

UNIVERSITY OF KWAZULU-NATAL

Empowering Women in the Workplace: A South African Perspective

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Declaration

I Ajaikumar Ratelal Daya declare that

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Abstract

Empowerment is the degree of flexibility and freedom provided to individuals to make decisions in relation to their work. Individuals tend to respond more creatively when given additional responsibilities and are encouraged to contribute to and attain satisfaction from their work and its environment. Women in South Africa have unfortunately found it difficult to take advantage of this flexibility and freedom due to the countries past policies and laws. They have to face various barriers that restrict them from advancing in their careers and in the workplace, particularly at senior management levels. One of these barriers is to balance work and family life. The government has legislated policies and procedures for the empowerment of women in the workplace. Companies are required to use these policies and procedures to promote women to senior levels of management. The aim of the study is to determine whether women in South Africa are being empowered in the workplace and the impact of organisational practices on their progression. This study used a quantitative research design and data was collected using an electronic questionnaire in the Greater Durban Area using a non-probability sample. There were 129 respondents who responded to the electronic questionnaire of which only 121 were valid responses. The study showed that women were not accepted in a managerial role yet respondents preferred female managers due to their influence in the workplace. Barriers which affected women in acquiring higher positions in their companies were identified. The findings indicate that organisations which have policies and procedures in place invest in developing female leaders and managers. Based on the research findings it is recommended that organisations need to be more supportive of women with families. In this way they could retain the best. In addition, organisations need to ensure that for empowerment of women to materialise; power sharing, skills development and positive relationships should be a part of their organisations' empowerment strategy. Government may need to change certain policies and procedures to encourage the promotion of women in the workplace.

Table of Contents

| | |
|---|-----|
| Title Page | i |
| Declaration | ii |
| Acknowledgements | iii |
| Abstract | iv |
| Table of Contents | v |
| List of Figures | ix |
| List of Tables | x |
| CHAPTER ONE | 1 |
| INTRODUCTION | 1 |
| 1.1 Introduction | 1 |
| 1.2 Motivation for the study | 2 |
| 1.3 Focus of the study | 3 |
| 1.4 Problem statement | 3 |
| 1.5 Objectives | 4 |
| 1.6 Limitations of the study | 4 |
| 1.7 Chapter Outline | 5 |
| 1.8 Summary | 6 |
| CHAPTER TWO | 7 |
| Literature Review | 7 |
| 2.1 Introduction | 7 |
| 2.2 Background | 8 |
| 2.3 Definitions | 9 |
| 2.4 Barriers to women's career progression | 10 |
| 2.4.1 Family-related barriers | 11 |
| 2.4.2 Societal-related barriers | 11 |
| 2.4.3 Organisational-related barriers | 12 |
| 2.4.4 Gender stereotyping barriers | 13 |
| 2.5 Women in management: career and family challenges | 14 |
| 2.6 Gender inequality in management | 15 |
| 2.7 What is empowerment and who benefits? | 22 |

| | | |
|---------------------------|---|----|
| 2.8 | Summary | 24 |
| CHAPTER THREE | | 26 |
| Research Methodology..... | | 26 |
| 3.1 | Introduction | 26 |
| 3.2 | Statement of the research problem..... | 26 |
| 3.3 | Aim and Objectives of the Study..... | 27 |
| 3.3.1 | Aim..... | 27 |
| 3.3.2 | Objectives | 27 |
| 3.4 | Sampling..... | 28 |
| 3.5 | Sample Size..... | 29 |
| 3.6 | Data Collection Strategies | 30 |
| 3.7 | Data Collection Instrument..... | 31 |
| 3.8 | The Questionnaire as a Research Tool | 32 |
| 3.9 | Questionnaire Design | 33 |
| 3.10 | Statistical Analysis of the Questionnaire | 33 |
| 3.10.1 | Questionnaire Reliability | 33 |
| 3.10.2 | Questionnaire Replication..... | 34 |
| 3.10.3 | Questionnaire Validity | 34 |
| 3.11 | Administration of the Questionnaire | 35 |
| 3.12 | Data Analysis Method..... | 35 |
| 3.13 | Summary | 35 |
| CHAPTER FOUR..... | | 37 |
| Results | | 37 |
| 4.1 | Introduction..... | 37 |
| 4.2 | Biographical characteristics of respondents..... | 37 |
| 4.3 | Objective 1: Ascertain individuals view on women’s career advancement.. | 38 |
| 4.3.1 | Reasons why women are unable to progress in their careers.... | 38 |
| 4.3.2 | Reporting to a woman manager..... | 40 |
| 4.3.3 | Influence of women managers in the workplace | 41 |
| 4.3.4 | Barriers to career advancement for women | 42 |
| 4.3.5 | Barriers to progression faced by women..... | 43 |
| 4.3.6 | Women need to be given equal opportunities | 44 |

| | | |
|---------|---|----|
| 4.3.7 | Outcome of Objective 1..... | 45 |
| 4.4 | Objective 2: Gender and race impact on progression..... | 45 |
| 4.4.1 | Barriers to progression faced by women..... | 45 |
| 4.4.2 | Gender versus barriers to career advancement for women | 45 |
| 4.4.3 | Gender versus women’s ability to progress in their career..... | 46 |
| 4.4.4 | Race versus women’s ability to progress in their career | 47 |
| 4.4.5 | Outcome of Objective 2..... | 47 |
| 4.5 | Objective 3: Organisational practices..... | 48 |
| 4.5.1 | Organisational policies and procedures in place for the progression of women..... | 48 |
| 4.5.2 | Organisational investments in developing female leaders | 49 |
| 4.5.3 | Women in my organisation who have received necessary training are excellent managers..... | 50 |
| 4.5.4 | Outcome of Objective 3..... | 51 |
| 4.6 | Summary | 51 |
| | CHAPTER FIVE | 52 |
| | Discussion..... | 52 |
| 5.1 | Introduction..... | 52 |
| 5.2 | Demographics..... | 52 |
| 5.3 | Findings of the study..... | 53 |
| 5.3.1 | Objective 1: To ascertain individual’s view on women’s career advancement | 53 |
| 5.3.1.1 | Reasons for non-progression..... | 53 |
| 5.3.1.2 | Relationships with managers | 54 |
| 5.3.1.3 | Barriers and their impact..... | 55 |
| 5.3.1.4 | Equal opportunities | 57 |
| 5.3.2 | Objective 2: To investigate barriers faced by women in achieving higher positions in companies..... | 58 |
| 5.3.2.1 | Advancement for women | 58 |
| 5.3.2.2 | Ability to progress in a gender and race perspective | 59 |
| 5.3.3 | Objective 3: To examine the impact of organisational practices in promoting women to executive positions | 60 |

