more financially knowledgeable. *“So that was the reason to join Minara, to be on the business forum, and to make women aware now, wherever I get that opportunity with a group of women, ladies - we need to do financial boot camp, why is it that you should have your own. And we find that 66% of the workforce are women today, they’re earning the bread, they’re bringing it home, and you find that out of them just six percent are going to retire well, because they mismanage their money ... so my leadership extends to the fact that as a Muslim woman, more especially that our women are not very empowered in knowing everything about business.”*

6.15.2.4 Change in career

Participant 14 began her career as a teacher and enjoyed working with young children. *“I found that I took to children and I was like a born teacher, I took to the profession very well, I loved it.”* She continued her studies in education and was promoted to a head of department position. Her exposure to the financial sector was not planned, but somewhat familiar, as both her husband and brother were already established in financial jobs and she was attracted by the potential of personal financial management as a practice that could improve the quality of people’s lives, *“I really bought into the whole concept. I loved it because it spoke about financial analysis, it didn’t talk about selling, it spoke about the needs of people and I was really taken by the whole thing.”*

Motivated by better financial rewards and opportunities for further advancement compared to her career in education, she was open to completely changing her career after thirteen years and studying in a new field, *“I had to go right back to banking and insurance so all of my years in education never counted. Even post-graduate never counted. I had to start, a clean state again to come out to where I am now which is N-plus-six, you know which is on the N-SETA, in banking and insurance.”* She made another significant career change when she offered to partner up with her husband and brand a financial services company that she currently runs successfully.

6.15.2.5 Leadership style

6.15.2.5.1 Compassion

Describing her leadership style as very compassionate, Participant 14 spoke about establishing relationships with people and gaining their trust. *“I think my leadership style is very, very compassionate. I’m a compassionate leader and I think my entire nature is that I’m ruled by my heart, and not my head ..., I’m always loved people that I work with and I try to find that connection with them so that I’m able to lead from within and not from outside and people will only*

accept your leadership if you are trusting and I love that trust to be created, whether it's a beggar or whether it's somebody that doesn't have."

6.15.2.5.2 Balanced decision-making

Participant 14 stated that being able to make decisions by being compassionate and considerate of other people, yet also able to make tougher business decisions, suggested a balanced approach, *"and I think my entire nature is that I'm ruled by my heart, and not my head, I'm ruled by my heart most of the time, I do, I'm a tough decision-maker when it comes to financial etiquette in a business, strategies to save money, strategies to keep the business afloat. I'm very clear there when it comes to the business side."*

6.15.2.5.3 Developing others

Participant 14 regards it as important to display selflessness and to help and empower others to pursue better opportunities, both in her community and in the workplace. This could be in the form of a charity drive or investing in the growth of her secretaries. The need to elevate the status of others is rooted in her own background, as she came from *"a very poor background and I always feel for the poor. So that passion, that commitment, that selflessness and I think that genuine love ..."* are what she believes help to bring out her best as a leader.

6.15.2.5 Opportunities

6.15.2.5.1 Study sponsorship

Participant 14's early career decisions were shaped by the available study options when she had completed her secondary education. At the time, she was orphaned and from a poor background and had received a sponsorship to study in the field of education. She completed a diploma in education and worked as a teacher for thirteen years, but continued studying until she

reached a head of department role and master's level in her education studies.

6.15.2.5.2 Exposure to financial sector

At about the same time she gained exposure to the financial sector, she had reached a plateau in her educational career and began a new career in financial management services. She took up studying financial courses, trained and worked with some of the major financial services companies and banks and eventually opened her own company, of which she is the director, with her husband. She also occupies a leadership role in the Minara Chamber of Commerce, has led several community-based projects, has hosted her own TV and radio shows and is a professional reciter of Islamic naaths, similar to religious songs.

6.15.2.5.3 Niche career

Part of Participant 14's success and the demand for her services can be attributed to her niche advisory offering. There is a shortage in this field, since there are few female financial advisors with expertise on shariah compliance in financial and business affairs. She regarded this niche area of her practice as one of the cornerstones of her leadership and stated, "*... my financial leadership in the field of finance. There's not many women that can accomplish what I've done, there's not a lot of female financial advisors, out there ... I have been given lots of opportunities because there aren't many women who are financial advisors so we sort after, to give a talk or to put things together. So I would say religion-wise on the work point of view, yes when it comes to opportunities with Minara, when it comes to other Muslim organisations we do talk about shariah compliance and how women can do things and bringing in the Muslim laws into their marriages. Yes it has impacted positively on both sides.*"

6.15.2.5.4 Broadening opportunities

By following her passion for singing and developing this talent as a professional, Participant 14 had her naaths aired on radio and she was subsequently given opportunities to present radio shows and shot a series of talk shows that she presented for an international television channel. *“Back in 1996 uhm when I did my first, I contributed to a programme and that led to us coming together and I launched my first album. That was a first for South Africa, and it sort of put South African women on the map, it was a great opportunity for television, for radio. Radio followed thereafter for years I did radio work and stemming from that today I have my very own programme, as a presenter, producer, of my very own programme, which is going to be aired internationally. That has been a tremendous opportunity for me as a leader.”* Participant 14 has also trained around forty other naath reciters and they conduct between ten and fifteen functions a year that attract large crowds of people, Funds received are donated to charitable causes. She developed career opportunities for herself in different roles in the media, for the people she worked with in her different work contexts and for the communities who benefitted financially from the donations.

6.15.2.6 Muslim women in contemporary context

6.15.2.6.1 Choosing to stay at home or to work

Participant 14 described the Islamic prescriptions for the roles and responsibilities of mothers as being a leader in the home as the primary caregiver. Most young women get married, have children and move into a “cyclical” pattern where they only focus on home and childcare tasks. Islam encourages the importance of the role of the mother and it is quite easy for Muslim women to prefer being at home and claim to be in the right to do so: *“...they get married and they settle down to this Islamic routine, which is ideal and which is good. I mean it’s the ideal situation and they don’t want to pursue anything further because they would be happy with what means their husbands give to them ... the professional part of it, studies and all of that,*

really gets into nothing, it falls into nothing. I think it's because of our religion, our ethos, the way we live, and the way we dedicate our life to our children and I think it is a fact." The added difficulties of ensuring children's safety and the lack of a family support structure may support Muslim parents' choice to have the mother at home instead of working.

6.15.2.6.2 Exclusion from domestic finances

Participant 14 established a financial services company with her husband as her partner and after he took ill, ran the organisation on her own. Most other Muslim women in comparison are excluded from the financial affairs of their husbands and because they are taken care of and provided for, there is an unspoken rule that it is not necessary for them to be informed. This seems to be more prominent in wealthier marriages where material comfort comes with renouncing financial control. This also excuses the wife from working, as her income is not needed, *"and particularly Muslim women because you know when it comes to us particularly we have this unknown boundary in terms of we don't question our husbands when it comes to finances. We feel they taking care of us ... we don't want to question them any further, like 'my husband who's provided well for me, we drive the top of the range car, I've got six or seven vehicles in my yard, who am I to question as to what, he gives me a credit card, he gives me what I want.'* So a lot of women are in this position, where they got everything and they wouldn't want to question [it]." Compared to their non-Muslim sisters who are achieving success professionally in various sectors and industries, Participant 14 noted that Muslim women are lagging behind as a minority, specifically so if they are wealthy.

6.15.2.6.3 Islamic attire and perceptions of Muslim women

Muslim women are expected to dress conservatively and Participant 14 mentioned that she wears her hijab full-time outside her home but does not adopt the parda (face covering). However, she describes the parda as a

“safety-net” rather than something that oppresses women. Her husband places no restrictions on her professionally but will occasionally check that she is appropriately dressed and she feels more comfortable if she is modestly attired. *“It’s a myth that we want to break, you know the West is perceiving us as the parda being something that’s repressing for us and to us it’s our safety net, it’s our safety net. I mean I don’t wear the parda as full nikaab but I do cover up totally when I’m out, I’m most happy when I’m covered up totally because then I’m free to be in the public eye and I’m not shy at all.”*

6.15.2.6.4 Muslim women in the media

The image promoted by Western media of Muslim women is that of repression and Participant 14 was concerned that this image should be rectified to reflect that the opposite was in fact true, that Muslim women have come a long way and are found in leadership positions and at the forefront in some fields. *“Muslim women are working, holding good leadership positions in South Africa, in terms of medicine, in terms of research, you know in all fields ... they’ve gone a long way, so we can’t say that Muslim women are repressed and that’s an image that we have you know, outside in the Western world. So I think that should come to the forefront that Muslim women are leaders in their own right, in everything that they do.”* Participant 14 listed a few names of Muslim women; some were pioneers in the medical field, another was a prominent community leader. She went on to explain that while there are Muslim leaders to be found in the broader community, much of their work is unheard of and not publicised in the media. The majority of Muslim women leaders voluntarily avoid the media, preferring to remain in the background, partly because theologians disapprove of publicly exposing women, but Participant 14 also suggests that perhaps the media do not really focus on Muslim women.

6.15.2.7 Challenges

Muslim women who embark on careers and decide to assume roles of leadership may encounter specific challenges, according to Participant 14, and those she encountered are described.

6.15.2.7.1 Theologian's stance on public participation of women

Participant 14 experienced resistance from Muslim theologians who are religious authorities in the South African Muslim community. Being educated on the tenets of Islam and the shariah, their role is to educate the South African Muslim community and provide advice on challenges affecting local Muslims. Issues where Participant 14 came into conflict with the theologians were on the parda, the mingling of males and females at functions, acceptance of a woman as a leader, public speaking and religious recitals to a public audience. The greater area of concern was the exposure of women and men to each other. Women are restricted from participating in public issues and are limited to women's forums and other female groups. This created a barrier for her role in public naath recitations and her programmes were removed from local radio because *"we also as women we have been stifled by some of the theologians of the time and imams of the time who have spoken out against women who are reciting in public. Like my programmes were taken off (air) because they say that a woman's voice is alluring and they do not like it on air, so they had these controversies on and off but we have kept it to our women's functions. I think a lot has to be addressed in that issue."*

6.15.2.7.2 Inconsistent Islamic practices

The inconsistencies and hypocrisies in the application of Islamic laws is a further frustration to her, as is the fact that Islamic laws are not properly applied across the board. Theologians would contest intermingling of sexes at public events, but would themselves attend public events where they would

interact with women. Many Muslims do not have their financial affairs in order, which is a religious requirement. When explaining the selectiveness about the Islamic principles that were followed by the Muslim community, she commented, *“So we do not have, we are limited in terms of our leadership in the general public issues because we cannot share a mixed stage, with others that are less talented than we are in the male fraternity. So this is a problem, it is reality so we have to stick to women’s forums, women’s get-togethers, all that sort of thing, that irritates me from time to time ... And I find that in finances our Muslim community are very uh two-faced regarding this. You can’t leave behind a whole lot of debts and go away or legal estate duty problems for all of your family to sort out ... You find that it’s something that its taboo that they don’t wish to talk about and our Prophet (SAW) even gave away the last Dirham before he died because he didn’t want to have wealth ... People don’t want to take the Muslim principles into effect when they practice, they don’t want to do it.”*

6.15.2.7.3 Impact of childcare on career advancement

Women who work or have careers as well as typically younger children to take care of may consider gap years to tend to their children themselves, especially where a family support structure is lacking, given the prominent nuclear family structure. Participant 14 mentioned having had her mother-in-law and sisters-in-law assist with childcare when she had to attend to work commitments. The concern for safety was repeated, for both Muslim women and children in an unsafe environment. Contemporary young couples today may lack the kind of support provided by extended family arrangements in the past, and may choose rather to protect their children from possible abuse or harm and compromise a more comfortable lifestyle by having the mother stay at home and settling for a single income. Taking children to and from school and madressa in the afternoons is something many parents prefer to do themselves. Some women whose careers are more flexible choose to run their professions from their homes. Taking a few years off from formal working roles can have an impact on career advancement and they may take longer to

reach positions of leadership. Choosing instead to continue within a leadership capacity could mean very little time for family.

6.15.2.7.4 Personal sacrifices

Being in a leadership role and having home and family responsibilities can be very demanding and become tiring. Good organisational skills are therefore necessary, as well as tolerance for difficulties, *“being a woman leader and being in a leadership position, it also entails a lot of blood, sweat and tears and I think lots and lots of sacrifice. And I think organisational skills come into play. And you get very tired you know, being able to juggle your whole day ... So it becomes very difficult to juggle a whole day and organisation of your day so sacrifice is a huge thing. Whether it’s your sleep, whether it’s your time with your hubby, or whether it’s time to just chill and unwind with a movie, these become the pleasures that you seek, reading the morning paper in the morning undisturbed. The simple things in life become a sacrifice for a good leader.”*

6.15.2.8 Supportive family structure

Participant 14 was initially encouraged by her mother to assume responsibilities that initiated her into a leadership role and her husband served as a constant source of support in her various interests and endeavours. Having married into an extended family, she had assistance with caring for her children, which enabled her to attend to her work responsibilities, meetings and events.

6.15.2.9 Leadership strengths

6.15.2.9.1 Resourcefulness

In her role as a community leader Participant 14 emphasised the need to be resourceful in the area and to be able to come up with solutions quickly in

order to deal with the problems related to poverty in the area where she taught.

6.15.2.9.2 Building relationships

Participant 14 worked to establish relationships by being caring and interested in the welfare of others, and not being detached. Being motherly in her approach to leading others, she felt others responded positively to her because she showed empathy, caring and commitment to improving conditions for them.

6.15.2.9.3 Community

Participant 14 saw herself as part of the community she worked with and felt motivated to improve their socio-economic status because her own income was derived from working in their area and she saw the opportunity to 'give back' to them by initiating subsistence projects in the area.

6.15.2.9.4 Passion

"You got to innately believe and love what you doing and then you will be a good leader." As a professional reciter of naaths she believes that her voice is a gift and performs her *"heart's passion"* for non-profit causes and *"the love of the (Urdu) language."* Another of her passions is helping women to *"a place where women should be."* More important than the nature of the activity, she emphasises that if passion is lacking, then success is limited. *"You got to believe as a leader, whether it's a leader in the community that I'm in, whether it's a leader of that I'm doing a programme with women, or it's a talk or whether it's a financial seminar I'm involved with. If those things you don't have the passion for, those things you never going to be a good leader and that's my strength."*

6.15.2.9.5 Commitment

Being dedicated to a chosen path and showing determination and pursuing goals set for the long term are important: *“to keep leadership going, you must be in it for the long run. You must be in there to stay. You can’t say that today I want to do this and then tomorrow you’re not endorsing that.”*

6.15.2.9.6 Caring

More applicable to women, being caring and compassionate towards others was described as the ‘X-factor’ that differentiates women as great leaders. She referred to figures such as the Prophet SAW and Lady Diana because of their concern for the welfare of others, with the Prophet (SAW) being the only male she could think of who extended such care for women. *“I think that women care for everybody. And that’s a difference you know, that’s a difference in terms of the gender. Men make good leaders but women, a woman leader takes it a little further and that makes them special and remembered.”* Women leaders are therefore implied to have a more significant and revered relationship with those they lead.

6.15.2.9.7 Multi-tasking

Participant 14 referred to multi-tasking as a special quality possessed by women rather than men which enables them to achieve a greater number of tasks with greater efficiency but that perhaps not all women exploit this ability, possibly due to complacency which can set in some time after being married, *“So I say women can multi-task and I don’t think that women are using all of their facets that they could. Or we also become very complacent in this role.”*

6.16 PARTICIPANT 15

6.16.1 Participant's background

Participant 15 was unable to study when she completed high school and began working in the insurance industry when she was nineteen. She completed a BA in psychology and criminology part-time but continued to work in the insurance industry, later completing a post-graduate diploma in financial planning, and worked her way through various positions to a management role. She was employed by the larger corporate insurance companies, held a position in research and marketing for an IT company and is currently the head of client services at a major insurance company.

6.16.2 Emerging themes

6.16.2.1 Leadership

6.16.2.1.1 Adaptive leadership style

Participant 15 understands people as different and reported trying to understand the people she worked with as individuals, what motivates them, being polite, giving them feedback and building a relationship with them. She would communicate with individuals in a way that they preferred and was adaptive in her approach to accommodate each person. Trusting individuals to carry out their responsibilities, she would only intervene if they failed to perform and adjust to a micro-management style if necessary. Participant 15 had found that the department she had taken over was lacking in structure and role clarification. She therefore implemented a performance management system and her communication about expectations and work standards was backed by a firm approach to non-performance. People's expectations were clearly outlined and her management style with them would depend on their level of performance. *"I prefer to leave people to get on with it. I think that I am a type B manager, until the trust is broken, because I will trust you and if I can*

see that you can't handle it than I will be a type A manager and micro-manage you."

6.16.2.1.2 Strict performance management

Other managers would refer employees with performance issues to Participant 15 for remedial action and she would manage and improve their performance by understanding their difficulties and needs, clearly defining their responsibilities and outlining the consequences if their objectives were not met. The nature of support they could expect from her was clear, but they were still accountable. By being supportive, understanding and fair and providing guidelines about specific corrective actions, she could eliminate performance problems with employees. In her communication of criticism, she would be frank about the quality of people's work, but was aware of the need to *"take the softer approach ... And there are times when I just have to put my foot down and become an ogre and say you will do X Y and Z before you go. How you do it, I leave to you but this is the requirement for today, full stop."*

6.16.2.1.3 Gender differences in communication

Participant 15 felt that male colleagues were more responsive to someone who was confident and maintained a 'commanding' social presence. Although she had an even gender complement of people reporting to her, she was the only female manager and experienced a degree of resistance from male employees compared to females. Males were more likely to communicate in a direct and confrontational manner, while women would consult one another and rely on a more talkative female colleague to raise their concerns.

6.16.2.2 Challenges

When confronted with challenges, Participant 15 would analyse the situation and adopt an alternative approach to reach her goals.

6.16.2.2.1 Promotion of males over females

Management positions were difficult to secure unless the candidate was male and if qualified candidates of both genders applied, the male would be selected. There was competition for management roles and the assistance of a mentor who was willing to give a candidate who showed potential the opportunity to get into management. Favouritism made it difficult for her to be appointed into a position she had earned and she eventually left her employer for a better offer from a competitor because of her efforts being impeded. *“So when the role came about and it was released, I went to the person who signed my package to say, ‘you paying me a lot more than a specialist should get, yet you are hiring a head of to come in that does not have my knowledge, experience and qualification, but he’s going to sign off on my work. Do you think that’s fair?’ And that role got put to the side and everything remained the same for about three months and then he re-engineered the role and the department to create a way for this person.”*

6.16.2.2.2 Exercising authority with male subordinates

Participant 15 found it a little difficult to adjust to being the manager of people she had previously worked with, specifically because they were male and intimidated by her position of authority. She found that the younger men would challenge her ideas and easily take offense to any criticism that she offered as a reflection of doubt on their integrity. Being very careful about how she communicated her intentions became important in order to avoid misunderstandings and resistance. Compared to female subordinates who were generally receptive and accommodating, men could be uncooperative and undermine her decisions if they had not been personally consulted.

6.16.2.2.3 Work ethic

Participant 15 seemed frustrated that the people who reported to her seemed to lack high standards of performance and completing their tasks when she

displayed a high level of commitment to the organisation and understood the impact on business if she did not maintain this.

6.16.2.2.4 Social events and alcohol consumption

Social functions are typical of the organisational culture where clients are invited and business relationships created. Drinking alcohol was expected, but as this is not Islamically permissible, she would attend work functions but refrain from any alcohol consumption. Once she started wearing hijab she would limit her socialising to venues such as restaurants where she could still fit in with her conservative dressing but would avoid settings such as bars where the activities were related to alcohol.

6.16.2.2.5 Perceptions of hijab

Male colleagues who worked with Participant 15 were surprised when she decided to adopt wearing a headscarf (hijab) full-time and asked her whether she was forced to do so by her husband or father. The assumption is that Muslim women have little control over their decisions and the hijab is a symbol of Muslim women's submission. *"Muslim women aren't viewed as these strong women because they supposed to be hidden in their veils ... there is a perception and stereotype that we are not the masters of our destiny."* Because of being non-white and identifiably Muslim, she felt that she had to work twice as hard to prove herself at work.

6.16.2.2.6 Impeded promotion

Participant 15 described her relationship with her more recent boss who prevented her from succeeding to the head of department position and had side-lined her despite her eligibility for the position based on her high performance and demand for her expertise by competitors. He was reluctant to make a counter-offer to retain her skills until her last day, when he offered her the position he had earmarked for a male candidate. *"I started wearing*

hijab and there's nothing else I can think of ... I still shake hands with people, I still talk to people, I still make eye contact. Nothing changed in the way I conducted myself, it's just one change. I put a scarf on my head. Ok and my dressing has been covered and more conservative but nothing else has changed and I am still the same person. Mmm and that for me was the biggest disappointment because mmm he counter offered me on my last day and I already had a plane ticket booked to Australia because they (new company) were sending me for training to Australia and he said, 'Tell them to cancel it'. And I said I can't because it's a matter of principle and I can't do it." Apart from her recent employer, which "was a very male-dominated hierarchy that was also very white", Participant 15 did not experience much discrimination on the basis of her religion with any of her other employers in the insurance industry.

6.16.2.3 Support

6.16.2.3.1 Management support

As research and marketing manager she had a managing director as her boss who gave her the freedom to run her department as she liked and implement changes she deemed necessary. There was an open-door policy in place and she had his trust and support.

6.16.2.4 Opportunities

6.16.2.4.1 Opportunities awarded for capability

Because her work was of high quality, Participant 15 was offered opportunities to work on other special projects, "*within the first month was that I set a particular standard and because I was quick to get response, they happened, well the divisional director decided to add more projects to my portfolio purely because they were high priority at the time and they needed traction. So the opportunities actually presented themselves, I didn't go looking for them.*"

6.16.2.5 Strengths

The strengths that Participant 15 favoured were strategic thinking, initiative, perseverance and self-assurance.

6.16.2.5.1 Strategic thinking was regarded by Participant 15 as a strength that *“anyone could develop.”*

6.16.2.5.2 Perseverance was described as standing by something believed to be true even when confronted by disagreement.

6.16.2.5.3 Self-confidence

Participant 15 referred to being confident that the effort put into a task was sufficient and the quality of the end result was of a good standard and not *“requiring assurance or validation by someone else.”*

6.16.2.5.4 Social confidence

In order to gain respect and be listened to in a male-dominated environment, displaying social confidence and maintaining one's presence was regarded as a strength. *“You have to have this commanding presence and I don't mean by shouting at everybody or being rude. You have to tell them what you want, why you want it and you have to be clear to do it with a firm voice.”* Participant 15 also noted that confidence in the workplace was more readily displayed by males than females.

6.16.2.5.5 Initiative

Participant 15 described having initiative as a strength necessary for effective leadership.

6.16.2.5.6 Independent decision-making

The ability to make decisions on their own, without referring to anyone for assistance, was seen as a leadership strength that needed to be developed in Muslim women, particularly because they tended to be swayed by the expectations of their families and colleagues instead of basing their decisions on their own needs. Participant 15 explained that not being able to make independent decisions filtered into relationships in the workplace. *“I have been on my own now for about fifteen, sixteen years and I have always made the decisions whether it was about having a child, work, moving, buying a car or buying a house I made those decisions. I didn’t have to look at my husband for guidance or approval and that kind of rolled out to my work as well.”*

6.16.2.6 Muslim women in the work and social context

6.16.2.6.1 Stereotypes and assumptions about Muslim women at work

Participant 15 explained two apparently conflicting views of Muslim women. She related her personal choice of deciding to adopt the hijab full-time and consequently being viewed at work according to stereotypes that portray Muslim women as submissive and lacking the ability to make decisions for themselves. In this case she was defensive about her capability and performance, which tended to be overlooked because of her appearance and religious affiliation, which was different from those of the people with whom she worked with. *“There’s sometimes just assumptions that I will not do something because I am Muslim, a Muslim woman. You’ve got to rectify those misconceptions because they are not right.”*

6.16.2.6.2 Variability of conservatism in the Muslim community

Compared to the family in which she was raised, Participant 15 is one of only two women who wear a hijab and she described her family as rather modern. The decision-making power of spouses in her extended family depended on who the main breadwinner was and varied between couples, but many of the

women in her family had given up their careers and working once they had children. Participant 15's family background could be regarded as more moderate compared to many Muslim homes, which does conform to the submissive female stereotype. In her view, women were less inclined to work and hold careers if they came from wealthier families and were financially secure. *"I know a lot of women who are not allowed to make their own decisions and that their parents will not send them to school and to complete their studies and they have to get married even if their parents are absolutely wealthy."*

According to Participant 15, the degree of conservatism varies in Muslim families and predicts the opportunity for further studies and a career for women. In her case, she has attempted to maintain her identity and principles as a Muslim while still pursuing a career. *"It depends on the type of family you come from and the type of support structure you have. Do they allow you to grow into this independent Muslim woman? To balance what is expected of her in terms of Islam and to still do whatever she wants to."*

6.17 CONCLUSION

This chapter served to convey the individual stories of the Muslim women who served as leaders in their workplaces and professions, as collected through semi-structured interviews. The themes and sub-themes derived from the individual cases are compared for convergence and divergence and group level results are presented in Chapter 8.

CHAPTER 7

ANALYSIS OF QUANTITATIVE RESULTS

7.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents the results of each individual participant as the personality profile generated from the completion of the 16PF-5 and conveys the themes derived from the interviews conducted with the research participants.

7.2 INTERPRETATIVE 16PF-5 PERSONALITY PROFILES OF PARTICIPANTS

7.2.1 PARTICIPANT 1

7.2.1.1 Overall adjustment

No significant adjustment difficulties were noted on Participant 1's profile.

7.2.1.2 General relating to people

Participant 1 presents as someone who highly enjoys being involved in group activities and tends to be acutely concerned about the well-being of others, exhibiting warmth and attentiveness. As such she is better suited to a working environment characterised by consultation, where she can discuss her ideas with colleagues. She is likely to relate to people in a non-judgemental way, taking them at face value and in turn may be fairly open about herself and her own views. Demonstrating a lower level of dominance, she is unlikely to force her opinions on others, however, and would prefer to let someone else

assume the lead if necessary. Where it may happen that she disagrees on an issue with someone, she may suppress this and if left unresolved, this could become critical in her interpersonal relations.

7.2.1.3 Thinking style

Participant 1 is likely to give just as much attention to facts and detail as she is to consider the bigger picture and related conceptual aspects of a problem. This would enable her to apply a balanced approach of reflecting on information, as well as being aware of the practical and immediate demands of a project. She has a strong orientation towards new ideas and experiences, which could assist in generating additional solutions and adapting current ideas. Her average level of spontaneity could find her thinking through aspects of a problem rather carefully instead of making impulsive decisions. Typically rule-conscious, Participant 1 sees the value of standards and would generally be willing to follow them. She may be better at tolerating change and disorganisation than most people and seems to have a lower need to exercise control over the events that take place in her life.

7.2.1.4 Management of pressure and workplace frustration

With a higher degree of emotional stability, Participant 1 is likely to be able to meet with life's demands and deal with things calmly. While not particularly apprehensive in more difficult situations, she should have a realistic idea of her strengths and weaknesses. She would probably also acknowledge any errors made, accept responsibility and learn from them. She is unlikely to gain satisfaction from a working environment that provides little opportunity for close interaction with others and prefers to be updated with feedback on a regular basis. Participant 1 is apt to enjoy tasks that offer a degree of challenge or variety and could be less motivated to engage in tasks that expect careful planning to be applied.

7.2.2 PARTICIPANT 2

7.2.2.1 Overall adjustment

No major adjustment concerns were noted on her profile.

7.2.2.2 General relating to people

High in self-reliance, she is someone who values time alone and freedom to make her own choices and decisions. She shows very strong concern for others and a higher degree of attentiveness and warmth towards them. At times she may experience some difficulty with having her own dependency needs met and can be critical when placed under pressure. She tends to be as open about disclosing personal information as most and accept others at face value. Participant 2 appears to have an average level of energy, being neither overly spontaneous nor cautious in her exchanges with others. She scored extremely high on social boldness and is consequently unlikely to feel uncomfortable or intimidated by others. She is unlikely to dominate others or force her point of view on them. While she may express her opinions, she will also allow others to have their say.

7.2.2.3 Thinking style

Participant 2 is likely to consider facts and details when considering an issue, but not to the extent that she will lose sight of the bigger picture. Instead, she tends to think things through when making her decisions, to reflect beyond information presented but still to remain able to maintain a realistic and practical focus. A little more sensitive to the aesthetic side of life, she would probably consider the implications of her judgements on her values rather than on hard logical analysis. She is inclined to be more open to change than to stick with familiar or traditional ways of viewing and doing things.

7.2.2.4 Consistency of behaviour

Scoring slightly lower on rule-consciousness, she will generally abide by external rules and regulations, but consider them flexible at times. She is typically organised in her approach, but is not overly worried about planning in advance and does not require a high level of control over activities. She is likely to tolerate a degree of uncertainty from her environment.

7.2.2.5 Management of pressure and workplace frustration

Participant 2 displays a knack for dealing with life's ups and downs as well as most people and feels self-assured about herself and her accomplishments. She is unlikely to regard others with suspicion or vigilance, considering them to be sincere, and her attitude has a positive impact on her overall feeling of well-being. Not typically prone to irritability, she experiences physical tension in response to pressure, as most people would. If she does not work in an environment that promotes close relationships with others, she may feel less satisfied but she will still require her independence. She could also feel stressed and less motivated if her work offers her insufficient challenge.

7.2.3 PARTICIPANT 3

7.2.3.1 Overall adjustment

No major adjustment concerns were noted on her profile.

7.2.3.2 General relating to people

Participant 3 prefers to spend time on her own and to make decisions independent of others' input. Although she shows as much concern as most for the well-being of others and is fairly easy to get along with, she is

somewhat more reserved and will not readily disclose personal information. Participant 3 is likely to be observant of social expectations and preferred behaviour in specific contexts and will exercise caution when expressing her views and opinions, coming across as serious rather than spontaneous. She tends to be accepting of others and willing to be lead, but needs to be wary of supressing her true feelings and to learn to express negative emotions appropriately.

7.2.3.3 Thinking style

Participant 3 prefers to solve problems that are more practical in nature, grounded in reality and focussed on tangible solutions. She can be more responsive to immediate demands than longer-term issues and open to new ideas, experiences and ways of doing things. When working with information Participant 3 tends to adopt an analytical, experimental approach and she likes to work through the facts carefully and thoroughly. Having achieved a greater level of comprehension using this method, she is in a better position to make well-informed decisions.

7.2.3.4 Consistency of behaviour

Participant 3 generally appreciates rules and standards and can be expected to follow them consistently. She does not place high value on perfectionism, valuing the practical reality of things and as such should demonstrate an average tendency to plan and organise events in advance. Her better level of focus on the task at hand can make her appear emotionally detached to those requiring a more supportive approach.

7.2.3.5 Management of pressure and workplace frustration

Participant 3 reported a high level of emotional stability, which relates to dealing with life's demands in a calm and composed way. She is unlikely to be apprehensive when confronted with challenges, or become overly tense and

worried. She should be quite self-assured but may become a little unsettled when having to multi-task, as she prefers working more thoroughly with fewer tasks at a time.

7.2.4 PARTICIPANT 4

7.2.4.1 Overall adjustment

No severe adjustment concerns were noted. There is possibly difficulty with the smooth processing of aggression and here extremely low score on liveliness indicates a depressed mood or problems with enjoyment. A very high score on self-reliance translates into her experiencing difficulty with having her dependency needs met.

7.2.4.2 General relating to people

Very high on self-reliance, she values time alone, prefers the freedom to make her own decisions and not having to depend on others. Participant 4 has a slightly higher level of concern for attentiveness and should relate easily to people and be attentive to their needs. Somewhat more private, she is generally open and straightforward, but may be less comfortable discussing personal information with others. She tends to be fairly accepting of other people and not prone to suspicion, may not always express her views or her disagreement with something and would be likely to allow others to have their way. Extremely cautious, she is likely to think things through very carefully and take life seriously rather than engage in reckless behaviour. She is generally at ease in social settings and unlikely to feel shy or intimidated when sharing her views. Although she shows concern for others, her higher level of independence can cause her some frustration when she requires support herself.

7.2.4.3 Thinking style

When approaching problems Participant 4 is a little more inclined to give attention to facts and details and what is practically important in the shorter term. She is somewhat more logical and objective in her decision-making, rather than being swayed by sentiment and is as open as most people to adapting to changing circumstances. She seems extremely cautious when making decisions and prefers to consider the implications of her decisions carefully. She takes time to process information, may develop ideas more thoroughly and achieve a greater level of understanding than most.

7.2.4.4 Consistency of behaviour

Participant 4 accepts and abides by externally imposed rules and standards, but not rigidly. At times she may give preference to expediency. She tends to have clearly defined personal standards and it is important to her to behave in a manner consistent to these and she will exert control over events by planning ahead and preparing for them. Her decisions and behaviour tend to be grounded in practical reality and she is more likely to focus her attention on current issues.

7.2.4.5 Management of pressure and workplace frustration

Participant 4 tends to be affected by life's ups and downs and may feel less calm than most people when dealing with challenges. She tends to perceive her strengths and weaknesses fairly realistically and should be able to take responsibility for mistakes made and learn from them. She is fairly trusting of others, believing people to be honest and sincere and this generally has a positive impact on her overall well-being. She is as likely as other people to experience physical tension when under pressure and may respond less favourable to multi-tasking, preferring to deal with tasks separately and thoroughly. She does however enjoy a degree of challenge and may derive less satisfaction from working as part of a team.

7.2.5 PARTICIPANT 5

7.2.5.1 Overall adjustment

No significant adjustment difficulties were noted.

7.2.5.2 General relating to people

Participant 5 tends to be a warm, outgoing individual who enjoys spending time with people, but has a balanced need for being with others and being alone. Genuine and generally having high concern for others she can be quite friendly and attentive. When dealing with others. Participant 5 articulates herself in a forthright, unpretentious manner and usually says what she means. Her blatant honesty and likelihood to reveal information about herself could potentially make her seem more naïve than most. An average level of vigilance indicates that she generally assumes people to be trustworthy and sincere, but will be alert to grounds for suspicion. She may exhibit a typical level of energy, being neither too spontaneous nor too cautious. Participant 5 is inclined to be comfortable in social situations and not easily intimidated by others. She may enjoy being in a position of influence and voice her views and opinions rather boldly. She would probably approach challenges head-on, welcome opportunities for adventure and apply herself assertively in most situations. At her worst she may be critical in interpersonal conflict, bossy and stubborn.

7.2.5.3 Thinking style

High scores on abstract thinking may indicate detachment from the more mundane issues of life and interfere with an individual's functioning. Participant 5 may become deeply engrossed in thoughts and ideas and enjoys reflecting on the broader view of things rather than being caught up in trivial details. She is likely to consider implications beyond concrete facts when working through an issue. With a more balanced value for logic and

aesthetics, she will be more inclined to pay attention to facts and their practical implications and will be aware of their emotional consequences and the values involved. It seems that in her judgement she tries to balance objectivity and sensitivity. Being neither too spontaneous nor too cautious suggests that she will think things through carefully before arriving at a final decision. Participant 5 tends to have quite a strong orientation towards free thinking and new ideas and experiences and may enjoy opportunities for change and exploring new ways of doing things.

7.2.5.4 Consistency of behaviour

Participant 5 is generally willing to accept and abide by externally imposed rules and standards of behaviour, but not rigidly so. At times she may give way to expediency if it makes more sense to her than following the rules to the letter. She is neither very perfectionistic nor laid back and can be expected to plan ahead and organise herself as necessary. Her higher preference for abstract thinking and considering information beyond what is present may find her wandering from the activities of her immediate environment.

7.2.5.5 Management of pressure and workplace frustration

Participant 5 likes being able to establish close relationships with others and can become a little despondent if her environment does not allow for this. She would prefer greater autonomy to be in control of activities and events and can become restless if dealing with lack of challenges.

7.2.6 PARTICIPANT 6

7.2.6.1 Adjustment

No significant adjustment difficulties were noted. Participant 6 was extremely relaxed and unperturbed.

7.2.6.2 General relating to people

Participant 6 prefers being around other people and working with them and is likely to enjoy being able to contribute as a team member. However, she also presents as somewhat cool and aloof and it could take others some time to get to know her well. She prefers to focus her attention on tasks and objectives and her discussions will seldom be about her feelings or personal issues. Participant 6 is fairly easy to get along with and communicates openly and directly in most cases. Very accepting and trusting of others, she regards them at face value but can be critical in less favourable circumstances. Rather confident, she is quite comfortable in social settings and is not easily intimidated. Participant 6 is apt to be more venturesome, vocal and assertive about what she wants. She should enjoy being in a position where she can direct and influence others.