| | | |
|---------------------------------------|---|----|
| 5.3.3.1 | Policies and Procedures | 60 |
| 5.3.3.2 | Investment in female leaders | 61 |
| 5.3.3.3 | Training to be excellent managers | 61 |
| 5.4 | Summary | 62 |
| CHAPTER SIX | | 63 |
| Recommendations and Conclusions | | 63 |
| 6.1 | Introduction | 63 |
| 6.2 | Key findings | 63 |
| 6.3 | Recommendations resulting from this study | 65 |
| 6.4 | Limitations of the study | 67 |
| 6.5 | Recommendations for future studies | 68 |
| 6.6 | Summary | 68 |
| References | | 70 |
| Appendix 1 | | 77 |
| Appendix 2 | | 81 |

List of Figures

| | |
|--|----|
| Figure 2.1 Labour Force Participation Survey | 19 |
| Figure 2.2 Incidence of Management Positions..... | 20 |
| Figure 4.1 Reasons for non-progression of women..... | 39 |
| Figure 4.2 Choice of reporting to a woman manager | 40 |
| Figure 4.3 Women managers not influential..... | 41 |
| Figure 4.4 Barriers to career progression for women | 42 |
| Figure 4.5 Barriers faced by women..... | 43 |
| Figure 4.6 Equal opportunities for career progression..... | 44 |
| Figure 4.7 Organisational policies and procedures | 48 |
| Figure 4.8 Developing female leaders..... | 49 |
| Figure 4.9 Excellent managers..... | 50 |

List of Tables

| | |
|--|----|
| Table 2.1 Mid –year population estimates for South Africa by population group and gender, 2010 | 17 |
| Table 2.2 Mid-year population estimates by population group, age and gender, 2010 | 18 |
| Table 2.3 Gender Parity Index..... | 19 |
| Table 4.1 Biographical characteristics of respondents | 38 |
| Table 4.2 Central tendency result of reporting to a women manager | 40 |
| Table 4.3 Central tendency result for influential women managers | 41 |
| Table 4.4 Central tendency result for barriers to progression..... | 42 |
| Table 4.5 Central tendency for equal opportunities | 45 |
| Table 4.6 Gender versus barriers to progression | 46 |
| Table 4.7 Gender versus choice for non-progression..... | 46 |
| Table 4.8 Race versus choice for non-progression | 47 |
| Table 4.9 Central tendency for policies and procedures | 49 |
| Table 4.10 Central tendency for developing female leaders..... | 50 |
| Table 4.11 Central tendency for excellent managers | 51 |

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

The apartheid era in South Africa defined women to be inferior to men and bestowed upon them the status of minors in both the public and private sectors (National Gender Policy Framework 2003). The unequal sharing of power led to the exploitation of women and resources such as information, time and income being unequally distributed (Mathur-Helm 2005). South Africa has always strived to promote the rights of individuals irrespective of age, race, gender, class and disability (Constitution of the Republic of South Africa 1996).

For this purpose, the South African government endorsed the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) in January 1996. The Gender Policy Framework outlines the policies and strategies aimed at implementing human rights laws for improving the status of women in the workplace.

Whilst great advances have been made towards gender equality in the public and private sectors, women continue to be noticeably excluded from many areas of society, in particular the formal economy. An important aspect of this economic exclusion is the unfair treatment of women in the workplace (Chan 2006). The “glass ceiling” is used to explain why women fail to achieve senior management roles and are prevented from attaining senior levels of management due to the various related barriers (The world needs women leaders 2008). On the other hand, some levels of advancement are prevented by other women who had achieved these levels thus creating a new ‘glass ceiling’.

Although legislation has provided policies and procedures for the progression of women, organisations lack of understanding the legislation has led to the underutilisation of the best and brightest women (D’Agostino & Levine 2010).

1.2 Motivation for the study

In the changing global and economic times, women's empowerment and the barriers they face in the workplace has been drawing the attention of most organisational researchers where changes in senior management are being reported and the status of professional women is being debated (Mathur-Helm 2005). Women in South Africa only began to meet this global economic change since the democratic elections in 1994. However, despite changes in legislation to empower women in South Africa, the majority still hold secondary positions and are frequently or mostly being underutilised in the market place.

The intention of this study is to create awareness amongst leaders about the barriers faced by women in the workplace and balancing the conflicting roles of family and career. According to Ezzedeen and Ritchey (2009), women fail to reconcile career aspiration with family. Women are efficient but many do not possess the traits of being independent, confident and assertive. Due to past policies of organisations and government, many women are not skilled enough to take on positions in management. Despite governments' intervention to promote women into management positions, there are not many that reach these levels in organisations. According to Ismail and Ibrahim (2007), women have to work harder and longer to prove their credibility in their organisation. This study is deemed necessary and will benefit:

- Women: By making them aware of the barriers that prevent them from advancing to senior management levels. Understanding that the government has policies and procedures in place for the progression of women and that the organisations they work for can use the policies and procedures to promote women in management.
- Companies: By allowing them the opportunity for promoting gender equity and implementing work-life balance policies for women based on the underlying gender ideologies (Straub 2007). This will change the company mindset so that the company can be competitive in the global marketplace.

- Government: By helping to improve on the Gender Policy Framework so that the policies and strategies relating to gender equality and women's empowerment become more efficient and successful.

1.3 Focus of the study

The focus of this study is to identify the barriers that women face in the workplace and to determine if and why women are under-represented in senior management levels in their organisations within the Greater Durban Area. This study also focuses on the responsibilities of organisations in their attempt to empower women to move to senior management levels. The responses of respondents will be compared to the literature of organisational researchers to compare whether they are similar or dissimilar. The Greater Durban Area was chosen for the researcher's convenience and due to time constraints.