7.2.6.3 Thinking style

Participant 6 may be inclined to adopt a more concrete and practical approach to problem-solving, attending to more immediate issues rather than abstract ideas and concepts. She is likely to pay attention to facts and pragmatic concerns but also consider the values and emotional consequences of her decisions. With a very strong orientation towards change, she can be expected to be highly receptive to new experiences and improvements to ways of doing things. She will hardly act in an impulsive or thoughtless manner but rather consider the consequences of her behaviour, which may assist her to develop solutions more comprehensively.

7.2.6.4 Consistency of behaviour

Participant 6 is as likely as most people to accept and follow externally imposed rules and guidelines for behaviour but may occasionally be more expedient if it makes more sense to her. Her need for perfectionism is fairly low, indicating that she is more comfortable dealing with things as they happen and is rather tolerant of disorganisation and lack of advance planning. Her activities tend to be more grounded on practical reality and she is likely to focus well on the task at hand.

7.2.6.5 Management of pressure and workplace frustration

With an average level of emotional stability, Participant 6 is likely to deal with life's ups and downs as calmly as most. She sees herself as extremely self-assured and unperturbed, generally maintains a positive attitude and regards others with little scepticism. She would be far less prone to physical tension or irritability. If her working environment provides insufficient opportunity for challenge and autonomy she may feel less satisfied. She tends to be impatient with long-term planning in favour of implementation, dislikes working alone for long periods of time and would rather work more thoroughly on fewer tasks than attend to multiple tasks and tight time constraints.

7.2.7 PARTICIPANT 7

7.2.7.1 Overall adjustment

No significant adjustment difficulties were noted on her profile.

7.2.7.2 General relating to people

Participant 7 generally has a balanced need for sharing experiences with other people and being on her own. She shows an average level of concern for others and is likely to be as warm and attentive as most. She is inclined to share information about herself when more comfortable and typically regards people as trustworthy and sincere, but will be alert to any real grounds for suspicion. Participant 7 will not readily express enthusiasm or excitement, as she prefers to take her time and assess a situation carefully and she takes life fairly seriously. When part of social events, Participant 7 is usually comfortable, but prefers not to steer conversations or force her views on other people. Instead she may hold back on what she actually thinks or feels and allow others to assume the lead.

7.2.7.3 Thinking style

Participant 7 is likely to give due attention to the facts and details when working on a problem but is unlikely to get so bogged down that she loses sight of the bigger picture. While she will tend to reflect on things and come up with thoughts that go beyond the immediate situation, she nonetheless sees the value of focussing on what is realistic, practical and immediately necessary. She displays a slightly higher preference for the aesthetic side of life and should be considerate of the emotional and values-based consequences when making decisions. She demonstrates a strong orientation towards change and looking towards new experiences. Her low level of liveliness could point to problems with enjoyment or a depressed mood.

7.2.7.4 Consistency of behaviour

Participant 7's affinity for externally imposed rules and structures is somewhat lower and she is likely to attach more value to her personal code of behaviour. As disciplined as most, she will typically plan and organise her tasks and activities. She is likely to give attention to facts and detail, as well as consider

the bigger picture, and should be able to maintain a good level of concentration.

7.2.7.5 Management of pressure and workplace frustration

Participant 7 perceives herself as generally capable of dealing with life's ups and downs in a calm manner, has a realistic sense of her own strengths and weaknesses and can be expected to take responsibility for any mistakes made. She tends to be less physically tense when dealing with difficult situations and does not easily become impatient or irritable with others.

7.2.8 PARTICIPANT 8

7.2.8.1 Overall adjustment

Participant 8 displays elevated anxiety with low emotional stability, indicating a coping deficit, poor tolerance of frustration and difficulty in deferring needs. A high level of apprehension results in negative self-experience and attacks of conscience.

7.2.8.2 General relating to people

Participant 8's need for socialising and being with others is fairly balanced with a preference for spending time alone. She shows a very high level of concern for others, takes an interest in their well-being and relates quite easily. With a very low need for privacy, Participant 8 is open and straightforward with others and more willing than most to disclose information about herself. While she believes that people are generally sincere, she is alert to their hidden motives, but on the whole is rather accepting of people. Participant 8 is likely to demonstrate an average level of energy and spontaneity, is comfortable having others take the lead but feels quite at ease

in social settings. She may not always verbalise her views if she feels her opinion may be overridden, but could become critical of others when discontented with their behaviour.

7.2.8.3 Thinking style

Participant 8 takes more of an abstract than detailed approach to understanding things and is likely to be preoccupied with her thoughts and prefer a broader, more creative view of things. She has a tendency to daydream. She will take some time to think through her decisions and the implication of the values that may be involved. With a very high orientation towards change, she is unlikely to shy away from new experiences and she prefers free thinking rather than conservatism.

7.2.8.4 Consistency of behaviour

With an average level of willingness to abide by externally imposed rules, she will not typically go against the accepted norms of behaviour unless she genuinely believes a more expedient approach is more appropriate. Although not highly perfectionistic, she will plan and organise herself as necessary and will reflect beyond the presentation of information. At times her attention may wander. A higher level of dependence may affect her behaviour adversely.

7.2.8.5 Management of pressure and workplace frustration

Participant 8 is likely to be quite affected by life's ups and downs, becoming reactive and emotionally changeable when faced with difficulties. A very high level of apprehensiveness indicates a tendency to worry a lot, accept responsibility when things go wrong and be hard on herself about how she could have handled her situation better. She may become overwhelmed and anxious about demands and lapse into self-doubt because of lack of adequate emotional resources. In this case she may become more emotionally dependent and this could affect her behaviour. At work she will prefer an

environment that allows her to establish relationships with others and it is important to her to be properly understood. Lack of challenge and variety can cause her to feel less satisfied with her efforts.

7.2.9 PARTICIPANT 9

7.2.9.1 Overall adjustment

There A few adjustment difficulties were noted, including social timidity, possibly fearfulness of others and a greater tendency to experience anxiousness. On the global factors, a higher-end score was noted for tough-mindedness and lower-end scores were obtained for independence and anxiety, which together indicate an adjustment difficulty, particularly where social integration is concerned.

7.2.9.2 General relating to people

Participant 9 shows a balanced preference for spending time with others and being on her own. She is as likely as most people to demonstrate warmth and empathy, will tend to communicate in an open and straightforward manner and is fairly comfortable sharing information about herself. She is usually very accepting of people and takes them at face value, not being forceful about her ideas or opinions, and will consider another view if it seems more appropriate. Participant 9 may become self-conscious and uncomfortable in social situations and would rather prefer to work in the background than be the centre of attention.

7.2.9.3 Thinking style

More practically minded when attending to problems, Participant 9 is likely to have less patience with abstract ideas and would rather apply a steady, concrete approach to dealing with things. She is likely to pay attention to the

factual elements but also consider the value implications of her decisions and attempt to achieve results without compromising people's well-being. With a fairly lower inclination towards change, she can be expected to implement more traditional methods and systems with a view to minimise risks. When required to adapt to evolving circumstances, she is apt to be more constricted in response and inflexible. Neither overly cautious nor spontaneous, she will regard the information at hand when coming to a decision and is likely to apply consistent effort and attention.

7.2.9.4 Consistency of behaviour

Participant 9 tends to dislike having to abide by strict rules and externally imposed rules of conduct, preferring to follow her personal value system, sometimes indulgently so without a sense of guilt and disregard of social norms. A little lower on perfectionism, she tends to deal with situations as they occur rather than plan in advance and is more likely to tolerate a degree of disorganisation, potentially leaving things to chance. This could possibly be linked to a perceived lack of purpose or lower self-esteem.

7.2.9.5 Management of pressure and workplace frustration

Participant 9 appears to have a good level of emotional stability and generally feels capable of dealing with life's demands in a self-assured and calm manner. She is not typically prone to vigilance or suspicion and unlikely to become irritable or impatient when working with others. She is likely to feel under pressure if attention is focussed on her and may struggle with adapting to radical change. Activities that involve careful, long-term planning may be experienced as frustrating.

7.2.10 PARTICIPANT 10

7.2.10.1 Overall adjustment

No significant adjustment difficulties were noted.

7.2.10.2 General relating to people

Participant 10 regards herself as highly self-reliant, as an individual who values time alone and the freedom to make her own decisions. She prefers working with tasks and objectives rather than with people and softer issues with a view to achieve results. An extremely high preference for privacy indicates strong resistance to revealing information of a more personal nature, even though she generally perceives people as trustworthy and sincere. Participant 10 tends to be comfortable in social situations and is not averse to influencing others, tending to be rather assertive on issues she regards as important. She applies a measure of social awareness and will typically conduct herself diplomatically and in a calculated, socially appropriate manner. Participant 10 typically feels she needs to be adequate functioning on her own in the absence of a support system and her relationships are more likely to be aloof and lack emotional expression. If she feels the needs to defend herself, she can be critical in her interpersonal relationships.

7.2.10.3 Thinking style

Participant 10's orientation to problem-solving is more practical and she prefers to tackle and resolve issues taking an immediate, hands-on approach. Higher sensitivity to aesthetic aspects may find her considering the value implication of decisions made and interests of a more sentimental or artistic nature may appeal to her. Her openness to change is average, implying that she will consider the merits of change and adapt accordingly. A little lower on liveliness, she is more careful about decisions made, trading spontaneity for

introspection and restraint. Greater depth of comprehension about the subject matter concerned is likely to be achieved as a result.

7.2.10.4 Consistency of behaviour

Participant 10 places greater value on socially imposed standards of behaviour and is unlikely to compromise on them without due cause. Highly perfectionistic, she has clearly defined personal standards and exercises precision and self-discipline, both in her own behaviour and in her organisation and planning of her environment. Not particularly moved by abstract ideas, she prefers to focus her attention on concrete facts and details and to make decisions that yield tangible outcomes.

7.2.10.5 Management of pressure and workplace frustration

In response to challenges, Participant 10 exhibits a level of emotional stability and is usually in control of the demands placed on her, dealing with these in a calm and composed manner. She has a realistic idea of her own strengths and weaknesses and will accept responsibility for any mistakes made. Her mood is rather serious and she is prone to experiencing a greater degree of tension, owing to her restlessness and drive. She may feel dissatisfied by the lack of autonomy and a strong emphasis on multi-tasking.

7.2.11 PARTICIPANT 11

7.2.11.1 Overall adjustment

No significant adjustment difficulties were noted. She scored slightly higher on social desirability responses. There may be possible conflict between getting dependency needs met and/or establishing mutually gratifying relationships.

7.2.11.2 General relating to people

Participant 11 is very self-reliant and perceives herself as someone who values time alone and prefers the freedom to make her own decisions and choices. Easy to get along with, she shows an average level of warmth and concern for others. She is very open and straightforward about her views and generally prefers a direct approach rather than adopting tact and diplomacy. Regarding others as honest and trustworthy, she tends to accept people as they present themselves. She is likely to feel as comfortable as most in social settings and is unlikely to have a prominent presence. Although she may articulate her views and interpretation of situations, Participant 11 would consider an alternative opinion as appropriate and will hardly force her ideas on others. Because of her high level of self-reliance there may be possible conflict with getting dependency needs met and/or establishing mutually gratifying relationships.

7.2.11.3 Thinking style

A slightly lower preference for abstract thinking indicates that Participant 11 is more inclined to pay attention to issues requiring immediate attention and focus on solutions that are practical and realistic. While she would usually pay attention to the facts and their practical implications, she will not overlook the emotional aspects and values involved. It would seem that her judgements tend to balance objectivity and sensitivity. Participant 11 is as open to new experiences as most, neither too attached to old and established systems nor reinventing things unnecessarily. With an average level of spontaneity, she is likely to think things through when reaching a decision.

7.2.11.4 Consistency of behaviour

Participant 11's concern for rules is similar to that of most people and she is generally accepting of externally imposed rules and standards of behaviour, but at times may give way to expediency over following rules to the letter. She

is inclined to be highly perfectionistic in her approach and sets personal standards she feels she can maintain. She is more comfortable if given the opportunity to exert control over events by exercising discipline, preparing and planning ahead to create an organised and predictable environment. Grounded in practical reality, she can be expected to have stronger control over her attention than most people.

7.2.11.5 Management of pressure and workplace frustration

More self-assured than most and with a normal level of emotional stability, Participant 11 typically deals with daily challenges in a calm and positive manner. She exudes a positive attitude towards others and seldom experiences impatience or irritability, coming across as composed and relaxed. Her stronger penchant for self-reliance could result in her deriving less satisfaction when working as part of a team.

7.2.12 PARTICIPANT 12

7.2.12 Overall adjustment

No significant adjustment difficulties were noted.

7.2.12.2 General relating to people

Participant 12 can come across as serious and reserved, rather introspective. She sees herself as someone who values time alone and the freedom to make her own decisions and choices. She demonstrates an average level of warmth and attentiveness toward others. Generally as open about herself as most people, she is neither too withdrawn nor too revealing. She generally regards people as trustworthy, but does not blindly accept what she encounters at face value and will be alert to others' hidden motives. Participant 12 tends to be more cautious and likes to think things through

carefully, is not reckless and takes life fairly seriously. While she is unlikely to force her views and opinions on anyone, she is likely to express what she thinks but will also let others have their say and may alter her opinion if it is appropriate to do so. Lower liveliness indicates a depressed mood or problems with enjoyment, while a very high score on self-reliance indicates conflict between having dependency needs met and maintaining mutually gratifying relationships.

7.2.12.3 Thinking style

Participant 12 is likely to give due attention to facts and details when working on a problem but is unlikely to get bogged down to the extent that she loses sight of the bigger picture. While she would prefer to reflect on things and come up with ideas that go beyond present information, she will still keep her focus on what is practical, realistic and immediately necessary. She shows a very high orientation towards change and openness to new ideas and experiences and enjoys experimenting and looking at new ways of doing things. Her judgements attempt to balance sensitivity and objectivity, without compromising the facts or emotional consequences of her decisions. Highly open to new ideas and experiences but not impulsive, Participant 12 prefers to think things through very carefully and her capacity for deep thought may allow her to develop ideas more thoroughly and achieve a greater level of comprehension when researching a task or project.

7.2.12.4 Consistency of behaviour

When it comes to rules and regulations, Participant 12 will generally accept and follow externally imposed instructions and codes of behaviour, but will not do so rigidly, giving way to expediency where necessary. Being neither too perfectionistic nor laid-back, she would typically plan her activities and keep focussed and organised. However, she does not exert a high degree of control over tasks and events, focussing her attention on what is current and important.

7.2.12.5 Management of pressure and workplace frustration

Participant 12 tends to be a little more in control of dealing with life's demands and disposed to approaching difficulties in a calm manner. She has a realistic sense of her own strengths and weaknesses, but is sometimes inclined to feel tense or irritable with others. She may find it difficult to trust others with responsibilities, being wary of people's true agendas, and may become frustrated or anxious about not being able to rely on them. She consequently derives little pleasure from being part of a team. Because she likes to attend to issues more thoroughly, she may become unsettled when required to multi-task.

7.2.13 PARTICIPANT 13

Participant 13 tended to provide too many 'middle' or inconclusive response answers when answering the 16PF-5 questionnaire, which invalidated the results. A personality profile could not be generated for this participant.

7.2.14 PARTICIPANT 14

7.2.14.1 Overall Adjustment

Her responses are slightly higher on social desirability than those of most people. A low liveliness score indicates possible problems with enjoyment or a depressed mood and blunted affect or distancing from feelings. Self-assured and unworried, she seems to feel confident and self-satisfied (seven extreme scores; acceptable range is a maximum of six).

7.2.14.2 General relating to people

Participant 14 is fairly self-reliant, prefers to make her decisions independently and is a little more inclined than most to enjoy a position where she can influence others. Rather warm and friendly, she tends to display a good temperament and integrates easily in social settings, is not shy and communicates in an open and direct manner. In general, she is accepting of people as they are, perceiving them to be trustworthy and sincere, but will be alert to their motives. She is not usually confrontational, but can be critical in her interpersonal relations. Participant 14 is apt to take life seriously and will usually exhibit socially precise rather than reckless behaviour. While she may carry herself in a composed manner, she is unafraid to voice her opinion and is likely to be somewhat adventurous in new situations.

7.2.14.3 Thinking style

With a slightly lower liking for abstract thinking, Participant 14 can be expected to be more responsive to the immediate needs of a given situation and remain grounded in the practical realities rather than consider probable theories or the bigger picture. She is likely to give due attention to the facts, as well as consider the values and emotional consequences of a problem at hand, taking her time to think through the details carefully before reaching a decision. With a very high orientation towards change and free-thinking, it is probable that she will enjoy experimenting and looking at ways to improve things.

7.2.14.4 Consistency of behaviour

Very aware of externally imposed rules, Participant 14 is typically compliant and conscientious, dutifully following what is expected of her. She also has clearly defined personal standards and sees it as important to behave consistently according to these, demonstrating discipline and etiquette. She

favours having things done properly and will probably plan her activities in advance to create an organised and functional environment. In touch with the demands of her environment, she is likely to have a better level of control over her attention than most people.

7.2.14.5 Management of pressure

Participant 14 rated extremely high on emotional stability, which is indicative of being able to deal with challenges in a calm and mature manner, but also suggests that she may be dealing with some short-term situational problems. She presents as relatively trusting and self-assured and is less likely to experience irritability or impatience with others. Her lower level of liveliness can make her appear more restrained and serious and at times she may be downhearted and introspective.

7.2.15 PARTICIPANT 15

A personality profile could not be generated for Participant 15, as she had an invalid response style, having responded affirmatively to a high number of unsure/uncertain middle response items.

7.3 GROUP REPRESENTATION OF PERSONALITY TRAITS

The results of the global five factors and primary personality traits as measured by the 16PF-5 are represented for the thirteen participants (excluding invalid profiles of Participants 13 and 15) in Tables 25 and 26, respectively.

Table 25

Group representation of participants on global factors

Global Personality Factors		High			Mod	Ave		Mod	High			
Extraversion	Introverted, Socially inhibited	10		7 4	9 3 12	2 11 14	6	5 8	1			Extraverted, Socially participative
Independence	Accommodating, Agreeable, Selfless	9	4	7 3	1 8 11	2 12 6 14	10	5				Independent, Persuasive, Wilful
Tough-mindedness	Receptive, Open- minded, Intuitive			5 8	7 1 2 12	6 14	3 10	11	9 4			Tough-minded, Resolute, Unempathetic
Self-control	Unrestrained, follows urges				9 1 2 5 8	7 12 6	3	4 11	10 14			Self-controlled, inhibits urges
Anxiety	Relaxed, Unperturbed	6	11	9 1 3 14	7 2	5 10 12 4	8					Anxious, Perturbable

Table 26

Group representation of participants on primary factors

Primary Personality Factors		High			Mod	Ave			Mod	High			
Warmth	Reserved, Impersonal, Distant		10		6	3	9	4	5	1			Warm, Outgoing, Attentive to others
						11	7	14		2			
							12			8			
Reasoning	Concrete				9		2						Abstract, Fast learner
				7	6	8	3	1					
					11	14	5	12					
							4						
							10						
Emotional stability	Reactive, Emotionally changeable		8		5		9	1					Emotionally stable, Adaptive, Mature
					4	11	7	12	3	14			
							2	10					
							6						
Dominance	Deferential, Cooperative, Avoids conflict				7	9							Dominant, Forceful, Assertive
				4	1	2		6					
					3	12		14	5	10			
					8	11							
Liveliness	Serious, Restrained, Careful	4	7	12	3	1	9						Lively, Spontaneous, Animated
			10	14	6	2	5						
						8							
						11							
Rule-consciousness	Expedient, Non-conforming				9	5	4	1					Rule-conscious, Dutiful
					7	12	8	3	14				
					2	6	11	10					
Social boldness	Shy, Threat sensitive, Timid							1					Socially bold, Venturesome, Thick-skinned
				9		7	11	4					
						3	10	8	5	2			
						12		6		14			
Sensitivity	Utilitarian, Objective, Unsentimental							9					Sensitive, Aesthetic, Sentimental
					3	1	5	7					
					4	11	12	2	10				
							6	8					
							14						

Vigilance	Trusting, Unsuspecting, Accepting	6	9 1	3 4 11	2	7 8 14 10	5	12			Vigilant, Suspicious, Sceptical, Wary
Abstractness	Grounded, Practical, Solution-oriented			9 10	3 4 6 14 11	7 12	1 2	8	5		Abstracted, Imaginative, Idea-oriented
Privateness	Forthright, Genuine, Artless			5 8 11	9 1 6 14	7 2 12		4	3	10	Private, Discrete, Non-disclosing
Apprehension	Self-assured, Unworried, Complacent	6	11	9 2 14	3	7 5 12 10	1 ZS			8	Apprehensive, Self-doubting, Worried
Openness to change	Traditional, Attached to familiar				9	4	11 10	2	7 8 14	1 3 5 12 6	Open to change, Experimenting
Self-reliance	Group-oriented, Affiliative		1	6		9	7 5 8	3 11 14	2	12 4 10	Self-reliant, Solitary, Individualistic
Perfectionism	Tolerates disorder, Unexacting, Flexible		1		9 2 6	8	7 3 5 12	4 11		14 10	Perfectionistic, Organised, Self-disciplined
Tension	Relaxed, Placid, Patient		6 11	7 1	9 14	2 8 3	5	12 4 10			Tense, High energy, Impatient, Driven

7.4 CONCLUSION

This chapter provided an interpretative analysis of the individual participants' personality profiles together with a graphical representation of the results. The subsequent chapter considers the relevance of the results and discusses both the qualitative and quantitative results in light of significant research thus far and the implications of the findings against the objectives of the study.

CHAPTER 8

DISCUSSION OF QUALITATIVE AND QUANTITATIVE RESULTS

8.1 INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this chapter is to describe the qualitative and quantitative results of the study. An overview is provided of the key themes elicited within the overarching qualitative categories, namely themes on leadership, opportunities and supportive factors that enabled the participants' ability as leaders, challenges that they experienced, contemporary perceptions of Muslim women and the psychological strengths that they regarded as important for dealing with these factors and supporting their leadership activities. The discussion of the qualitative themes and related research is followed by the comparative quantitative results and descriptive trends identified. Since the sample was relatively small for a detailed quantitative analysis (generally analysis relies on larger numbers of participants in order to formulate generalisations about the results), statistical analysis was limited, but some trends were evident across the personality traits measured.

8.2 COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF QUALITATIVE THEMES

The qualitative themes related to the participants' experiences and perspectives of leadership, opportunities, challenges and contemporary context provide a background to the psychological strengths generated by them.

8.2.1 Themes on leadership

Some general topics related to leadership were raised by the research participants and other, more specific areas included team leadership behaviour, personal indicators of effectiveness and descriptions of preferred leadership styles.

8.2.1.1 General themes on leadership

8.2.1.1.1 Extended leadership

Nine of the participants (60%) served in more than one leadership role. This took the form of serving in a leadership capacity in the primary job role, as well as serving on or chairing executive boards, heading up several organisations at a time or heading up hospital units as well as academic departments. Some participants extended leadership to non-work contexts, initiating community-based and charitable programmes and even applying their leadership principles in their homes.

8.2.1.1.2 Role models

Having role models to consult as ideal examples of leadership behaviour was cited by four of the participants (27%). Participant 2 referred to the current lack of strong leadership in a South African context and supported the political leadership of freedom stalwarts and activists such as Nelson Mandela and the intellectual leadership of progressive Islamic scholars. Participant 4 referred to the leadership of Prophet Muhammed (SAW) whose purpose was to elevate humanity. The associated principles of equality were implemented in the mandate of her NGO and she cited examples of female leadership during the era of the Prophet (SAW). Participant 10 also chose to follow the Prophet Muhammed's (SAW) example of leadership, which aimed to win over the hearts of people rather than use of force and she regarded herself as setting a precedent for female leadership based on Islamic principles, including generosity, magnanimity, forgiveness and tolerance. Participant 14 identified

with her mother as the first role model of leadership for her. Her mother was a widow who worked and raised five children on her own. She also referred to the Prophet Muhammed (SAW) and the late Princess Diana as role models of leadership who had been compassionate and had shown genuine concern for people.

8.2.1.1.3 Gender, religion and leadership

The last general leadership theme was associated with gender, religion and the perceived impact of these factors on leadership behaviour. Gender-specific behaviours in relation to leadership were mentioned by seven participants (47%). With regard to the leadership approach of women, Participant 14 described her personal approach as very compassionate and trusting; Participant 1 emphasised empathy and compassion; Participant 5 described feminine leadership as being less controlling and more trusting and Participant 13 regarded her leadership approach as strongly maternal and caring about the best interests of the members of her teams. In contrast, male leadership was described as harder, less permissive and requiring nasty character building by Participant 13. Regarded as a 'soft power', female leadership has been found to be characterised by empathy, speaking out, gathering support and remaining in power. In contrast, typical male leadership characteristics include being task-oriented, dominating and using a directive leadership style (Werner, 2003).

Participant 12 described men as firm leaders who tended to make quicker decisions, but were stubborn and unwilling to adopt others' ideas. She viewed female leadership as easier to get along with and allowing for individual development without micro-managing of subordinates. Participant 15 and Participant 7 were more comfortable in their interactions with male colleagues. According to Participant 15, male colleagues were more responsive to a leader who held a stronger, commanding social presence and could communicate directly, without avoiding confrontation. Participant 7 found that

her male colleagues were more forceful and pushy about achieving their own goals, and defensive where they failed to do so. These tendencies were confirmed in a South African study by Booysen (2000) who found that 'masculine leadership' was focussed on dominance, competition, performance, winning and control and 'collectivism' was associated with broader-scale networking. Person (2003) described women as having to resolve complex issues and tending to ascribe meaning to their experiences and suggested factors of impact to be the intricacy of relationships between men, women and subordinates and the challenge to leaders to manage a diverse workforce, facilitate delivery through teams and avert claims of discrimination based on gender.

Unfortunately, there is insufficient research that analyses gender differences in leadership in South Africa (Geldenhuis, 2011). Werner (2003) suggested that rather than adopting either masculine or feminine values, the integration of both could offer a better contribution to organisations, though it may be difficult to achieve a desired synergy if leadership positions continue to be dominated by males.

The impact of religion on leadership behaviour was related by two participants (13%). Participant 4 directed her NGO to reflect the universal Islamic principles of non-discrimination, openness and tolerance. Participant 5 believed that Muslim women were already socialised with Islamic values that were easily transferable to leadership contexts. These included being honest, reliable, ethical, exhibiting morally appropriate behaviour and conducting themselves professionally and respectfully.

8.2.1.2 Team leadership

Some positive leadership behaviours that were mentioned by four of the participants (27%) that were supportive of the theme of team leadership

included an interest in developing others through providing additional learning and responsibility. Using communication skills, influencing others, building networks and strategic alliances and encouraging inclusiveness were raised by five participants (33%). Delegation and performance management were also referred to by five of the participants (33%) who discussed the need to hand over areas of responsibility and assertively manage the work outcomes of team members.

When asked to define their leadership style, some participants ascribed to behavioural, contingency (Brewster et al., 2003) or transformational 'feminine leadership' approaches (Eagly et al., 2003). Three participants were in favour of a democratic approach that involved consultation (20%) and another three (20%) made use of an 'adaptive' approach by adapting their behaviour according to the contexts in which they were functioning. Participant 5, for example, used a more authoritative approach with her hospitality staff than she did within her textile business, where she had more managers reporting to her. One participant (7%) preferred a rigid leadership style where roles and responsibilities were very clearly defined and communicated to subordinates with no room for deviation because of the possible negative consequences to high-risk patients in the event of non-performance. Another described her leadership style as participative (7%) because her work context required her to facilitate and guide others on research projects, but they were still individually responsible for their progress.

When compared to leadership literature, the democratic and rigid leadership approaches of the participants corresponded with the more classic leadership styles of Lewin (1939), while the participants' 'adaptive' style was more fitting to the contingency approach, which was popularised by Hersey and Blanchard (1993) who proposed that leadership effectiveness depended on being flexible and adapting behaviour when dealing with different subordinates (Brewster et al., 2003). South African meta-analytic studies have shown that women as leaders tend to focus more on interactive and

transformational relationships (Ayman & Korabik, 2010; Eagly et al., 2003). They encourage collaboration, empathy, support, empowerment and self-disclosure. They also make use of more democratic and participative leadership styles and are adaptable and flexible, but display lower self-efficacy and tend to be unassertive (Werner, 2003; Geldenhuys, 2011).

8.2.1.3 Personal effectiveness

The issue of professional competence and being adequately qualified was raised by a single participant (7%). Two participants (13%) favoured a hands-on approach and being personally involved with activities, so their subordinates were aware of their knowledge and commitment. Perspectives on decision-making were shared by four of the participants (27%). Participant 4 experienced more resistance from her husband as co-director of the NGO when making decisions, even if those decisions were later implemented, while other professionals she worked with were generally more accepting of her opinion. Participant 5 had found that employees were more likely to accept her decisions if she held a role title that formally indicated her degree of authority to do so. While Participant 5 found it easy to assume control of situations and make decisions, after running her businesses successfully for some time she found that her need for control was less emphasised and she wanted to hand over decision-making so she would have the freedom to be a woman, let someone else make the decisions and be taken care of.

Participant 14 saw it as important to adopt a 'balanced' decision-making approach, by giving due consideration to people's needs and being compassionate, but also to be able to make tougher business decisions such as defining the financial etiquette of her business and implementing cost-saving strategies. Participant 13 outlined some stylistic differences between males and females, particularly mothers, in decision-making. In her experience women considered the future and the impact on the younger generation and were amenable to suffering and sacrificing for this cause. For

her personally, motherhood reinforced her prioritisation of life being important and meaningful, grounding her in reality but also elevating her to act on the future. In contrast, she described men as being vested in the present, being more motivated by power and targets and “*susceptible*” to company incentivisation. In South Africa there is an upward trend of women in leadership roles and decision-making capacities, but the rate of progression has been fairly slow (Geldenhuys, 2013).

8.2.2 Themes on opportunities and supportive factors

Opportunities conveyed by the participants related to education, expanded opportunities, leadership development programmes, niche careers, transformation and key relationships. Supportive factors included mentoring and role models, family support and religion.

8.2.2.1 Education

Opportunities to engage in leadership activities were preceded by educational qualifications, according to five of the participants (33%). The availability of bursaries and sponsorships was also mentioned as an advantage; being afforded the opportunity to study overseas in the United States, Europe and Canada was more common with those in higher education and specialist medical professions. Access to higher education opportunities was historically limited for non-white South Africans and older, qualified women in leadership roles are relatively rare in the workplace (Fedderke & Simkins, 2006). Only a few Indians older than forty-five years today would have achieved more than a twelve-year education in the past (Fedderke & Simkins, 2006), which has contributed to the small pool of highly qualified women with extensive leadership experience.

8.2.2.2 Broadening opportunities

Two of the participants (13%) advocated that by applying themselves and competently exploiting existing opportunities, a chain reaction of additional opportunities could be effected, for reasons such as the extended network created in Participant 14's case and the allocation of additional projects to Participant 15 because of her successful track record. The concept of positive actions leading to positive results and enhanced opportunities can theoretically be linked to Fredrickson's Broaden-and-Build Theory (1998, 2001) of positive emotions, which emphasises a similar premise of progressive experiences.

8.2.2.3 Leadership development programmes

The participants described various forms of leadership development initiatives. Participant 7 reported not having intended to become a leader, but rather to be the best that she could within her job role. She had a number of opportunities, however, which assisted her development as a leader. These included a number of publications, travelling in Africa and overseas and taking sabbaticals in India and Canada. The different environments and experiences helped her grow and develop skills that she applied in her leadership role. Participant 7 considered difficulties and obstacles encountered as opportunities for problem-solving and personal growth. Participant 3 mentioned her enjoyment of teaching, which led her to assume the academic portfolio. Her supervisor was supportive of her involvement in developmental courses and conferences to enhance her teaching and understanding of leadership. As a young graduate, Participant 5 was placed with a major petrochemical company on a leadership development programme where she was groomed and mentored for a senior management role. As an entrepreneur she was chosen to be part of a business incubation development programme by a major financial institution, which also provided support in the form of entrepreneurial skills.

Participants 5 and 13 made recommendations on future leadership development programmes for women. Participant 13 suggested that South African women could be better leaders if they were to master their skill in an area they were passionate about in order to be the best at what they did. In addition, South African women needed to learn to mix and connect socially to people who were different from themselves. She observed that South African women in general, including Muslim women, tended to stay within close-knit groups of the same race group and family or a few close friends. She suggested that formalised bodies be established to provide practical support services to professional working mothers. She also suggested that forums be created to support Muslim women as professionals through workshops to improve leadership skills and to serve as a support structure with practical services such as a pick-up and drop-off service for the children of working mothers. In order to be better leaders, they suggested that Muslim women needed to be more sharing and vocal on what they know and learn, as well as their values. Legislation is supportive of women's career development and the SABPP 2011 report predicted an increase in the number of successful women in the workplace if career management strategies, mentorships and personal career ownership and self-directed learning were accommodated (Riordan & Louw-Potgieter, 2011; McCammond, 2008; O'Leary, 2006; Yiannakis, 2010). Future programmes should aim to be inclusive of diversity (Littrell and Nkomo, 2005), and additional research should be conducted on how people's self-systems are formed by their personal goals. Understanding these processes from the perspective of women might assist in exposing the development of their leadership expectations (Ely & Rhode, 2010).

8.2.2.4 Niche careers

Five of the participants (9, 10, 12, 13 and 14) referred to having carved out niche careers for themselves. Participant 9 studied in a medical specialty that gained in demand, while Participants 10 and 12 found areas in their fields in which they felt comfortable and that they enjoyed. Participant 14 ventured into a business in financial services, which was uncommon for a woman in the

Muslim community, and Participant 13 bridged two seemingly incompatible careers as both medical doctor and auditor in a role that was previously non-existent and had a significant impact on the South African health services sector.

8.2.2.5 Transformation

Employment equity opportunities that encouraged the empowerment of previously disadvantaged women opened up opportunities for promotion for Participant 9 and Participant 11 (13%), where previously upward mobility had been limited.

8.2.2.6 Key relationships

Participant 13 mentioned the need for a leader to be able to establish strategic alliances and Participant 11 conveyed that by forming key relationships, opportunities could be created for new business ventures, particularly with other people who have the authority and resources to do so.

8.2.2.7 Mentoring and role models

Participant 2 had had contact with prolific activists, political and intellectual role models, from a young age. They served as mentors and left an impression on her, motivating her to develop similar qualities and values. Viewing mentoring as a cyclical process of receiving and giving guidance and support, she also passed on some of her responsibilities to developing younger leaders and this enabled her to focus on other opportunities. Participant 14 viewed her mother's ability to assume multiple roles as her earliest impression of leadership. She and Participant 2 referred to icons such as Lady Diana, Nelson Mandela and the Prophet Muhammed (SAW) as ideal examples of leadership whose characteristics and principles could be emulated.

8.2.2.8 Family support

The participants reported supportive family environments as a positive influence that enabled them to accept and realise career opportunities. Support from the family structure early in their careers, from parents and particularly fathers, was mentioned by Participants 2, 5, 8, 9, 10, and 13. All of them had at least one parent who was educated or progressive in their view of the participants' education, rather than conservative. Participants 3, 4 and 6 referred to having both conservative parents or fathers and for the older participants in the group, Participants 4, 7 and 9, opportunities to study and take up professional careers was highly unusual, as the social norm was for girls to leave school early, join their family businesses or get married and take care of their homes and families. Referring to this trend around thirty years ago, Participant 4 described herself as a rebel for her time for taking up tertiary studies after she was married.

Once established in their careers and having married and become parents, Participants 3, 7, 9, 10, 13 and 14 expressed how having a supportive spouse made it easier for them to attend to work commitments because home responsibilities and childcare were mutually agreed upon and shared and they typically referred to being allowed the freedom to pursue their careers. Participants 4, 5 and 11 expressed the difficulty of having to care for their children single-handedly in conjunction with attending to full-time careers where there was an absent spouse or they were single mothers. Participant 14 referred to the benefit of having married into an extended family where there were additional family members available to assist her with childcare so she could work and attend meetings and events outside working hours. Participant 6 chose to remain single because her job required a high level of commitment and based on her observations of the marriages of her colleagues, she wanted to avoid the possibility of having a husband whose career would take priority over her own.

8.2.2.9 Religion

Participants 7 and 10 had found that Islam as a faith was a source of support to their careers, which prescribed equal right to education for females. The practical implications of Islamic principles served as a source of structure and stability for Participant 7 in her work approach. These principles provided guidance on decision-making and behaviour and were seen to be as applicable in her personal life by informing her approach to issues such as the upbringing of children. Participant 10 regarded her career in the sciences and religion as integrated rather than conflicting. She stated that her faith as a Muslim provided a good grounding for her career and together the two made her a 'whole person'.

8.2.2.10 Management support

The most significant form of support for Participant 15 who worked in a corporate environment in the insurance industry was a supportive manager who gave her the freedom to run her department as she liked and implement changes she deemed necessary. She received his trust and he had an open-door policy in place, which facilitated their communication.