1.4 Problem statement

Although a number of women have been entering the workforce in South Africa, the majority of senior management positions have been held by men (Weyer 2007). Despite the various government policies and legislation to promote the advancement of women in the workplace, they remain employed at the lower ranks in organisations (Mathur-Helm 2005). Kargwell (2008) asserts that this under-representation of women in senior management results in family-work conflict. This contributes to the glass ceiling formed as a result of attitudinal and organisational prejudices which prevent women from progressing to management levels. This study will answer the question "What can be done to increase the number of women in management?"

The sub questions include:

- Are women being empowered in the workplace?
- What are the factors affecting women in progressing to management levels?

- What and how are the barriers faced by women impinging on the progression of women to higher position in companies?
- Does the 'glass ceiling' created by male domination still exist?
- Do women who are empowered reach senior management?
- Do women who reach senior management create their own 'glass ceiling'?
- What are organisations doing to influence the career progression of women to executive positions?

1.5 Objectives

In order to obtain a better understanding of the lack of empowerment of women in the workplace, this study set out to accomplish the following:

- To ascertain individual's views on women's career advancement
- To investigate barriers faced by women in achieving higher positions in companies
- To examine the impact of organisational practices in promoting women to executive positions

1.6 Limitations of the study

The following limitations to this study include:

- The study was conducted within a particular region and not nationally.
- The participation of male to female respondents was not proportional.

- The race ratio of respondents is not proportional to the demographics of the province.

These limitations will be discussed in detail in Chapter Six.

1.7 Chapter Outline

This study is made up of six chapters. Chapter One presents an overview of the study followed by chapters of a literature review, the methodology adopted, results and discussion of the results of this study and ending with recommendations and conclusions.

Chapter One introduces the study by providing an overview of the key issues relating to the empowerment of women in the workplace. Furthermore, the motivation of the study and limitations are highlighted.

Chapter Two presents the literature review in which a greater understanding of the barriers that face women and the organisational practices are discussed using journal articles and other authoritative sources.

Chapter Three discusses the methodology adopted for this study. The sample and sampling size followed by the research instrument and data collection method are explained. Likewise the administration of the questionnaire and analysis method are specified in respect of the construct to be measured.

Chapter Four contains the results of the data of the survey from respondents. The empirical data is analysed and presented in a way to address the objectives

Chapter Five presents an interpretation of the findings from chapter four by contrasting the findings to the literature review from chapter two.

Chapter Six discusses whether the objectives of the survey have been met or not. The recommendations and conclusions of the survey are provided.

1.8 Summary

In this chapter the motivation, the problem statement and objectives for the study are highlighted. Furthermore, the limitations of the study are introduced. The literature review in the next chapter provides a detailed understanding of the study from the perspective of other researchers by means of journals and other authoritative sources.

CHAPTER TWO

Literature Review

2.1 Introduction

Women have been in the labour market for more than 20 years in developed and developing countries (Ismail & Ibrahim 2008) irrespective of their racial identity (Mathur-Helm 2005). Over the last decade, women have been increasing and participating continuously in the labour market (Nagy 2005). The educational and economic activity levels have identified two interrelated processes; the demand for equality and the appearance of women in management (Nagy 2005).

South Africa has embraced women as professionals and as equals and has made every endeavour to utilise their full potential in the labour market, and conferred upon them equal representation in senior levels of management (Mathur-Helm 2005). Studies in Norway, the USA, Canada, Australia, New Zealand and the United Kingdom have monitored the presence of women in senior management levels and reveal that the lack of women in management positions is a global phenomenon (Straub 2007). Women still face barriers to career advancement internationally and their progression to senior executive levels is blocked (Straub 2007). Government and organisations have implemented various policies and procedures such as equal opportunities and affirmative action to eradicate the gender inequality in the workplace (Mathur-Helm 2005).

This study is conducted in the field of management to create an understanding in relation to the barriers faced by women and their progression to senior management levels.

The relevant literature has been reviewed relating to the empowerment of women in the workplace. The focus of this review begins with the background of the problem in South Africa. This is followed by the barriers faced by women in achieving positions in senior levels of management and reflect on empowerment and its benefits.

2.2 Background

The United Nations Private Sector Forum on the Millennium Development Goals 2010 discussion reported that investing in gender equality and women's empowerment was the key factor for the progression of women internationally. However, socially, economically and politically, women are faced with barriers in the workplace despite their progress worldwide (Empowering women and achieving equality 2010)

The international human rights framework was built on feminist theories and common experience of subordination. The civil, social, political and economic rights of women had been revealed through feminist theories interpreted by women's experience internationally (Romany 1996).

Women in South Africa were also discriminated against and victimised due to the White male dominated society which restricted women's professional and social growth and development (Mathur-Helm 2005). It is evident that not only does South Africa have barriers that prevent women advancing in their careers but so too do countries like Australia, Canada and the United States. Of the 52 percent of women in South Africa, 46 percent are in the labour force. Of the 46 percent, none held managerial and professional specialty positions but 25.3 percent are executive officers, corporate officers or executive managers, the highest between the four countries. However, only 14.3 percent of women in South Africa held board directors positions, whilst Canada and the United State had 14 percent and 15.2 percent respectively (Catalyst 2010). It is evident that women need to be empowered to break the bonds that prevent their corporate success.

Since democracy in 1994, access to political power was denied to women, however, if power was granted, "women might wield economic power as proprietors and managers of businesses and households" (Walker 2008). Perrot as cited by Walker (2008: 591) claims that domesticated women are the resource to the foundation of a "budgetary matriarchy". This then questions the type of leadership role women should adapt. "Women are more likely than men to adopt a transformational leadership style and therefore it could be argued that women

should be running the world's major corporations as well as playing key roles in national and international politics. However, a review of the CEOs of major US and European firms or a quick scan of the world's political leaders indicates that a resource with the potential to bring about much needed changes in both business and politics is being squandered" Hogue and Lord (2007 cited in *The world needs women leaders* 2008:27).

2.3 Definitions

A barrier is defined as a factor, event or phenomenon that prevents individuals from progression (Ismail & Ibrahim 2007).

"Empowering" or "empowerment" means to provide the means to undertake certain actions. South African Black societies were oppressed for many decades before 1994, especially women, due to the fact that they are Black and female (Romany 1996). Therefore, the subordination faced by Black women was magnified by sexism that overlapped with racism and economic deprivation (Romany 1996).