8.2.3 Themes on challenges

According to the SABPP report (Łaba, 2011), barriers to women's leadership progression can broadly be attributed to South Africa's social revolution, current organisational structures and cultural, racial, gender, family and personal belief systems. Barriers that had a significant negative impact (Caliper, 2014) included experiencing guilt about not spending enough time with family, personal responsibilities interfering with work, competing with other leaders, having to outperform male leaders to be recognised as effective and lack of social support when work demands increased.

8.2.3.1 Race, gender and discrimination

According to historical apartheid practices, racial segregation took precedence, but since 1994 when the Constitution abolished all forms of unfair discrimination (Mathur-Helm, 2002), gender-based discrimination has stubbornly managed to remain unchanged and has been perpetrated within the same communities (Tabudi, 2010) as before. Additional research would need to ascertain personal beliefs that may be held by cultural groupings that encourage prejudice in the treatment of women in the workplace (Łaba, 2011). In this study, fourteen of the fifteen participants related having experienced challenges on the basis of their gender, race or both.

Belonging to a non-white racial group was cited as a reason for being precluded from positions of employment before 1994, according to participants 7 and 9 and then not being black enough when employment equity legislation was passed after 1994. Participant 3 was eligible to become head of department, a role in which she had acted in the absence of the head, but being Indian could have disqualified her for the position. Participant 7 felt that it was unfair for her to be denied promotion on the basis of her race, since she had also come from a disadvantaged social background and received disadvantaged schooling. Participant 9 felt that she had benefitted from the affirmative action appointments, as she had experienced discrimination on the basis of her race before 1994 but the situation later improved with the implementation of employment equity policies, which promoted her suitability as a female candidate of colour.

Preference for appointments to positions on the basis of gender was experienced as a challenge by Participants 1 and 15, who both stated that all other factors being equal, the male would be selected over them. Participant 10 had to deal with stereotypical notions from her national and international peers of Muslim women being less capable, oppressed and subjugated because of her conservative dressing, but over time they learnt to identify her

less with the stereotype and more with her professional contributions. Participants from a medical background tended to work in traditionally male-dominated environments (Participants 6 and 7). From their experience of having practiced medicine, they found their fields were dominated by males, sometimes particularly in certain sub-specialties. The candidates also mentioned difficulties in working with white male bosses (Participants 14 and 15) and white female subordinates (Participant 5). Participant 11's position was previously held by a white person and her staff took time to accept her as a non-white boss. She also frequently interacted with male peers and stakeholders, finding that they were hesitant to deal with her in the past but over time became accustomed to her and would be willing to listen to her opinion at a meeting, even if they didn't follow her ideas.

Participant 5 found that senior male business partners who had previously worked with her father were a challenge for her to work with because they did not recognise her as an equal business partner and frequently undermined her. In response she stopped addressing them with respect as her elders, because this undermined her position of bargaining, and spoke to them as equals. Participant 13 found it particularly trying when working with white males in leadership roles and described them as difficult to work with and having had a number of bad experiences, but was not specific about the nature of these experiences. Traditionally, white males have been better qualified than females of any race group (Geldenhuys, 2013) while Indian women are a significant minority, and white men typically dominate the management (Geldenhuys, 2013). According to Venter (2009), gender stereotyping remains one of the biggest challenges to South African women and can have an impact on their ability to maintain their positions and financial status when opting to leave because of non-work responsibilities. Black South African women are especially vulnerable compared to white females and non-white males.

The participants reported having encountered resistance and difficulty being accepted and acknowledged by males in their workplaces, and this was reflective of males across racial groups. When giving instructions to male subordinates, Participant 6 encountered similar resistance, particularly when having to give instructions to indigenous African and Indian males. She reasoned that this behaviour was an attribute of the cultural backgrounds they came from. She added that the tendency had become less frequent over the last ten years and even her (Indian) patients were more accepting of her as a female doctor than they were a decade ago. Being accepted by her male colleagues was challenging and Participant 7 found that she was “*almost penalised*”, mainly by male colleagues, because she was Indian, female and married to a non-Muslim, as she had to endure negative comments from male colleagues particularly after a promotion and had to deal with allegations of her having affairs when meeting with colleagues. Male colleagues seemed to find it difficult to communicate with her on the same level.

Participant 15 found it a little difficult to adjust to being the manager of people she had previously worked with, specifically because they were male and intimidated by her position of authority. She found that the younger men would challenge her ideas and easily take offense to any criticism that she offered as a reflection of doubt on their integrity. Being very careful about how she communicated her intentions became important in order to avoid misunderstandings and resistance. Compared to female subordinates who were generally receptive and accommodating, men could be uncooperative and undermine her decisions if they had not been personally consulted.

Difficulty in acting from a position of leadership within the Muslim community and organisations because of gender discrimination against women was reported by Participants 2, 8, 11 and 12. Participants 2 and 8, whose social and political work involved liaising with leaders from the Muslim community, struggled with patriarchal attitudes to women. Community leaders post-1994 were typically males who did not easily accept suggestions from them as

women and they were labelled by some community members as 'modernists' for not complying with the conservative Muslim woman stereotype. Participant 8 encountered communication barriers, misogyny, intolerance and being side-lined as a leader simply because she was a woman and had to deal with negative comments and threats from the Muslim community. When Participant 11 dealt with Muslim male stakeholders, they would typically be dressed in a Kurta and observe Islamic etiquette about not making eye contact with women or shaking their hands and would purposefully sit across from her because they felt forced to do business with her, but would eventually "*get over it*" as they realised that her intentions were strictly business-related. Having worked for many Muslim companies, Participant 12 commented that they did not compensate employees enough and discriminated against female employees by offering them fewer opportunities to be in leadership roles or contribute input to decisions; "*the glass ceiling is actually lower.*" Women who worked without a headscarf were made to feel unwelcome and she had experienced sexual harassment by one of her colleagues who incited the other men at work to harass her. She subsequently worked for a Jewish organisation and felt that she fitted in comparatively better with the culture, which was more liberal and tolerant. Unlike her Muslim employers, she was able to relate to her Jewish bosses on a platonic level while still maintaining professional etiquette.

Social activities were attended by male colleagues as 'boys' clubs' and described by Participant 12 as the context within which business strategies were discussed, but women were not invited into that sphere. Close relationships between male and female colleagues were not regarded in the same way and although she personally found that establishing relationships with individuals was helpful, as a female employee she would not get too close to older male colleagues and said that it was easier to maintain a professional relationship between men and women if they kept some distance between them. These spaces or 'inner circles' where important decisions are often made continue to exist in South African companies (April et al., 2007)

and for Muslim women in particular, gender stereotyping presents as a potentially disempowering challenge (Ahmed, 2008) that is often experienced. Although it may be encountered in both work and social contexts and it involves husbands, family members and bosses, it remains sparsely documented. As experienced by the participants in their work with Muslim organisations, particular views about the priorities of women as mothers and wives may lead to their professional roles being regarded as of inferior value.

Apart from the discriminatory attitudes of male colleagues, Participants 12 and 13, who had female bosses experienced challenges. Participant 12 proposed that self-confidence played a major role and women leaders lacking this tended to have something to prove, were '*bitchy*' and tried to emulate men by being "*hard*" and "*abrasive*." They tended to clash with other females more frequently. Participant 13 was in agreement with this view, as she described the very few women who held respect in the boardroom as "*the typical sort of corporate bitch who tends to walk all over other people and is very self-centred, very selfish, for themselves*", typically referred to in the literature as the 'queen bee' who prevents the promotion of other women for fear of risking their own careers (Mavin, 2006). She explained that gender-based issues were prominent in the corporate context and discrimination was dealt with negatively by some women who were conversely prone to falling into "*gender traps*" by conforming to submissive, docile stereotypes in order to be accepted. While she believed that women had a very important role to play in healthcare and in business, it was a role that was rather undefined.

From the overall responses of participants it appears that discrimination against women in the workplace is a general phenomenon across industries, race groups and cultures, the perpetrators typically being male but sometimes including female bosses.

8.2.3.2 Challenges specific to Muslim women

8.2.3.2.1 Integrating Islamic practices and work

Some of the participants avoided work environments or social contexts that seemed to be in conflict with Islamic prescriptions. Participant 5 was offered alternate employment and opted to leave her current Jewish employer because it weighed on her conscience that many Muslims were dying at the hands of Jews at that point during the Middle Eastern conflict. Participant 1 did not agree with travelling longer distances and staying out overnight and would decline job offers if this was a requirement. Participant 10 also experienced personal conflict about having to travel for work without the company of her husband as a mahram, which is an Islamic requirement for women when travelling further than a day's distance from home. She also found it uncomfortable to observe social niceties that involved physically touching the opposite gender, such as hugging and kissing. While she would sometimes succumb to a handshake with males, she was very conscious of such behaviour being Islamically inappropriate.

For Participant 6, inconsistencies in the observation of religious practices by some Muslim colleagues could cause a strain on those who were observing these practices properly. Some professional medical colleagues would unnecessarily take extra time for prayer, or exaggerate the time needed to observe prayer to excuse themselves from work responsibilities. On the other hand, the employer organisation could also be inconsiderate of the religious obligations of staff by scheduling meetings and conferences during salaah times, when fasting during the month of Ramadaan or failing to include halaal catering for the Muslim medical staff. Numerous social events also took place after working hours where alcohol would be consumed and informal networking created opportunities for career progression. Participant 6 would excuse herself from these activities but also encountered some subtle pressure from Muslim male colleagues, who would drink alcohol and condone eating meat that was not certified halaal when travelling, which she did not agree with, as vegetarian options were generally available.

Participant 6 also mentioned the general shortage of Muslim female doctors to serve women of the Muslim community and avoid cross-gender medical treatment. As doctors in training, however, more clinical work was allocated to them and challenges for a Muslim female doctor could include the examination of male patients and difficulty in decision-making on issues of euthanasia and abortions, for which the terms are quite strict from an Islamic perspective. Medical students were typically not aware of what is Islamically permissible or prohibited in practice.

8.2.3.2.2 Hijab

On the subject of hijab, Participant 6 considered very strict observation of hijab, where even the face and hands of Muslim medical students were covered, as a potential obstacle when examining patients, so some practitioners refrained from complete hijab, which was noticed as a growing trend with new trainees. Participant 11, however, described many corporates as more understanding and accommodating of religious practices and donning hijab was welcomed though she personally did not do so, even though she came from a family where most women wore headscarves. Hijab for women who are of mature age is the modest attire of being loosely covered with only space open for the face, hands and feet “*so that they may be recognised and not molested*” (Qur’an, 33: 59). Women are also advised to speak frankly when communicating with non-relative males, but being secluded with someone of the opposite sex is generally to be avoided (Khattab, 1993). Participant 15 decided to start wearing a headscarf while she worked in a corporate environment and found that her male colleagues assumed she did not do so voluntarily, but was forced to do so by her male relatives, when in fact she came from a liberal family where they did not wear headscarves.

From her interaction with non-Muslim colleagues she felt it was perceived that Muslim women are not viewed as strong or in control of their lives and

because of her being non-white and identifiably Muslim, she found it necessary to work twice as hard to prove herself at work. Participant 8 had been instructed to remove her headscarf before beginning her internship at a media organisation. She refused to do this and was eventually accepted into employment with her hijab. Participant 10 dealt with stereotypical attitudes from her national and international peers, who saw Muslim women as being oppressed and subjugated, because of her conservative dressing. Participant 14 felt more comfortable if she was modestly attired and donned her hijab full-time outside her home, without the parda (face covering), but described the parda as a “*safety-net*” rather than something that oppresses women. The participants exercised discretion in whether or not they chose to wear the hijab in their work contexts and some organisations were more receptive of the practice than others. Conversely, some Muslim organisations were not tolerant of failure to wear a hijab.

8.2.3.2.3 Culture

Participant 10 noted that the cultural backgrounds of Muslim women, rather than the religious requirements according to Islam, served as a significant barrier, preventing Muslim women from progressing within leadership. In a democratic country such as South Africa, where gender equity and women’s empowerment exist, opportunities for leadership are better, but she felt that “*cultural issues really preclude women from taking on the leadership they would otherwise be destined to take on.*” Participant 14 related that she came into conflict with the community theologians who were conservative on the issues of parda (gender segregation) at social events, acceptance of women as leaders, and their communicating to public audiences. The greater concern of theologians was the exposure of women and men to each other, hence women were restricted from participating in the media and discussions of public issues were limited to women’s forums and other female groups. Her views supported those of Participant 6 regarding the tendency for the Muslim community to apply Islamic principles selectively to some situations as it suited them (such as financial affairs), but to be overly strict about gender

segregation and limiting Muslim women's participation in the public sphere. Misperceptions and confusion about Islamic and cultural norms have been explained as the reason for the misperception of Muslim women being viewed as the recipients of an extreme form of oppression under the authority of their male spouses and relatives (Abdulsalam, 1998), but this is hardly as a direct result of the Islamic faith (Sayed-Iqbal, 2006).

8.2.3.3 Work and family integration

Only 2.2% of employed women in 1980 were Indian (Pillay, 1985), and approximately half of the Indian population at the time was Muslim, but accurate figures of employed Muslim women at the time are absent in census data. While Islam is practised across racial groups in South Africa, the majority of Muslims are from the Indian and coloured communities (Statistics SA, 2011). A study by Daya (2011), in which a majority of the sample consisted of female Indian managers, found that family responsibilities served as a more significant barrier to their career progression than organisational difficulties. Muslim women who are also Indian may therefore be disposed to cultural gender-role prescriptions and a finer analysis of Daya's (2011) findings shows that compared to other reasons for career non-progression, at least 25% of his sample had favoured their concentration on another role, motherhood. However, other South African studies of successful women leaders have conveyed the greatest difficulty with work and personal life balance issues, while challenges with the least negative impact are centred on female leader stereotypes, unfair performance evaluations and exclusion from male leader social networks (Caliper, 2014). The seriousness of the difficulty with work/life balance is evident in the mortality of women, who are more predisposed to lifestyle diseases and stress as a result of these challenges and in addition to role conflict, also have to contend with other stressors, such as increasing job demands or major changes such as mergers (Bezuidenhout & Cilliers, 2010; Geldenhuys, 2013).

From an Islamic perspective the primary role of a woman is that of a wife and mother as the primary care-giver and educator of moral and psychologically healthy children (Naseef, 1999), but she is not prevented from working or assuming roles of leadership where these do not contravene the shariah (Khattab, 1993). Participants 2 and 6 consciously chose to sacrifice having a family in favour of a career in public service and medicine, respectively, as they did not perceive their careers and a marriage and family life to be compatible or expected to be able to dedicate themselves sufficiently to both simultaneously. Participant 3 described full-time employment as a general challenge for women but particularly for Muslim women coming from a traditional home environment, where their role was primarily to look after the home, children and often extended family members. As a result some qualified Muslim women may refrain from participating as part of the general working population. Increasingly, though, she found that Muslim women were more perceptive about their options and more freely chose to adopt a conventional lifestyle or pursue personal career goals.

Maintaining balance between work and family life was further reported as challenging by Participants 4, 5, 7, 11, 13 and 14. Those who successfully managed both tended to have supportive and accommodating spouses, but those with younger children communicated the difficulty of having to fit in childcare between work responsibilities and finding time for transporting children to school and assisting them with homework. Participant 14 referred to the Islamic emphasis on the importance of the mother to the development of the child and some of the Muslim women who were parents saw themselves as leaders to their children within their home structures (Participants 1, 4, 11, 13 and 14). Support structures beyond the family context, such as day-care centres and au pairs, were avoided.

Participant 14 commented on ensuring the safety of children in the climate of crime in South Africa and said that a Muslim woman's commitment was firstly to her family and their well-being. Participant 5 experienced guilt about having

to leave her first baby with a day mother to be cared for while she resumed work and regarded this as a form of abandonment of her child. Participant 4 wanted to be a good mother to her children, yet still do something purposeful, so opted for a more flexible form of self-employment that allowed her to work from home and be available to her children. Participant 14 discussed the need to consider the impact of childcare on women's career advancement. Taking gap years to take care of their children was an option, especially where a family support structure was lacking, unless their careers were flexible to be run from home.

Participant 6, having witnessed her colleagues in the medical profession, believed their children 'suffered' because of their mothers' attention and commitments being divided and did not agree with using caregivers for children, but Participant 11 had a different viewpoint and regarded Muslim parents as overly protective of their children compared to other cultures. As a single mother she felt that Muslim women needed to learn that they did not have to do everything by themselves and assistance from family members and domestic workers was acceptable. Participant 7 took the responsibility for her patients' care very seriously and found it difficult to disengage from work. She had to learn to change over from the role of doctor to being mother at home and attending to her children's needs. Participant 11 conveyed that it would be helpful if husbands were prepared to play a stronger role, such as in the cases of the married participants in this study, and assist their partners with child care and home responsibilities. She acknowledged that this did not happen in many cultures, not just Muslim homes. In common with Participant 6, she did not feel prepared to meet the expectations a potential husband would have of her or anticipate that he would accommodate her if there were additional work commitments to attend to, such as networking dinners, or be comfortable with her working on her projects from home.

The significance of a support structure in balancing home and work responsibilities for Muslim women leaders was raised in the previous section on opportunities and support factors. It was typically found that spouses and close family were supportive of their careers and assisted with childcare where necessary. Some of the participants chose to remain single to dedicate themselves fully to their careers, while those who were divorced and single mothers were also cautious about getting remarried because it was uncertain whether a new spouse would be supportive of their careers. Naidoo and Jano (2002) had found that women could experience work and home as complementary rather than conflicting, but required being able to balance multiple life-roles as a necessary skill. Physical and mental health needed to be maintained and the effort of creating and maintaining balance was described as a life process with a cyclical nature that served as a useful tool for achieving personal growth.

8.2.3.4 Organisational challenges

There was little convergence regarding organisational challenges between the participants and the view conveyed by the participants tended to be specific to their professional environments or industries. Participant 3 described the organisational hierarchy as having defined reporting channels and commented on the degree of control that could be exercised. Having been promoted implied a reversal of authority. It became a challenge to issue instructions to others who were initially her appointed teachers and she had to adapt her behaviour to be more assertive yet still respectful.

Participant 8 found that business partnerships formed with men presented challenges when conflicts of interest arose. Their shared ventures typically started off very well but later disintegrated, particularly if better financial rewards were perceived by her male associates elsewhere. Dealing with these disintegrating relationships was difficult for her and she would often feel disappointed and used. When she came up against Muslim men in a conflict

of interest over a business interest or religious matters, the advantage of them being “funders” and male undermined her ability to change the situation and her gender was used against her to allow them to exit their partnership.