"Transformational leadership is defined as the facilitators for role modeling and the use of problem solving approaches" Hogue and Lord (2007 cited in *The world needs women leaders* 2008:27). Kreitner and Kinicki (2008:479) define "transformational leadership as bringing about trustworthiness, seeking development in other, self-sacrifice and serve as moral agents", focusing on the objectives rather than the needs of the workgroup.

Transactional leadership, however, is characterised by a top-down definition of role responsibilities. Kreitner and Kinicki (2008:479) define "transactional leadership as a system of rewards and punishment to meet the organisations goal". Evidence exists where men and women experience executive leadership differently. This evidence suggests that men's careers tend to be linear while women's are characterised by interruptions and exits due to the phenomenon called the 'glass ceiling' (Ezzedeen & Ritchey 2009).

2.4 Barriers to women's career progression

The 'glass ceiling', is an invisible barrier that prevents individuals from advancing to senior managerial positions. Nagy (2005) confirms that "the term 'glass ceiling' was introduced in the 1970s to describe an invisible artificial barrier, formed as a result of attitudinal and organisational prejudices, which prevented women from attaining senior executive jobs. O' Connor (2001) whilst sharing the same sentiments as Nagy also postulates that there may be more women than men who would rather not be in management positions. This is seen as the need for satisfaction which women wish to achieve rather than merely a move to positions which do not satisfy their needs. Kargwell (2008) agrees with O' Connor by showing that female managers give priority to their families rather than their jobs. Married women who have children need to find the assistance of external sources. This gives rise to a priority given to families which plays a negative role in career progression thereby creating the perception that women are under-represented at senior management levels. Regmi, Naidoo and Regmi (2009), in their study of Nepalese immigrants in the United Kingdom, found that despite the implementation of numerous employment acts to protect employees, discrimination in the workplace still persisted in terms of gender and ethnicity. These results were further enhanced by Morgan and Ragins as cited by Regmi, Naidoo and Regmi (2009), that the 'glass ceiling' theory is created by barriers to promotion in factors such as gender, age, race, ethnicity, colour, culture and ideology. Studies done by the Chartered Institute of Personnel Development (2004 cited in Regmi, Naidoo & Regmi 2009) show that discrimination leads to decreased motivation, physical abilities and organisational performance.

According to Kreitner and Kinicki (2008:44), "women constituted 46 percent of the labour force in 1996 and were expected to represent 48 percent by 2010" but still faced the 'glass ceiling'. Ismail and Ibrahim (2008) found that family responsibility was the most significant barrier for women. Women find it difficult to cope with workloads and moreover, struggled to gain credibility and respect from supervisors and managers (Ismail & Ibrahim 2008). Competition with the opposite sex,

networking and establishing independence was not a barrier for women in this study. Ismail and Ibrahim (2008) also found that women resigned most often due to family responsibility. According to Powel and Graves (2003 as cited by Ismail & Ibrahim 2008), organisations in Malaysia are struggling to retain “their best and brightest women” all due to this invisible barrier. It is important to understand the barriers faced by women and identify strategies that can be used to overcome these barriers associated with balancing work and family life. Four types of barriers to women’s progression exist, namely, “family, societal, and organisational-related” and gender stereotype barriers (Ismail & Ibrahim 2008:54; Wood 2008:615).

2.4.1 Family-related barriers

Charles and Davies (2000 as cited by Ismail & Ibrahim 2008), make reference to the fact that traditionally people are led to believe that domestic responsibility is a women’s primary role and any other role taken by women detracts from their ability to perform this role, which causes conflict. According to Kargwell (2008), “a woman sacrifices her career for the sake of her children’s upbringing”. Nagy (2005) found that women reduced their chances of career advancement considerably when their timing to start a family and begin a career coincided, therefore they were at crossroads. Rosser, Maskel-Pretz and Hopkin and Miller in Ismail and Ibrahim (2008) found in their study that women scientists and engineers find it difficult to advance in their careers when it came to balancing family and career life. Ismail and Ibrahim’s (2008:54) study shows that women need to understand the barriers faced by family and career life and recommend women to “think early about the strategies they must devise to achieve their career and family goals.” Hewlett as cited by Ezzedeen and Ritchey (2009) found that women have to make changes that men do not have to make. The biological reality women face is that their career building years coincide with their fertility, thus making it difficult for them to start a family (Ezzedeen & Ritchey 2009).

2.4.2 Societal-related barriers

The belief, that women give less effort and priority to work demands, creates a

perception that women are less committed workers (Ismail & Ibrahim 2008). Ridgeway as cited in Ismail & Ibrahim (2008) add that this belief has created barriers for women who want to advance in the workplace. On the other hand Nagy (2005) is of the opinion that society does not reward and value women who rise in their careers as it goes against the traditional values i.e. to be a 'mother' or 'housewife', creating a negative perception in society towards women in male roles due to their masculine behaviour. Hungarian women face difficulty in achieving managerial positions in their socio-economic system because their role expectations are very traditional, thus them having to make choices between family and career (Nagy 2005). Furthermore, this societal barrier does not allow women to present their ideas and thus reduces their ability to make influential decisions in the workplace. D'Agostino and Levine (2010) argue that the societal barriers in the United States exist due to the glass ceiling.

In a Malaysian study conducted by Ismail and Ibrahim (2008) on barriers to progression, three statements were posed to women: society is still biased against women; there is not hope for talented women; and women get lonely as they become successful. The study showed that women were in agreement with the statements. As women break away from the norms of traditional womanhood, the weakening effects of societal pressure is felt. This results in situations where women are paid less than their male counterparts and results in the perception that women are subjected to gender-related discrimination (Ismail & Ibrahim 2008). D'Agostino and Levine (2010) argue that barriers do not pose a threat to women's progression but instead highlight that a sustainable, diverse and competent female workforce is essential to compete globally. Pesonen, Tienari and Vanhala (2009:332) make reference to the fact that female board members in Finland have digressive resources which become logically contextual when their "(re)production is considered".

2.4.3 Organisational-related barriers

Organisational culture is "the collection of traditions, values, policies, and attitudes that constitute a pervasive context for everything we do and think in an organisation" (Mullins 2005:891). Ismail and Ibrahim (2008:60) found that 72

percent of women in their study of a Malaysian multinational oil company agreed that the organisation was more male oriented and that women had to compete on men's terms. Almost fifty percent (49.9%) also agreed that women had to work harder and longer to achieve the level of progression men had. Ismail and Ibrahim (2008) argue that organisational-related barriers are the key catalyst in Malaysian work-life policies where formal policy is overridden by cultural norms. Oakley, Singh and Vinnicombe (as cited by Pesonen, et al 2009) emphasise that women face multiple barriers in organisations. The support women receive is less than that which their male counterparts receive. Women are put into positions to manage people instead of being put into positions to manage competitiveness and business orientation where important networks are kept out of their reach (Pesonen, et al 2009). Nagy (2005) found that companies preferred to employ single women than those married with other responsibilities. Nagy (2005) cited in her study of Gender Management in Hungary that after graduating, men start their careers in management more often than women do. In the same study she also cites that the proportion of male managers as opposed to female managers is an obstacle in organisations where senior management positions are strictly and exclusively reserved for men whereas women are only posted to middle and lower management positions. Rose and Hartmann and Blau et al (as cited by D'Agostino & Levine 2010), claim that gender equality can only be achieved when organisational policies, flexible work hours, pay during absenteeism, child care subsidies, home based employment, mentoring, networking and creating a better work environment are encouraged.

2.4.4 Gender stereotyping barriers

Wood (2008) notes the perception that women are more suited for the supportive, nurturing role of motherhood rather than the decision making role of management. This perspective of gender stereotyping explains why there are low numbers of women in Australia in senior or executive positions (Wood 2008:614). Lyness and Heilman as cited by Wood (2008:615) suggest that "gender bias against female managers in organisations is attributed to a perception of lack of person-job fit, which detrimentally affected performance evaluations, and in turn impacted on the career advancement outcomes of women managers." The attitude of such

organisations lack the acceptance of women in a management roles, and may be influenced by gender stereotyping perceptions which attributes to the creation of barriers for women in career advancement (Wood 2008). Heilman et al (as cited by Roehling, Roehling & Guy 2009), found that “successful performance may overcome the negative stigma of being an affirmative action appointment”.

Catalyst (2007) reports that gender stereotyping became a powerful but invisible threat to women in senior positions and the organisations they worked for. It is argued that stereotyping reflects the behaviour of individuals within an organisation but strangely research does not accurately represent reality but more so misrepresents it. Companies which fail to address stereotype bias will eventually lose female talent at senior management to competitors (Catalyst 2007).

Catalyst (2007) further found that the perception of women leadership was misleading. The study showed stereotyping amongst the participants and that stereotyping has in some way underestimated and underutilised women’s talent in organisations. Catalyst (2007) said “organisations need women’s talent in order to succeed”.

2.5 Women in management: career and family challenges

According to Katz and Kahn as cited by Ezzedeen & Ritchey (2009), career and family can either hinder or facilitate each other, given that work-family research has its conceptual roots in role conflict theory (Ezzedeen & Ritchey 2009). Byron, Ezzedeen and Swiercz, Dierdorff and Ellington, Greenhaus and Beutell, Netemeyer et al. as cited by Ezzedeen and Ritchey (2009) go on to say that the focus on conflict is caused by the participation in one role by virtue of participation in another. Women have the ability to derive greater benefits by engaging in multiple roles (Ezzedeen & Ritchey 2009).

Drucker always reflected in his work that gender diversity played an important role in organisations (Oyler & Pryor 2009). Furthermore, Drucker maintained that American adult females held more meaningful knowledge of career and financial

decisions, as they were forced to take control of the household when their spouses had gone to war (Oyler & Pryor 2009).

Ezzedeen and Ritchey (2009) make reference to the fact that women's stereotyping clashed with the notion that single mindedness and the display of traits like independence, confidence and assertiveness are a prerequisite for executive advancement. Here, women face a double disadvantage, when women display organisational traits, they are said to be not very family oriented and when family responsibility traits are displayed, they are said not to be organisationally oriented (Ezzedeen & Ritchey 2009).

People are forced to strategise their lives around the everyday challenges consisting of redesigning one's roles and relationships, manipulating resources and demands (Voydanoff 2005). Women enter into social networks, mentoring programmes and promotional opportunities to advance in their career (Brett & Stroh 2003). Women executives seldom rely on the organisation for support but cope with making discreet decisions regarding career and family by either leaving their career or delaying marriage and parenthood (Blair-Loy 2001). In the United States of America women executives have both challenges and opportunities concerning career and family; however, more emphasis is put on the challenges facing them rather than on their adaptability to the changing environment in response to family and career life (Ezzedeen & Ritchey 2009).

2.6 Gender inequality in management

According to the Commission on Gender Equality (CGE 1999), South African women constitute a major segment of the population but account for only a third of the labour force. At this point women are found to hold more stereotyped domesticated jobs. "Thus gender equality, within the workplace, according to the CGE, was underpinned by job segregation and perceived roles associated with gender group" (CGE 1999).

There were 189 governments that attended the Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing in 1995. It was confirmed at this conference that although

women progressed over the period 1985 to 1994, gender equality was a matter of fundamental human rights and a prerequisite for social justice (Fourth World Conference on Women 1995). A Declaration and Platform for Action was then signed to monitor the need for women to work together and in partnership with men towards the common goal of gender equity worldwide. Although the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action is a stand-alone document, it builds upon consensus and progress made at earlier UN conferences/summits, particularly the Conference on Women in Nairobi in 1985 which developed the Nairobi Forward-looking Strategies for the Advancement of Women (United Nations 1996).

The Platform for Action set out in Beijing in 1995 focuses on 12 critical areas to achieve gender equality and the empowerment of women:

- women and poverty
- education and training of women
- women and health
- violence against women
- women and armed conflict
- women and the economy
- women in power and decision-making
- institutional mechanisms for the advancement of women
- human rights of women
- women and the media
- women and the environment
- the girl child

The Platform for Action set the gender balance target for South Africa to be at least 50/50 by 2010.

According to Statistics South Africa (2010), there were 25 662 300 women in South Africa as shown in Table 2.1.