Working in PR, part of Participant 12’s job was to promote transparency and she had difficulty with top management and executives who were apprehensive about using social media and making company information available. She explained this as being due to her colleagues being older men who preferred known and established ways of doing things.

Participant 9 wanted to improve the accessibility of medical services to high volumes of patients at a public hospital. However, political transformation brought with it a number of procedural challenges, increased workloads and red tape when resources needed to be procured.

When she was appointed to the position of dean of faculty, Participant 10 was required to have sound knowledge of several other health disciplines for which she was responsible. In addition to the university’s policies and procedures, she had to escalate her knowledge as applicable to a small department to thirteen different medical disciplines, which was difficult, as it took a lot of time and effort to really understand the disciplines themselves, but she viewed this as a positive challenge that gave her intimate knowledge of each discipline.

Participant 15 felt that she had to work twice as hard because of being a Muslim female and was frustrated that the people who reported to her seemed to lack high standards of performance in attending to their tasks when she personally displayed a high level of commitment to the organisation and understood the impact on business if she failed to do so.

Depending on the work context, organisational barriers can determine the retention of female employees or contribute to the “leaky pipeline” of women where the care-taking roles expected of women as wives and mothers compete with professional demands (Francis, 2009). From an organisational perspective, Daya (2011) proposed that government could assist by reviewing legislation to encourage changes in organisational policies so as to be more supportive of women with families and initiate the empowerment of women through methods such as power-sharing, skills development and positive relationships as part of organisational strategy. In South African studies there remains strong evidence of the glass ceiling in organisations (Tokarczyk, 2008). Poor salaries, outdated company policies regarding flexible work arrangements, including part-time and flexi-time work options, job-sharing and telecommuting, as well as limited support structures and networking opportunities, compound the difficulty women experience in their career advancement (McCammond, 2008; Rowe & Crafford, 2003).

8.2.3.5 Personal challenges

Personal challenges that had an impact on their work were described by participants 1, 4, 5, 8, 13, 14 and 15 and there was some agreement between participants on the need for delegation, assertiveness, self-management and personal sacrifices. Research on American women between 1946 and 1967 suggests that assertiveness as a personality sub-trait (of extraversion) may increase in response to socio-cultural and environmental changes, such as education and age at first marriage (Costa, Terracciano & McCrae, 2001).

Personal relationship issues and conflict were encountered by Participant 4, whose husband was a co-director. Their personal relationship was difficult to manage in their work environment and the participant also suffered from a series of serious illnesses that required medical treatment and interrupted her work and studies. Her level of confidence was initially low and she needed to

learn to be more assertive with staff and value her own contributions to the NGO she co-founded.

Similar to Participants 1 and 4, Participant 8 needed to develop assertiveness in giving instructions and dealing with confrontation. She initially covered all the aspects of her work independently and found it difficult to let go of the responsibility to delegate some tasks, feeling guilty that by not being personally involved she was not exercising good leadership. Over time, however, she came to the conclusion that ownership of those duties belonged to the appointed staff and her own role was limited to oversight of the activity. As a single parent, Participant 5 experienced effective time management as a personal challenge and when too many conflicting demands had to be dealt with, she coped by 'compartmentalising' issues. Similar to Participant 8, in time she learnt to be more trusting of her staff and delegated more of her tasks to them, which allowed her employees the opportunity to develop themselves and eased some of the work pressure on her. She still found that there was insufficient time to develop her business skills and could not complete further studies because her children required her attention after work. Instead she opted for shorter business courses to support her business development. A further difficulty for Participant 5 was having her dependency needs met. While she was very independent in running her companies and seeing to all her children's needs, she felt she had not had the opportunity to embrace her femininity and felt tired from carrying so much responsibility by herself without a caring and supportive relationship with a spouse.

Dealing with uncertainty was one of the key challenges that Participant 13 perceived. Clarifying her professional role was difficult earlier in her career when she had completed her medical training and chose a divergent, unconventional career path by taking on actuarial studies instead of going on to specialise in medicine. The uncertainty of an uncharted career path was an uncomfortable experience for her and she was not readily accepted in either the medical or actuarial fields at the outset. She also cited time management

as a challenge. Caring for children and maintaining family values in her household while still performing at a professional level were physically exhausting and left little time for her to devote to studying, but she believed that some sacrifices were necessary. Similar to Participant 13, Participant 14 referred to willingness to make personal sacrifices in pursuit of a being a good leader, as well as developing good organisational skills. Hard work was necessary, a tolerance for difficulties and foregoing personal enjoyment or leisure activities: *“Being a woman leader and being in a leadership position, it also entails a lot of blood, sweat and tears and I think lots of sacrifice is a huge thing. Whether it’s your sleep, whether it’s your time with your hubby, or whether it’s time to just chill and unwind with a movie, these become the pleasures that you seek, reading the morning paper in the morning undisturbed. The simple things in life become a sacrifice for a good leader.”*

When the Model of Career Progression (April et al., 2007) is considered against the experiences of the participants, it can be seen that they had overcome the initial barrier of securing an education but needed to find ways of dealing with patriarchy and the glass ceiling. Sacrifices made were typically in their personal lives, foregoing leisure activities and time spent with family or being able to further their educational qualifications. Entrepreneurship may offer additional flexibility, depending on the nature of the work, but could also be fairly demanding of the participant’s time and attention. It can be argued that the model provides a baseline rather than comprehensive picture of barriers to the career progression of women and one could factor in personal (marital status, psychological factors) and cultural challenges (gender role identity) as identified in this study, to be more holistic in approach. Issues of gender and raced-based stereotyping or discrimination are not specifically referred to in the model and organisational bullying may also be explored further.

8.2.4 Muslim women in the contemporary context

8.2.4.1 Ideologies and worldviews

Participants 2, 6, 8 and 15 referred to the various Islamic ideologies ascribed to by South African Muslims and following from this, whether they are more conservative or progressive in their practice of Islam. From a more basic level, the Qur'an and Sunnah prescribe principles for the practice of Islam that are standardised for all believers and guide intra- and interpersonal activity, social conduct, spirituality, health, education and economic regulations (Ibrahim, 1997). Nuances in the manner in which these religious practices are exercised may vary across nations and cultures and are described as 'worldviews' or 'ideologies' because of the philosophical underpinnings of the varying views.

Participant 8 sketched her experiences of the Deobandi, Tabliqi, Sunni and Salafi traditions (the Tabliqi and Sunni traditions are followed by most South African Indian Muslims). At an early stage she was exposed to particularly conservative Islamic ideologies, which were largely Indo-Pak in origin, namely the Deobandi and Tabliqi followings, and while she was initially drawn to what she perceived as a pure form of the faith, she began to experience the practices as more ritualistic, with a strong emphasis on avoiding anything deemed haraam (forbidden). Eventually, hypocrisies she encountered, such as the derogatory treatment of women and racist attitudes toward black people, left her unsettled and she perceived that there was no one *“teaching you how to be a better Muslim in your interactions with other people.”* She came into similar conflict with Tabliqi authorities for challenging their mockery of young female students and was ousted from their institute as a student. Learning Arabic and undertaking the Haj pilgrimage to Mecca and Medina gave her the opportunity to meet Muslims of various nationalities and she was introduced to a more intellectual Salafi movement, which advocated a version of the faith based more strictly on Qur'anic principles and advocated a concise yet still conservative version of Islam without any cultural influence. Participant 8 described the Salafi tradition as being more strongly based on

the Qur'an and authentic Hadith, as well as more inclusive of different people in comparison to the conservative movements that had been established earlier in South Africa. Muslims ascribing to the Salafi approach were described as more moderate in approach and tolerant of differences in opinion and therefore less inclined towards stereotypes and prone to be viewed by conservatives as 'modernists'.

This degree of conservatism has prevented some international Islamic academic institutions from interacting with those in South Africa. Participant 6 also referred to her interactions with Muslims of different nationalities while completing her post-graduate medical studies in New York. She found that their practice of Islam was different from what she was used to, less rigid and segregated on the basis of nationality, religion or gender. She compared the situation of Muslims in the United States post-9/11 and their sense of cohesion, which was unlike the situation of South African Muslims who are constitutionally allowed to practise their religion freely but are divided as a local society. Participant 11 found that she had more strained relationships with Muslim men as significant stakeholders in strategic decision-making, but she was accepted like a family member when meeting other Muslims in her work context, even though they were not related.

Participant 2 focussed more on the conservatism of South African Muslims in relation to the socio-political climate and how this influenced their participation in the public sphere. She described conservative Muslims as more closed off from others of a different cultural background during the apartheid era and said that their conservative spaces served as a source of security and familiarity, with the result that some Muslims were less keen on the political changes. She personally identified with anti-apartheid freedom fighters and activists, many of whom were Muslim men and women and regarded recent South African Muslims as more multicultural, with fewer conservative expectations. She encouraged South African Muslims to identify themselves as citizens of a multi-cultural South Africa as well as global Muslim citizens.

8.2.4.2 Social status of Muslim women

Regardless of the particular ideology ascribed to by a Muslim, Islam affords women certain obligatory rights including protection, maintenance, shelter, education and inheritance (Badawi, 1997; Khattab, 1993). Participants 2 and 4 reflected on the historical absenteeism of Muslim women from the workforce and according to Participant 4, educational opportunities for young Muslim women after matric were understated. Girls were married off and regarded as dependents by their fathers and husbands. , Participant 2 stated that up until approximately twenty years ago, women were absent from the leadership arena but that paths had begun opening for them through the political activism of previous generations. Younger Muslim women should now seize the opportunities to occupy these 'spaces' in greater numbers. Comparisons were drawn by the participants to the women of the Prophet's (SAW) time, as they played very active roles in society and served as exemplary role models of how Muslim women today can contribute to society. As individuals, Islam gives all mature Muslims leadership responsibility, through the Qur'anic description of individuals as 'shepherds', who are responsible for what they have been entrusted with, including other people or different forms of property (Khattab, 1993). Being knowledgeable about the meaning of Qur'anic texts was emphasised by Participants 2 and 7, who stood by the right to education granted to them, as well as the right to work and a woman's ownership of her income as guaranteed to them in the holy book. Both further commented on the value of Qur'anic principles to personal development and their relevance to daily activities in observing worship, etiquette and ethics and in personal and business activities and relationships with others. Participant 2 took her inspiration from the verses of the Qur'an and teachings of the Prophet (SAW), which define humanity and guarantees women their rights. Participant 7 had studied other faiths and felt that Islam empowered her as an individual and did not suppress her, as is commonly portrayed in the media.

Conservative Muslim society, on the other hand, has traditionally restricted women's duties to the household and remains apprehensive about women

speaking in public and literally being heard, since “*a woman’s voice is part of her aura, so she mustn’t be heard speaking*” (Participant 2). Participants 8 and 14 found it confining that Muslim women were discouraged from having a presence in the media. Many younger Muslim women were, however, noted to be less inclined to accept this trend and Participant 4 described how some have “*taken control*” and pursued careers that were predominantly male or unusual, but concurred with Participant 2 that many still believed in their socially constructed roles and chose to fit into those roles. Participant 11 suggested that this was due to South African Muslim women being reluctant and less motivated to work because they were comfortable with depending on their husbands’ wealth.

Participant 1 was concerned about Muslim women being able to conserve their Islamic identity and expressed resistance to having to conform to prescribed gender roles and Western ideas of how women are regarded at work. She mentioned that from an Islamic perspective, women are valued and attributed higher status than Western ideals did, as suggested by the Qur’anic verse that refers to heaven being at a woman’s feet. She therefore argued that women should not try to be like men or feel under pressure to exhibit male behaviours. They should also uphold their values and principles despite the Western misperception that Muslim women are subservient and oppressed, as Muslim women are under no obligation to fit into the Western world.

8.2.4.3 Muslim women and work

Reserved attitudes about Muslim women working in corporate work environments were presented by Participants 1 and 4, as they felt that Islamic values could more easily be compromised. Participant 1 prioritised being rewarded by God and said that the physical rewards of their jobs should be given less emphasis than religious obligations. Participant 4 chose a career that she regarded as feminine and that did not alienate her family. However,

the women from her generation did not typically study further after school or pursue professional careers; they were rather married off or worked in their family businesses. Pursuing a career in social services cast her as a rebel of her generation because she dared to study towards a degree and sought stimulation in interests outside her home responsibilities. She recognised that women had much more to offer but were firmly stuck in mundane roles, as social expectations at the time were less accommodating than they are today.

Participant 2 found that younger women were more likely to work and become professionals, but leadership was still regarded as somewhat off-limits to Muslim women. The current practice of Islam was regarded as predominantly ritualistic, blindly following the doctrines of religious leaders without Muslim women actually understanding the premises of their faith and the rights afforded to them. Participant 15 explained the likelihood a Muslim woman choosing to work as depending on the degree to which her family was supportive or conservative about the issue. In her own case, her family was moderate compared to families in their community who were more conservative.

Participant 15 explained that women were less inclined to work and hold careers if they came from wealthier families and she related having known of many women who were not allowed to make their own decisions about studying and had to get married despite their parents being 'absolutely wealthy'. The general exclusion of Muslim women from domestic affairs was raised by Participant 14, who said that it was an unspoken rule that it was not necessary for Muslim wives to be informed because they were taken care of and provided for. Working in the financial services industry, she found this to be more prominent in wealthier marriages where wives renounced financial control in exchange for material comfort. Compared to their non-Muslim sisters who were achieving success professionally in various sectors and industries, Participant 14 noted that Muslim women were lagging behind, more so if they came from affluent backgrounds.

Participant 1 in the previous section raised her concerns about Muslim women maintaining their value systems in corporate environments and Participant 7, who had decades of work experience, pointed out work behaviours of females that could enable or impede their progress at work. Theoretically, maintaining her Islamic value system could protect a Muslim woman from some of the pitfalls of inappropriate work behaviour mentioned by Participant 7, such as flirting with male colleagues in order to get her way and potentially damaging her credibility. In her experience, women tended to be more willing to ask for assistance and more open to correction, but their relative naiveté compared to their male colleagues could land them in problematic personal relationships. Participant 5, however, positioned Muslim women as potentially good leaders because of their stronger value systems, which promote them as reliable employees who exhibit moral behaviour and professional conduct, are honest and overall more ethical and respectable compared to their non-Muslim colleagues.

From the responses given by Participants 6, 11, 12, 13 and 15 about the organisational cultures in which they worked, corporate contexts vary in the degree to which they accommodate religious practices and concerns about integrating into such contexts may at times be legitimate, as raised by Participants 1 and 4. However, Muslim women may have more to offer employers in terms of citizenship behaviour, as suggested by Participant 5. Contrary to stereotypes and media portrayals of Muslim women, Participant 14 reflected that the opposite was in fact true and that Muslim women had come a long way and could be found in leadership positions and at the forefront in some fields, so the pervading negative image needed to be rectified. Unfortunately, much of their work is not heard of and not publicised in the media. The majority of Muslim women leaders voluntarily avoid the media, preferring to remain in the background, partly because theologians disapprove of publicly exposing women, but Participant 14 also suggested that perhaps the media does not take an interest in focussing on the positive contributions of Muslim women to South African society.

The participants offered some recommendations to enable Muslim women to function as effective leaders. Investment in personal well-being and development was advocated by Participant 7, who was alarmed by the general trend of women neglecting their physical health and well-being and identified the need for improved education on health and nutrition. She also perceived lack of self-confidence in the workplace and felt that women needed to believe in themselves and exercise greater assertiveness rather than succumb to social pressures.

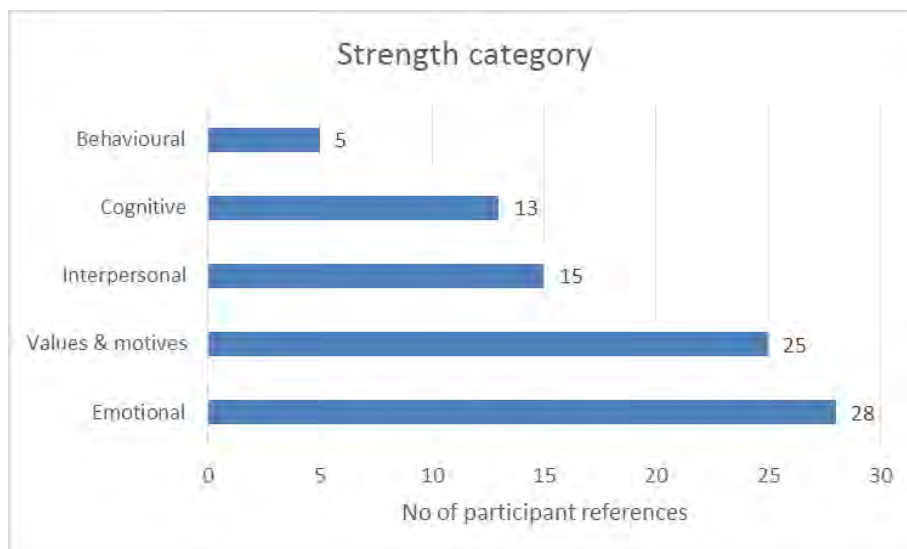
For those who preferred to wear the hijab, Participant 10 iterated that it was possible to maintain a religious identity and career achievement as mutually possible goals without compromising either, as the hijab serves to identify a woman as a Muslim without limiting her functional competence. Some organisations were more accommodating, even offering prayer facilities (Participant 11), but more importantly, Muslim women had to choose between having careers and being financially independent or trade this for being dependent on their husband's income and meeting their husbands' demands. This view suggests that wealthier Muslims tend to view full-time employment as a necessity only for those women who are less financially secure and place less value on the intrinsic rewards of having a career. Coming from a family in which both parents were medical professionals, Participant 13 indicated that neither her gender nor religion played a significant role in her career development. It was rather her personal motivation that had a much stronger influence on the course and direction of her career. While her values of charity and helping others to become self-sustainable were grounded in her upbringing and religion, it was her passion for her purpose that guided her career decisions.

8.2.5 Psychological strengths

The items derived as strengths were not subject to any strict criteria, but were rather accepted as those positive cognitive or affective characteristics, coping resources or values that participants contributed as meaningful to them in enabling their progress or overcoming difficult situations, as communicated during their interviews. Similar strengths were grouped together and categorised as cognitive, emotional, interpersonal, values/motives and behavioural strengths for easier reference. From Table 27 below it is apparent that most of the strengths elicited were emotional strengths, as well as values and motives. This was followed by interpersonal and cognitive strengths and behavioural strengths were emphasised relatively less. The general strength categories are described next, with definitions of the strengths as conveyed by the participants. The conceptually similar strengths of Peterson and Seligman's (2004) VIA classification of strengths and those measured by Buckingham and Clifton's (2001) StrengthsFinder are provided side by side (definitions provided in Chapter 2, Tables 2 and 3).