Table 2.1 Mid –year population estimates for South Africa by population group and gender, 2010

Adapted from Statistics South Africa, mid-year population estimates

| Population group | Male | | Female | | Total | |
|---------------------|------------|--------------------------------|------------|--------------------------------|------------|--------------------------------|
| | Number | Percentage of total population | Number | Percentage of total population | Number | Percentage of total population |
| African | 19 314 500 | 79.4 | 20 368 100 | 79.4 | 39 682 600 | 79.4 |
| Coloured | 2 124 900 | 8.7 | 2 299 200 | 9.0 | 4 424 100 | 8.8 |
| Indian/Asian | 646 600 | 2.7 | 653 300 | 2.5 | 1 299 900 | 2.6 |
| White | 2 243 000 | 9.2 | 2 341 700 | 9.1 | 4 584 700 | 9.2 |
| Total | 24 329 000 | 100.0 | 25 662 300 | 100.0 | 49 991 300 | 100.0 |

As can be seen the total population in South Africa as per the mid-year population was estimated at 49 991 300 of which 51 percent of the population was female.

Table 2.2 shows that out of 25 662 300 females in South Africa, 16 510 100 made up the labour force which represented 64 percent of the total female population in South Africa aged 15 to 64, which co-incidentally was the same percentage amongst the male population (Statistics South Africa 2010). This then shows that the target for 2010 set in the Platform for Action in Beijing in 1995 have been reached.

Table 2.2 Mid-year population estimates by population group, age and gender, 2010

Adapted from Statistics South Africa, mid-year population estimates

| Age | South Africa | | |
|--------------|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------|
| | Male | Female | Total |
| 0-4 | 2 579 300 | 2 541 400 | 5 120 700 |
| 5-9 | 2 608 700 | 2 572 500 | 5 181 200 |
| 10-14 | 2 619 300 | 2 583 000 | 5 202 300 |
| 15-19 | 2 627 800 | 2 598 400 | 5 226 200 |
| 20-24 | 2 521 400 | 2 497 100 | 5 018 500 |
| 25-29 | 2 180 300 | 2 338 500 | 4 518 800 |
| 30-34 | 1 957 200 | 2 078 500 | 4 035 700 |
| 35-39 | 1 660 100 | 1 805 100 | 3 465 200 |
| 40-44 | 1 205 100 | 1 319 100 | 2 524 200 |
| 45-49 | 1 052 700 | 1 177 900 | 2 230 600 |
| 50-54 | 941 700 | 1 077 400 | 2 019 100 |
| 55-59 | 764 700 | 889 000 | 1 653 700 |
| 60-64 | 590 600 | 729 100 | 1 319 700 |
| 65-69 | 432 900 | 552 300 | 985 200 |
| 70-74 | 288 900 | 406 000 | 694 900 |
| 75-79 | 173 100 | 268 300 | 441 400 |
| 80+ | 125 200 | 228 700 | 353 900 |
| Total | 24 329 000 | 25 662 300 | 49 991 300 |

According to The Mastercard Worldwide Index of Women's Advancement (MWIWA) 2010 the index rose from 87.96 percent in 2009 to 93.50 percent in 2010 as shown in Table 2.3. It can be seen from Table 2.3 that the highest level reached was 96.31 in 2007.

Table 2.3 Gender Parity Index

Adapted from The Mastercard Worldwide Index of Women’s Advancement 2010

| South African Gender Parity Indexes (Female/Male) | | | | |
|---|-------|-------|-------|-------|
| | 2007 | 2008 | 2009 | 2010 |
| Labour Force Participation Rate | 78.07 | 75.79 | 75.45 | 75.85 |
| Incidence of Management Positions | 72.71 | 65.31 | 64.27 | 75.04 |
| MWIWA Index | 96.31 | 93.28 | 87.96 | 93.50 |

According to The Mastercard Worldwide Index of Women’s Advancement 2010, women have been advancing in the past except for the drop in 2009, which recovered in 2010. The South African labour force participation rate rose marginally from 75.45 percent in 2009 to 75.85 percent in 2010, which means those women and men between the ages of 15 and 65 formed part of the labour force in South Africa. The incidence of management positions rose from 64.27 percent in 2009 to 75.04 percent in 2010, which means that both female and male positions in management increased by almost 11 percent from 2009 to 2010.

South Africa: Labour Force Participation Rate

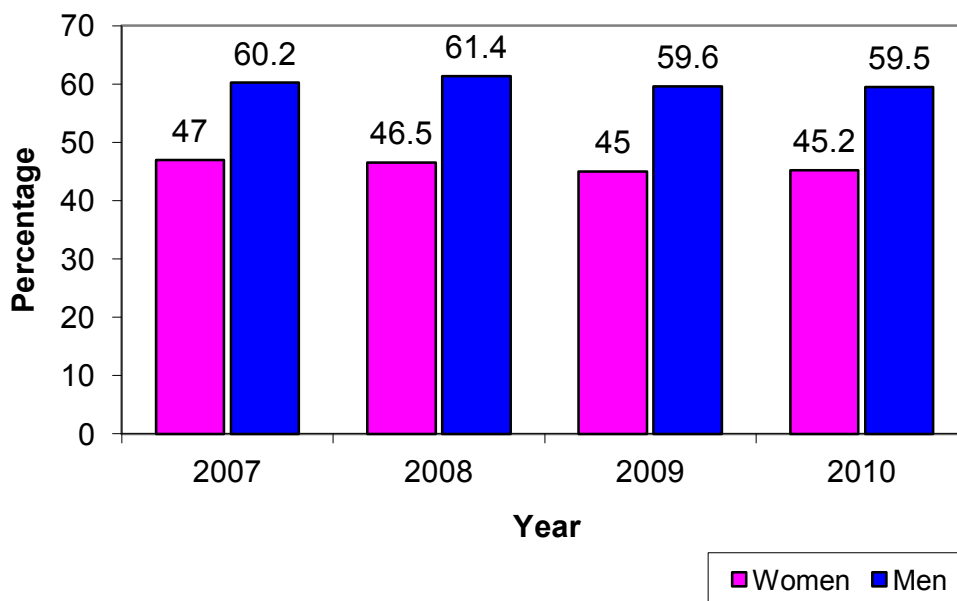


Figure 2.1 Labour Force Participation Survey

Adapted from The Mastercard Worldwide Index of Women’s Advancement 2010

As can be seen in Table 2.3 the Labour Force Participation rate rose marginally from 75.45 percent in 2009 to 75.85 percent in 2010. Table 2.3 shows that although the labour force participation is 75.85 percent, 45.2 percent of the female population made up the labour force in South Africa in 2010. In comparison to the male population, the labour force made up 59.5 percent. This reflects a slight decline in the male labour force whilst females have a slight incline. The data shown in Figure 2.1 reveals that men still hold a higher number of jobs than women.

The Mastercard Worldwide Index of Women’s Advancement 2010 released in August of 2010 shows that the incidence of management positions rose from 65.31 percent in 2008 to 75.04 percent in 2010 (Table 2.3). This suggests that women advancement seems to be growing on a yearly basis.

South Africa: Incidence of Management Positions

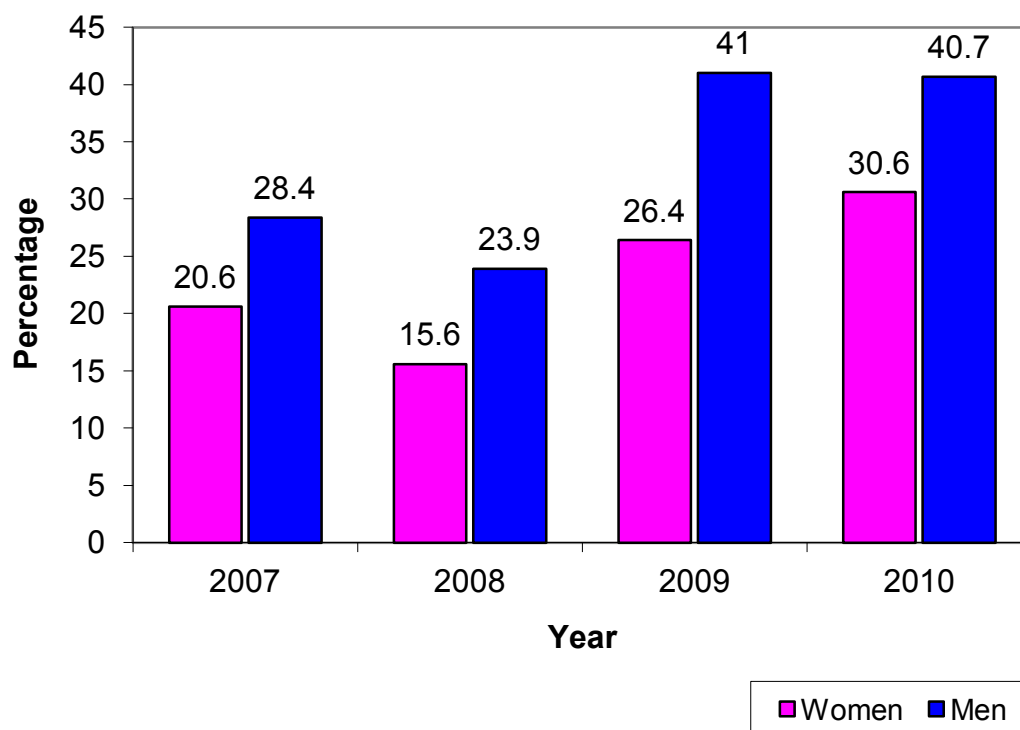


Figure 2.2 Incidence of Management Positions

Adapted from The Mastercard Worldwide Index of Women’s Advancement 2010

Figure 2.2 shows that the number of women in management positions has grown in South Africa from 2008 to 2010 from 15.6 percent to 30.6 percent respectively. This indicates that women are increasing in high positions year on year. However, Enslin–Payne argues in the Business Report that “women continue to be disadvantaged in the workplace through holding fewer top jobs than men” (Enslin–Payne 2010). This contrasts with what is being published by the Mastercard Worldwide Index of Women’s Advancement 2010.

Mathur-Helm (2005) found that organisational researchers were paying more attention to women in management worldwide by reporting the changes of top and senior management positions. Her study showed that the awareness created by these researchers merely reflected on women’s intellectual and professional contributions. The study reveals that women worldwide are still in secondary positions, being underutilised in the market and were considered a waste of resources. The Catalyst as cited by Mathur-Helm (2005), reports that “within the Fortune 500 companies, only one in eight corporate officers were women” and very few women actually broke the ‘glass ceiling’. According to Wilson as cited by Mathur-Helm (2005), in the United Kingdom, of the 75 percent of female employees in the services sector, only 24 percent held management positions and 9.9 percent directorships. Cooke Fang as cited in Mathur-Helm (2005) reports that in China, women make up 47 percent of the labour force and very few move up to management. When women reach management positions, promotions took place at a slow pace, caused by the laws and policies that prevent women from “setting foot into certain domains of the male’s world” (Mathur-Helm 2005).

According to Mathur-Helm (2005), in South Africa, it is only recently that attention has been paid to problems faced by women in the workplace and in management positions. Various initiatives and documents illustrate this point, such as the National Women’s Empowerment Policy, the Commission on Gender Equality, the Women’s Charter for Effective Equality (1993), and the Current Constitution of the Republic of South Africa (1993), among others. Women in the lowest ranks of organisations find it difficult to rise to senior and executive management levels, and are not benefiting from government policies and legislation towards career advancement (Mathur-Helm, 2005).

2.7 What is empowerment and who benefits?

According to Dainty, Bryman and Price (2002), empowerment yet poorly defined has been a subject of immense debate. The term rarely defined is commonly used as an idiom. The reason for this lack in definition is because it is mostly used in management programmes like Business Process Re-engineering (BPR) and Total Quality Management (TQM) (Dainty et al 2002). Empowerment has a wide variety of uses from deceptive empowerment where a high level of involvement and delegation is prominent to sham empowerment where something is not what it appears to be (Greasley, Bryman, Dainty, Naismith & Soetanto 2008). The term is more to be used in decision-making or giving power of authority over job content and job context. However the term “power” seems to be most common throughout the definition of empowerment though some would argue that empowerment should be used to equalise and promote trust and collaboration (Greasley et al 2008).

The term empowerment is used to denote the enhanced involvement of employees in organisational processes and decision-making. Though some proponents of empowerment see it as a manifestation of democratic ideals, most support the idea as a means of promoting employee well-being, and more especially as a way of harnessing the knowledge and abilities of employees as a whole to promote performance (Greasley et al 2008).