Table 27

Number of participant references per strength category



8.2.5.1 Cognitive strengths

The cognitive strengths of innovation, learning, conceptualisation, resourcefulness and insight were derived from the interviews and all except insight were in common with either the VIA or StrengthsFinder definitions (or both). Insight was described by Wen, Butler and Koutstaal (2012) as applicable when problems to be solved were ill-defined and the solver would adaptively restructure the problem, reset the goal state and search processes to reach a new goal state through a process of meaning-making that involved an appraisal and revision of a situation or event and interpreting it to discern what it might mean or signify.

8.2.5.2 Emotional strengths

All of the emotional strengths identified were similarly represented on either the VIA, StrengthsFinder or both and included perseverance, confidence, adaptability, courage, independence, compassion, discipline and humour. Emotional strengths were most commonly referred to by the participants when compared to the other categories of strengths. Perseverance, confidence and adaptability featured most strongly among them. A South African doctoral study that identified barriers to women's advancement and potential sources of stress (Zulu, 2007), such as family responsibility and gender issues, emphasised the need for persistence, perseverance and assertiveness, together with strong interpersonal communication skills. Similarly, a Chinese study found that higher levels of emotional strengths could be linked to greater life satisfaction (Chan, 2009).

8.2.5.3 Interpersonal strengths

Interpersonal strengths were those positive characteristics presented by the participants that enabled their relationships with others. These included building relationships, embracing diversity, persuasion, community and empowerment, all of which were somewhat similar to the VIA or

StrengthsFinder taxonomies. They were also shared by women leaders in studies that found negotiation and persuasion skills based on engagement and genuine understanding (Greenberg & Sweeney, 2005), applying an inclusive and team-oriented approach, willingness to take risks (Caliper, 2014), communicating directly and valuing relationships (April & Dreyer, 2007), being authentic, kind, embracing the diversity of others and encouraging equality and being compassionate and cooperative (Caliper, 2014).

8.2.5.4 Values/motivational strengths

The strengths derived in the form of values were integrity, purpose, initiative, excellence, respect, justice and authenticity. Of these, the strength of having a sense of purpose and being passionate about a particular cause or activity was not represented in either the VIA or StrengthsFinder definitions. This category of strengths was just behind emotional strengths in popularity and the specific strengths that elicited most responses were integrity, purpose and initiative.

8.2.5.5 Behavioural strengths

A general behavioural strength was also gathered from the interview responses; self-management was frequently referred to by the participants as necessary to deal with one of the major difficulties, namely maintaining balance between work and family life.

Table 28

Description of cognitive strengths

Strength	Description	VIA	Strengths-Finder	Participant reference
<i>Innovation</i>	Improving and re-inventing the way that something is done (P7), identifying obstacles and limitations and using technology to change how things are done for more positive results and remaining relevant and ahead of competition (P12), change and development aimed at benefitting future generations (P13).	<i>Creativity</i>	<i>Ideation</i>	7, 12, 13
<i>Learning</i>	Able to open the mind to other possibilities, ideas and experiences (P2), openness to making mistakes and learning from them (P4), being a life-long learner (P10).	<i>Curiosity, Learning, Open-mindedness</i>	<i>Learner</i>	2, 4, 10
<i>Conceptualisation</i>	Applying a systems approach to understanding issues, identifying overlapping and interconnected information and concepts (P13), applying strategic thinking (P15).	<i>Open-mindedness</i>	<i>Connectedness Futuristic</i>	13, 15
<i>Resourcefulness</i>	Coming up with creative solutions when conventional knowledge or other resources are lacking (P4, P14),	<i>Creativity</i>	<i>NA</i>	4, 14
<i>Insight</i>	Recognising individual differences and patterns in behaviour (P7), being able to analyse the core issues that have an impact on business and behaviours by being attentive to what is happening inside and outside the organisation (P12).	<i>NA</i>	<i>NA</i>	7, 12
<i>Problem-solving</i>	Deconstructing and resolving complex problems by analysing and negotiating various elements and coming to relevant solutions (P13).	<i>NA</i>	<i>Analytical, Arranger, Intellection</i>	13

Table 29

Description of emotional strengths

Strength	Description	VIA	Strengths-Finder	Participant reference
<i>Perseverance</i>	Patiently persisting at a cause despite obstacles encountered (P4, 15), remaining determined and working hard at realising opportunities (P6, P7), showing commitment to a chosen path and committing oneself for the long term (P14).	<i>Persistence</i>	NA	4, 6, 7, 14, 15
<i>Confidence</i>	Having a sense of conviction and certainty about decisions (P5). Acknowledging self-worth and upholding personal rights (P1, P6, 14), self-awareness and acceptance and valuing personal strengths (P4). Assertiveness (P6), being assured in actions so others are comfortable giving their trust and support (P11, 15).	<i>Courage, bravery</i>	<i>Self-assurance</i>	1, 4, 5, 6, 11, 14, 15
<i>Adaptability</i>	The ability to reframe negative situations positively and build on the positive aspects (P7, P4), adjusting behavioural approach to different audiences (P5), applying new learning to changing circumstances (P3), adopting a flexible approach to meet varying demands as contexts change (P11).	<i>Love of learning</i>	<i>Adaptability</i>	3, 4, 5, 7, 11
<i>Courage</i>	Being able to motivate oneself despite fear or adversity (P2, 9), being able to maintain integrity in spite of the fear of persecution for doing so (P13).	<i>Courage, bravery</i>	NA	2, 9, 13
<i>Independence</i>	Personal accountability for actions (P4), maintaining personal principles even if different from social context (P6), comfortable making decisions without assistance from others (P15).		<i>Responsibility</i>	4, 6, 15
<i>Compassion</i>	Considerate towards others over personal ambition (P9), caring and interested in the welfare of others (P14),	<i>Kindness, Love</i>	NA	9, 14
<i>Discipline</i>	Applying strict personal standards, not willing to compromise on values (P6), Self-control, applying principles consistently (P9).	<i>Self-regulation</i>	<i>Discipline</i>	6, 9
<i>Humour</i>	Being able to view issues less seriously, discuss them in a light-hearted manner, de-personalise and reflect on events jokingly.	<i>Humour</i>	NA	7

Table 30

Description of interpersonal strengths

Strength	Description	VIA	Strengths-Finder	Participant reference
<i>Building relationships</i>	Exhibiting warmth, friendliness, and showing others that they are valued (P5). Being able to communicate with people at their level by applying empathy, understanding (P8, P10), building strategic relationships with key stakeholders (P11).	<i>Love (Humanity)</i>	<i>Empathy, Relator</i>	5, 8, 10, 11
<i>Embracing diversity</i>	Able to co-exist and accept others who may be culturally different (P2), transcending barriers such as ideologies, race, age, economic status, culture and relating to individuals (P8), treating people equally regardless of their background (P10), challenging and resolving stereotypes (P12).	<i>Love (Humanity)</i>	<i>Individualisation,</i>	2, 8, 10, 12
<i>Persuasion</i>	Being able to negotiate terms with other stakeholders, motivate others to accept personal point of view or preferences (P6), guiding others to apply their own strengths (P7), conveying ideas and giving direction to others, gaining their buy-in and boosting morale (P11).	<i>NA</i>	<i>Winning others over</i>	6, 7, 11
<i>Community</i>	Viewing people and the events between them as interconnected, the purpose of human beings is to help one another to benefit collectively (P1), collaborating with others as part of a greater whole, fostering a sense of togetherness, individual actions have an impact on the whole, improving conditions for others (P13), enabling the development of the greater community (P14).	<i>Teamwork</i>	<i>Harmony, Includer</i>	1,13, 14
<i>Empowerment</i>	Enabling others with knowledge, skills and resources and respecting them as capable of helping themselves to improve (P10).	<i>NA</i>	<i>Developer</i>	10

Table 31

Description of values/motivational strengths

Strength	Description	VIA	Strengths-Finder	Participant reference
<i>Integrity</i>	Honesty and transparency in exercising judgement (P3, P9), ethical relationships with staff and stakeholders without discrimination (P8), applying ethics and Islamic principles in all respects (P10), being conscious of and standing up for what is right (P13).	<i>Authenticity</i>	NA	3, 8, 9, 10, 13
<i>Purpose</i>	Sense of contributing to a greater good and serving society (P1, P4), pursuing a career that cultivates a passion, such as writing (P8, P14), being driven to make a difference in a subject one is passionate about (P10, P13).	NA	NA	1, 4, 8, 10, 13, 14
<i>Initiative</i>	Identifying and acting on opportunities (P1, P2, P15), motivated and conscious effort to achieve goals (P2, P7), acting to effect improvements (P9).	<i>Zest</i>	<i>Achiever, Activator</i>	1, 2, 7, 9, 15
<i>Excellence</i>	Contributing a high standard of performance (P1, P11), achievement of best results (P9, P10).	<i>Appreciation of beauty, excellence</i>	NA	1, 9, 10, 11
<i>Respect</i>	Showing humility by relating to others at their level without feeling self-important (P2), non-judgemental regard for people as human beings, including self-respect (P7),	<i>Fairness</i>	NA	2, 7
<i>Justice</i>	Treating others with fairness and equality (P8, P9).	<i>Justice</i>	<i>Consistency</i>	8, 9
<i>Authenticity</i>	Being true to oneself, accepting the positive and negative aspects of oneself, being transparent about views and appraisals of issues and acting consistently with these (P1), exploring personal potential (P10).	<i>Authenticity</i>	NA	1, 10

Table 32

Description of behavioural strengths

Strength	Description	VIA	Strengths-Finder	Participant reference
<i>Self-management</i>	Being organised and able to multi-task (P4, P10, P11, P14), clearly defining goals and working in a structured manner to achieve them (P6), applying effective time management, prioritisation and delegation (P8).	NA	NA	4, 6, 8, 10, 11, 14

A necessary task in positive psychology is the classification of strengths and though regarded as an important objective, Aspinwall and Staudinger (2003) reasoned that defining a strength could be difficult, as it was unclear whether strengths should be represented based on their adaptiveness or functionality, whether they should be measured subjectively or objectively, or if specific value or ethics systems should be consulted. None of these approaches was deliberately or effectively excluded, as the strengths offered by the participants were accepted as relevant and valuable to their own contexts as leaders. They were measured subjectively using qualitative interviews to avoid any strength exclusions that could occur with a quantitative measurement and values-based strengths were included in the results.

Similar to Ndlovhu's (2010) qualitative study, there were a few strength themes, such as insight and purpose, that did not fit neatly into current theoretical classification systems of strengths such as the VIA or StrengthsFinder, but were not unfamiliar in the realm of positive psychology either. While the strengths derived from this study could fit fairly neatly into the clusters described by Aspinwall and Staudinger (2003), they are comparatively similar to Carr's (2004) categories of personal and character strengths of intelligence, creativity, wisdom, emotional intelligence, easy temperament, positive personality traits, positive motives, self-esteem, self-efficacy, positive defences, positive coping strategies and immuno-competence (Carr, 2004). Carr's proposed 'historical strengths' can be related to the positive and supportive factor themes of this study, which include educational opportunities and the participants having supportive parents who encouraged their careers. 'Contextual strengths' refer to the positive elements of a person's current social network and lifestyle and these are identifiable from the themes related to a supportive spouse or family support structure, adopting a niche career, access to mentoring and leadership development programmes, organisational transformation and the establishment of key relationships.

Seligman (2003) and Saleebey (2001) proposed that each individual possesses a set of strengths that, if applied, will promote experiences of gratification and authentic happiness. Unlike pathological psychological factors, which are clearly and identifiably destructive to an individual's functionality and life experience, individual positive characteristics only serve as strengths if applied meaningfully in a relevant context (Buckingham & Clifton, 2001). For example, innovation as a strength was critical to Participant 12's success in a leadership role in the field of marketing and communication, since her ideas needed to maintain currency and side-line competitors. In contrast to the nature of personality traits, which are relatively stable, strengths are contingent on their environments of application. The women in this study described developing certain strengths, such as resourcefulness, in response to their environments, which presented particular issues to resolve, but other strengths, such as initiative, were more constant and led to the creation of opportunities when applied.

At the outset of this study it was suggested that psychological strengths, similar to positive emotions, serve healthy adaptive processes and in the context of this research, enable Muslim women to achieve their goals. The results of the study seem to complement the model of strengths and healthy psychological growth (Snyder & Lopez, 2004), which suggests that allowing for optimal psychological health would in turn enable more effective responses to opportunities and challenges to be initiated and an enhanced repertoire of psychological resources that support broadened positive experiences (Fredrickson & Losada, 2005).

The sufficiency of the derived qualitative themes is regarded as adequate, according to the guidelines for IPA analysis, once no further information from additional participants significantly adds to the richness of the data. This is referred to as saturation (Mason, 2010) and the researcher may regard the analysis as complete when the goal of qualitative research has been achieved, that is an understanding is projected that integrates the findings in a coherent manner and still preserves the nuanced aspects (Brocki & Wearden, 2006). Creswell in Mason (2010) suggests that for phenomenological studies this should be achieved with a sample size of six to 25

participants. The broadness of the research objectives would also be a determining factor, with more narrowly defined objectives achieving saturation quicker. The results of this study based on the responses of fifteen participants, pointed to specific categories of strengths and while there were some variations within these categories on the number and descriptions of strengths, there were no particular strengths yielded from the interviews which would warrant a new category of strengths and perhaps additional interviews to elaborate on them further. With regard to describing the experiences of Muslim women as leaders, the diversity of the sample was visible in terms of their varied ages but a majority of the participants held post-graduate qualifications with more than a third holding PhDs. Most had cross industrial exposure but fell within people oriented and services industries particularly health and education. With the consensus on a theme being viewed as an estimate indication of saturation, and whether the theme about the experience being related to the participants being Muslim and women, it can be seen from the results Tables 14, 15 and 16 that there is generally greater consensus between participants on these aspects than with opportunities and supportive factors (Table 15) and except for the theme of family support, the other themes are largely related to features of the work environment and may need to be studied as factors affecting women in leadership in general, rather than just Muslim women.

8.3 COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF QUANTITATIVE RESULTS

8.3.1 Global factors

The 16PF-5 provides a profile of sixteen personality traits as well as five combined 'global' factors. Based on the global personality scores on the 16PF-5, there were more introverted than extraverted participants; the sample group as a whole tended to be more accommodating and agreeable than persuasive and wilful; more were receptive, intuitive and open-minded than tough-minded, unempathetic and resolute. They were also unlikely to be very self-controlled or anxious.

Studies on the relationship between global personality factors and psychological strengths have found lower levels of neuroticism-anxiety on personality and aggression-hostility on temperament to be associated with higher levels of resilience and character strengths (Hutchinson et al., 2010). Extraversion and neuroticism predispose people to experience positive and negative events, respectively (Carr, 2004). Strengths related to personality traits seem to be due to an approximately equal influence of genetic and environmental factors, as twin studies attribute 50% of the variance in neuroticism and extraversion and 40% of the variance in agreeableness, conscientiousness and openness to genetic factors (Carr, 2004). Personality traits tend to remain fairly constant during the lifespan and all individuals are affected by general maturity trends. Between late adolescence and the age of thirty the traits of neuroticism, extraversion and openness to experience decline a little as agreeableness and conscientiousness increase. After the age of thirty this trend is maintained, but at a much slower rate. This translates into younger people having the strengths of extraversion and openness and older people having the strengths of stability, agreeableness and conscientiousness. However, these shifts are not drastic and traits evident in earlier life are predictive of those observable at later stages in life (Carr, 2004).

8.3.2 General relating to people

The primary factors related to general interpersonal behaviour include warmth, self-reliance, privateness, vigilance, liveliness, social boldness and dominance. The participants in this study were less likely to be reserved and impersonal. They had warmer interactions with others, but were not necessarily affiliative or preferred being part of a group, favouring instead self-reliance and individualism. There were more positive responses to communication that was forthright and genuine over being private and non-disclosing. The participants were more inclined to be trusting and accepting of others than suspicious of their motives. They were generally more serious and restrained than spontaneous, bold and less sensitive to threats in social situations. The preference for being cooperative and conflict-avoidant versus forceful and assertive varied across the participants. South African meta-analytic studies have shown women as leaders to engage in relationships that are interactive and

transformational and to encourage collaboration, empathy, support, empowerment and self-disclosure (Eagly et al., 2003).

8.3.3 Thinking style

The primary factors related to thinking style include abstractness, sensitivity, openness to change and liveliness. The participants in this study tended to be somewhat more grounded and practical than abstract in their solution-finding and a little more inclined to be sensitive and sentimental than objective, which translates into being more attuned to feelings and values when making decisions. They also tended to be more careful in decision-making and willing to understand a problem more thoroughly before coming to conclusions. Most of the participants in this study showed a stronger orientation to new ideas, experiences and change over more traditional approaches.

Individuals who score high on the personality trait of openness to experience tend to take on more personal projects compared to individuals high on neuroticism who tend to report more stressful experiences in their projects. State-like motives, also known as personal action constructs, have been grouped into four different conceptual categories by different researchers, but they have much in common (Carr, 2004).

8.3.4 Consistency of behaviour

The primary factors associated with the consistency of the participants' behaviour include rule-consciousness, perfectionism and abstractness. Participants were fairly average in their acceptance of externally imposed rules and standards of behaviour. The participants were a little more inclined to focus on dealing with current practical issues rather than reflect beyond information present in the immediate environment. Preferences on perfectionism varied and were largely average; some were comfortable with tolerating disorder and adopting a flexible approach and a few were strongly self-disciplined and organised.

8.3.5 Management of pressure

Emotional stability, apprehension, vigilance and tension are the primary factors related to coping with and managing pressure. The participants were generally average to more emotionally stable and adaptive, indicating that they tended to deal with life's challenges calmly and constructively. They reported being relatively self-assured, less worried and relaxed, but a few showed a tendency to be more tense and driven. Generally, lower scores on vigilance translate into more trusting, open attitudes and more positive feelings of well-being. Comparatively, South African women leaders have been found to be quite adaptable and flexible, but to have lower self-efficacy and a tendency to be unassertive (Geldenhuys, 2011; Werner, 2003).

Recent results of studies on South African women leaders, according to Caliper (2014), have shown that personality traits that support their effectiveness in the light of barriers such as work-life balance and gender-role stereotypes include higher scores on assertiveness, ego-drive, abstract reasoning, urgency and risk-taking (Caliper, 2014). Lower scores associated with inhibited performance were external structure, thoroughness and cautiousness. The results from Caliper (2014) therefore seemed to emphasise traits that related to an action-oriented approach, a straightforward and persuasive communication style and the ability to solve complex problems and recognise patterns in data. In response to challenging situations, women leaders who scored higher on reasoning ability, high self-discipline and results orientation were less likely to be affected negatively (Caliper, 2014).

8.4 INTEGRATED OVERVIEW OF QUALITATIVE AND QUANTITATIVE FINDINGS

A qualitative comparison of the strengths yielded as emerging themes and the levels and representation in respect of the personality traits on the personality profiles shows that some conceptual links can be made between the constructs of the two methods.

The strength 'conceptualisation' was raised by two participants and can be directly associated with the personality trait 'abstractness', which scored positively with two candidates. The majority had a grounded/practical orientation.

There were three references to the strengths 'innovation' and 'learning' which could be linked to the personality trait 'openness to change'; nine (69%) participants showed higher openness to change and only one (8%) scored as traditional.

Resourcefulness, insight and problem-solving as solution-focussed strengths can be related to the personality trait of 'reasoning', the results of which showed three participants (23%) as inclined to concrete thinking, two (15%) two to be more likely to be abstract thinkers and fast learners and the rest to be average.

It was somewhat difficult to relate emotional strengths to individual personality traits, as the constructs were more complex.

The strengths *confidence, courage and independence* could be negatively associated with apprehension, for which the participants scored as either average (6=46%) or unworried/self-assured (6=46%).

Perseverance and Adaptability as emotional strengths related to the personality trait of emotional stability on which participants had average (n=5, =38%) to emotionally stable and adjustable results (n=5, 38%).

Discipline could be linked with the personality trait of rule-consciousness, for which a majority scored as average (n=6, 46%), followed by four (30%) as moderately rule-consciousness and three (23%) as moderate on expedience/non-conformance.

Compassion as a strength may require the possession of the trait warmth, which the participants scored on as average (n=5, 38%) to positive/high (n=6, 46%).

Humour could not be clearly linked to the measured personality traits.

The interpersonal strengths included *building relationships*, a sense of *community*, *empowering others*, embracing *diversity* and *persuasion*. The related interpersonal traits supportive of the strengths indicated six participants (46%) who scored higher on warmth/attentiveness to others, seven (54%) were more forthright and genuine (low privateness) rather than discreet, while a lower score on vigilance indicating trusting/unsuspecting (n=7, 54%) behaviour. Only one participant scored as shy, while the rest indicated an average (n= 5, 38%) or higher scores for social boldness (n=7, 54%) - positive on social boldness

It was noted that there were no positive scores for the trait liveliness, with seven (54%) of the participants scoring as more serious, restrained and careful and six (46%) rating average. Four participants (30%) scored positively on dominance while the rest were either average (n=4, 30%) or preferred cooperation and the avoidance of conflict (n=5, 38%). Only two participants (15%) rated positively on affiliative/community/group orientation, while the majority scored higher on self-reliance /individualism (n=7, 54%).

For the values/motivational strengths of *integrity*, *purpose*, *initiative*, *excellence*, *respect*, *justice* and *authenticity*, only the traits of rule-consciousness, perfectionism and privateness could be referred to for support for the strengths. The participants generally scored on average for rule-consciousness (n=6, 46%) and perfectionism (n=5, 38%) and higher on being genuine and forthright (low privateness) (n=7, 54%). Being aware of and following rules generally received an average to moderate score, with only three participants (23%) scoring as nonconforming/expedient.

The behavioural strength of *multi-tasking* when compared against the trait cluster of consistency of behaviour shows that participants were a little more inclined to focus on dealing with current practical issues, the preference for perfectionism as relatively average to moderate; some were comfortable with tolerating disorder and adopting a flexible approach and a few were strongly self-disciplined and organised.

While a statistical comparison is not possible on the basis of the quantitative and qualitative data to examine the relationship between the constructs, it appears that the cognitive constructs are easier to integrate, while the emotional and interpersonal strengths and personality traits are more complex and require further inquiry. The values/motivational strengths showed better coherence with the VIA classification of strengths than the personality data and together with the behavioural strengths, it would appear that there are more complex interactions or dynamics between an individual's personality, cognitive ability and behavioural tendencies that can result in a wide repertoire of strengths, much broader than are traditionally measured by individual psychological instruments, such as personality questionnaires.

8.5 CONCLUSION

In this chapter, an integrated overview of the converging qualitative themes, including psychological strengths, was conveyed, followed by a similar approach to the quantitative personality data for the sample group. The following concluding chapter serves to consolidate the findings of the current research and guide future research in the subject area.

CHAPTER 9

CONCLUSION, RECOMMENDATIONS AND LIMITATIONS

9.1 INTRODUCTION

In this chapter, the objectives of the study are reconsidered and an overview of the main findings of the study are presented, followed by a discussion on the contributions to research, perceived limitations and finally a conclusion with suggestions for future research.

9.2 SUMMARY OVERVIEW OF THE STUDY

The intent of this study was to explore the psychological strengths of a specific group of leaders who are women and belong to the Islamic faith. The study touches on contemporary interests, including the scarce representation of women leaders in a South African context where transformation is recent, Muslim women who are the subject of international media attention as an oppressed and undermined population and lastly, psychological strengths, which form one of the key areas of exploration in the burgeoning field of positive psychology. The specific area of investigation in this study was the strengths employed by South African Muslim women who had progressed to roles of leadership despite the apparent challenges presented by their social, political and employment backgrounds.

Although a mixed methods research approach was used to investigate the strengths of the sample, greater emphasis was placed on the qualitative interview method, which elicited the psychological strengths and rather than add a quantitative measure of strengths (which was difficult to decide on, since the nature of the strengths measured was very different for current tools, including trait-like, competency and character strengths) the recommendation by Biswas-Diener et al. (2011) was followed and a quantitative personality trait assessment was selected

with the aim of 'grounding' the psychological strengths elicited within an established personality assessment. The perceived advantage of this was a more basic reference against which to compare the strengths of the sample and the methodology served to triangulate or validate the findings where there were no significant contradictions in the two forms of data. A secondary purpose of the interviews was to uncover the challenges and opportunities or supportive elements experienced by the participants in their development as leaders, as the context in which their strengths were applied. The contextual data and strengths were analysed using IPA, which seeks to understand events as they are understood by and are meaningful to the participant. The results revealed both general challenges faced by female South African leaders as well as those more specific to being Muslim, relatively fewer but pertinent supportive factors and categories of strengths similar to established taxonomies, with a few exceptions. The findings of the study in relation to the objectives set out earlier follow below:

- Objective: To describe the leadership experiences of Muslim women.

The qualitative analysis results yielded some general themes concerning the leadership roles of the participants, such as the tendency for them to take on several or extended leadership roles and refer to role models as ideal examples of leadership behaviour. Gender differences in leadership behaviour were reported by the participants and many described themselves as ascribing to a feminine, transformational leadership style. The religious influences on leadership that were noted were ethical Islamic principles that socialised Muslim women with values of integrity that could be transferred to a leadership context.

The participants described team leadership behaviours, placing emphasis on developing others, communicating and networking, as well as being able to delegate and manage the activities of subordinates. Leadership styles adopted by the participants varied, with some of them ascribing to classical transactional leadership trends, while others preferred more democratic, transformational approaches, similar

to the findings of other South African studies (Ayman & Korabik, 2010; Eagly et al., 2003; Werner, 2003). Factors related to personal effectiveness, such as professional competence and different perspectives on decision-making, were raised in terms of balancing people and task issues, or the impact of gender on decisions that favour either the present or future circumstances.

- Objective: To explore the role of positive psychological strengths in exploiting the opportunities experienced by Muslim women as leaders.

One of the key opportunities participants mentioned was access to higher education, which was less commonly available to women in the past. 'Broadened opportunities' were realised when initial opportunities were used; presenting opportunities led to the creation of additional opportunities as a result of the progressive achievement of outcomes. A third of the participants referred to having established themselves in niche careers where they could apply their knowledge and skills in occupations that were uncommon or in special demand. Organisational transformation and employment equity initiatives facilitated the upward mobility of a few participants, but some participants experienced this as a challenge to their promotion.

Supportive factors narrated by participants enabled them to pursue career opportunities and family support was strongly emphasised by most of them in this regard. These included the encouragement of immediate family members, particularly fathers, early in their careers and while completing their studies. The emphasis on a supportive family member in the form of a spouse was more pronounced when their careers were better established and assistance in maintaining a work-home balance became more of a priority. Access to mentoring was helpful for some participants and religious guidance was seen as a source of support and reference for personal decisions.

- Objective: To explore the role of positive psychological strengths in negating the challenging experiences of Muslim women as leaders.

The most significant challenge experienced by the research sample was discrimination in the workplace, which was primarily gender-based. This was followed by difficulties experienced in maintaining a balance between work and family. Both these challenges have been reported as key barriers to career progression for South African women leaders in general (Łaba, 2011). About half of the participants encountered some challenges in practising their faith within their work contexts, followed by personal development challenges such as improved assertiveness. The least emphasised challenges pertained to the participants' job roles or organisational contexts.

Understanding the challenges associated with the social positioning of Muslim women in South Africa requires being familiar with the basic tenets of the faith of Islam, instead of applying stereotypes and assumptions about what is acceptable and permissible, since much of the propaganda broadcast in the media and on social networks is untrue reflections of the faith, which is largely moderate in approach and explicitly protects the rights and dignity of women. The participants narrated that there are views on Islam that cause variations in how the faith is practised across groups of Muslims and attribute much of the social discrimination to cultural influences. The degree of conservatism is likely to have some bearing on the decision of a Muslim woman to work and the participants suggested that those Muslims who were both conservative and financially wealthier, placed less emphasis on full-time employment and the intrinsic rewards of having careers, the assumption being that employment was considered more acceptable for Muslim women if it was a necessity. It is possible that those Muslim women who have made their mark as leaders have, however, been underrepresented in the media, partly because they avoid public exposure and also because they have largely been neglected by the media.

- Objective: To investigate the nature of the positive psychological strengths that Muslim women in leadership roles demonstrate.

The psychological strengths pointed out in this study roughly fitted into conceptual categories, including cognitive strengths, emotional strengths, interpersonal strengths, values/motivational strengths and a single behavioural strength. The VIA classification systems and StrengthsFinder definitions were compared to the derived strengths and while consistencies were noted on the strengths between the classification systems, it was easier to relate the cognitive strengths to personality thinking traits, and the values and motivational strengths to the VIA classification system. The emotional and interpersonal strengths were a little more complex to cross-reference and the strengths of insight (cognitive), purpose (values/motivational) and self-management (behavioural) were novel strengths.

Main trends in the personality traits of the group as a whole were slightly higher levels of extraversion and a greater general trend towards individualism. The participants were more likely to be forthright/genuine than private, and open and trusting of others. They were also more bold, serious and less sensitive to threats. The personality results suggest that Muslim women as leaders are open, collegial and receptive in their relations with others, but maintain their independence and some level of reservation. Most had a pragmatic approach to problem-solving but were strongly inclined towards new ideas and experiences. They demonstrated an average tolerance for externally imposed rules and social prescriptions of behaviour, emotional stability and positive attitudes. Some traits could be directly linked to strengths, particularly cognitive strengths. Some of the emotional traits and traits overlapped, for example the trait of 'emotional stability' could have an impact on but not fully account for the strengths of perseverance and adaptability, which may be more complex and linked to other constructs.

An examination of the objectives and findings of the study finds that the methodology succeeded in providing context to the strengths in terms of the participants' experiences as leaders and the opportunities and challenges they encountered.

However, describing the role of psychological strengths as specific constructs in relation to specific opportunities and challenges was more difficult to determine. In part because the interviews were semi-structured, participants referred to strengths but did not exclusively attribute them to 'positive' or 'negative' experiences. A closer analysis using quantitative measurement or more structured interviews may be more beneficial to analyse the dynamics between specific strengths and contextual factors and is suggested for further research.

- Objective: To investigate the broader implications of positive psychological strengths for the personal and professional development of female leaders.

Some of the participants referred to the value of leadership development programmes provided by their employers in equipping them with leadership theory and skills, but only a single participant referred to management support as having been significant in assisting her career development. It was also suggested that similar programmes be made more accessible and extended to Muslim women professionals, possibly with the aid of legislation to encourage organisations to be more supportive of women's career development. Leadership development opportunities were relatively limited in comparison to the challenges experienced, possibly emphasising the role of the psychological strengths exhibited. However, the nature and strength of the interaction between psychological strengths and development opportunities would need to be examined, using more structured or quantitative methods of analysis.

9.3 RESEARCH CONTRIBUTIONS

The study attempted to contribute to research by assessing strengths from a South African context and for women in particular, since not much literature has been generated in these arenas and positive psychological research in South Africa is still fairly new. The results of this particular study can hardly account for general trends in

the greater population, but could be used to initiate further exploratory studies of strengths in the work context and determine if demographic factors are a significant factor. Though quantitative strength measurement instruments are available on the market, sufficient local research could contribute to the development of tools that measure South African strengths, since they seem to be fairly complex and applicable to specific contexts. Alternatively, complementing current quantitative measures of strengths with qualitative methods such as IPA-analysed interviews can assist to access the experiences of participants and strengths that are meaningful to them, but might be missed by quantitative measures that do not comprehensively measure the variety of probable strengths. In response to the problem of classifying human strengths, it is proposed that they are indeed more complex and can be composed of personality traits, states and cognitive abilities. Criticism of the strengths approach latches onto the fact that strengths may be used inappropriately and a possible avenue to consider may be creating awareness of strengths by firstly identifying them and moderating their use as appropriate to the context. Meta-cognitive awareness and emotional intelligence may play a positive role in moderating the application of strengths and this is an area that could be further investigated in empirical studies.

A further contribution to research would be in the area of gender and positive leadership, an area overlooked in studies of work and positive psychology (Donaldson & Ko, 2010). The qualitative results of this study allude to challenges that are generally experienced by South African women in the workplace. Discriminatory practices prevail, despite legislation granting women 'equal rights' because in practice, there are deeper social and cultural issues such as patriarchy that cannot be dispensed with as quickly as one would hope for transformation to take place. Muslim women are given a platform in this study, as examples of actual leaders who contribute to the economy amidst the stereotypes and negative attention generally received publicly, but the specific challenges they deal with have also been raised. Whether similar issues are dealt with by South African women arising from their religious or cultural contexts can be further explored in comparative studies.

With regard to the subject of leadership and based on the results of this study and the results of meta-analyses completed in South Africa, it would seem that transformational leadership is somewhat feminised in its emphasis on supporting and transforming potential and growth in others, but there is lack of leadership development support for women in general. The work-life balancing challenges are a limiting factor in making development opportunities available to women who bear the burden of family responsibilities and are excluded from informal settings where business opportunities are created. It is therefore suggested that legislation and organisational policy go a step further in establishing programmes to develop leadership potential in general.

9.4 LIMITATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

Some theoretical and methodological limitations in this study are noted. The outcome of the study was a descriptive list of psychological strengths that were relevant to the sample and positive and negative contextual elements were described. The model of strengths by Snyder and Lopez (2004) was referred to, but its application was incomplete, as it was not possible to analyse the 'healthy processes' and 'fulfilment' as depicted in the model in its explanation of many alternatives to attain healthy psychological growth. This study was unable to contribute to additional information to support the proposal of a possible interplay between strengths, healthy processes and fulfilments and as the authors indicate, appears to involve complex interactions (Snyder & Lopez, 2004), which the study was not designed to investigate. Further research will be required to explore these relationships in greater depth.

The sample did not include Capetonian or Malay Muslim women and the results could therefore be slightly biased by excluding some of the religious and cultural differences between the two dominant South African Muslim population groups. Limitations arising from the methodology of the study are the resulting strengths

being fairly descriptive, but perhaps not comprehensive. At the time of the interviews the participants may have overlooked some of their individual strengths or these may not have been consciously obvious to the participants. This problem could have been circumvented by the use of quantitative measures, which assess a wider range of strengths. Secondly, associations between the strengths and personality traits are difficult to compare qualitatively and a quantitative approach would be better suited to this purpose. Character strengths and personality traits, however, do not seem to relate directly and the relationships between the two sources of strengths require further enquiry. Finally, although the objectives sought to describe the strengths shown by Muslim women as leaders and the role of these strengths in their experiences of leadership, the latter aspect of the objectives was difficult to achieve. The participants discussed the opportunities and challenges they experienced in general terms rather than in depth owing to the lack of a high degree of structure in the interviews. It consequently proved challenging to assign specific strengths to their experiences.

The qualitative and exploratory aspect of the study does, however, provide insight into phenomena that can be explored further in future quantitative and qualitative research. Some suggestions for further research include the following:

- Investigating the causal relationships between specific psychological strengths and environmental factors,
- Identifying the relationship between personality and psychological strengths as measured by comparative strengths instruments,
- Investigating gender differences in psychological strengths applied in leadership and work contexts,
- Investigating the psychological strengths and barriers to career progression of women in leadership from various cultural contexts,
- Examining the impact of religiosity and conservatism on career decision-making,
- Determining the relationship between psychological strengths of women as leaders and PsyCap.

9.5 CONCLUSION

This study aimed to explore and describe the psychological strengths of Muslim women as leaders in the workplace and this chapter outlined the objectives of the study and comparatively considered their achievement against the results obtained. The limitations of the research were considered and further avenues for similar studies were suggested. It is hoped that the results obtained will serve to gain further understanding of the utility of strengths and their implementation in the workplace for leadership in general and for women in particular.

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APPENDIX A

Interview schedule

1. Introduction and purpose of study

Study conducted from fields of positive psychology and industrial psychology, focus is on what is positive about people to bring out their best at work. Looking at psychological strengths in particular and how these may serve Muslim women in leadership and their career progression.

2. Voice recording and confidentiality

3. Questions:

- a. Tell me about your studies and employment/career history.
- b. Describe the progression of leadership roles you have held in the past.
- c. Tell me about your current role as a leader.
- d. How would you define your leadership style?
- e. What challenges have you encountered prior to and on becoming a leader and how did you deal with these?
- f. What opportunities did you perceive prior to, and on becoming a leader and how did you approach them?
- g. Being a Muslim and a woman, how has this impacted on your career development? (Positive and negative factors)
- h. What personal strengths do you believe enable effective leadership?

Are any of these more masculine or feminine?
- i. How can women (including Muslim women) be better leaders?

4. Close and thank participant.