Empowerment requires a certain degree of characteristics within an organisation. Employees need to know and understand the vision and goals of senior management where openness and teamwork are of greater need (Quinn & Spreitzer, 1997).

Empowerment has evolved into two perspectives:

- Structural empowerment: this refers to the sharing of power related to the organisational policies and practices and the latitude granted to employees to make decisions (Greasley et al 2008).
- Psychological empowerment: based on employees perceptions and beliefs

of power, competence, control and self-efficacy (Greasley et al 2008).

- The psychological state of employees as outlined by Lee and Koh (2001:686) has four dimensions:
 - Meaningfulness – the value of the task at hand.
 - Competence – the belief an individual has over their capabilities to skillfully perform tasks.
 - Self-determination – choices made towards behavioural patterns.
 - Impact – degree to which individuals have influence over the outcome.

The benefits of empowerment can be broadly divided into two areas: namely benefits to the organisation and benefits to the employee. Most research in the area of empowerment is based on the organisations benefits where the organisation attempts to enhance empowered working (Cunningham et al 1996). The empowerment of managers in an organisation is considered ideal for the improvement of managing work organisation and job performance and not necessarily for the benefit of the employees (Greasley 2008). Whilst global competition and the change in business environment have provoked organisations to increase efficiency and performance, it can be argued that organisations have gained tremendously in various economic performance areas (Applebaum, Hebert & Leroux 1999). This being so, Argyris (1998) argues that empowerment remains a myth rather than a reality.

Whilst empowerment drives the economic performance of organisations, there are also benefits for employees. Empowerment has brought about change in employees behaviour patterns where empowered employees reduce conflict and ambiguity by placing controls within their own environment (Nykodym, Simonetti, Warren & Welling 1994). Spreitzer et al and Koberg et al as cited by Greasley (2008) suggest that employees who are empowered become motivated and satisfied whilst being loyal to the organisation. This would greatly impact employee performance and effectiveness.

Whilst there are accounts of the supposed advantages of empowerment to both individual and team performance, it still remains a poorly defined concept, which is frequently used in a rhetorical sense (Mondros & Wilson 1994).

2.8 Summary

For empowerment to be successful, organisations need to facilitate teamwork (Greasley 2008). However, to begin this process an understanding of empowerment is necessary (Greasley 2008).

Attitudinal and organisational prejudices create the 'glass ceiling' which prevents individuals from advancing to senior levels of management, in particular women (Nagy 2005). From the 'glass ceiling' emerged other such barriers that women were unable to penetrate (Ismail & Ibrahim 2008).

With the emergence of democracy in South Africa in 1994 and the re-alignment of the Constitution in 1996, the Gender Policy Framework was passed to provide guidelines to empowering women in the workplace amongst other issues relating to gender equality (Mathur-Helm 2005). The introduction of affirmative action and equal opportunities legislation did little to assist women in acquiring senior management positions (Mathur-Helm 2005).

Women were found to have work-life balance issues and were faced with organisations misunderstanding of legislation policies and practices and thus women were being under-utilised in the labour market (Straub 2007). Although the percentage of males (59.5%) in the labour force was higher than females (45.2%) (The Mastercard Worldwide Index of Women's Advancement 2010), women are making every effort to increase the numbers in management.

The review of literature in this chapter gave a wide view as to the barriers that face women in the world and in South Africa. It also gave a view of what the South African government and organisations are doing to empower women in the workplace. The literature provides a solid foundation for the comparisons of

results from other studies to the results of this study. The next chapter looks at the methodology used for this study.

CHAPTER THREE

Research Methodology

3.1 Introduction

The literature review in chapter two forms the basis of the empirical study to determine the barriers affecting the empowerment of women in organisations in the Greater Durban Area. It also explains the impact of organisational practices towards career progression for women. This chapter fully describes the research methodology used to carry out this study.

According to Bryman and Bell (2007), a research method is a technique for collecting data using a specific instrument.

This chapter discusses the aim and objectives of the study and a motivation for using the quantitative method for the research.

3.2 Statement of the research problem

Although an increasing number of women enter the workforce each year, the majority number of senior management positions in the world are held by males rather than females, limiting women's access to leadership positions (Weyer 2007). Despite numerous employment acts being implemented to overcome unequal gender and ethnic treatment in the workplace, racial discrimination is still a major barrier which affects employee motivation and commitment (Regmi, Naidoo and Regmi 2009). After more than a decade since the new Employment Equity Act in South Africa, companies who were required to hire and promote women, still have senior management and company boards dominated by White males (The Economist 7th October 2010). Nelson Mandela said in his opening speech after being released from Robben Island "for generations Black women have been the most oppressed group in our society" (Romany 1996: 857). South African Black women make up 86% of the domestic workers where there is no statutory minimum wages (Romany 1996), although since this minimum wages for

domestic workers has been legislated (department of labour 2011).

Based on the background above, the research questions for this study are:

- Are women being empowered in the workplace?
- What are the factors affecting women in progressing to management levels?
- What and how are the barriers faced by women impinging on the progression of women to higher positions in companies?
- Does the 'glass ceiling' created by male domination still exist?
- Do women who are empowered reach senior management?
- Do women who reach senior management create their own 'glass ceiling'?
- What are organisations doing to influence the career progression of women to executive positions?

3.3 Aim and Objectives of the Study

3.3.1 Aim

The aim of the study is to determine whether women in South Africa are being empowered in the workplace and the impact of organisational practices on their progression.

3.3.2 Objectives

The objectives of this study are to:

- To ascertain individual's views on women's career advancement

- To investigate barriers faced by women in achieving higher positions in companies
- To examine the impact of organisational practices in promoting women to executive positions

Based on the research problem, aim and objectives, the method of how this study was conducted can now be discussed. The discussion starts with the sampling method and sample size followed by the description of the data collection strategies used.

3.4 Sampling

Due to the large population in South Africa and the time constraints, in addition to costs, accuracy of results, speed of data collection and the availability of the population elements, a sample of the population is used. Conclusions can be drawn of an entire population by selecting some elements of a population as a sample (Cooper & Schindler 2001). Sampling is the technique of selecting a part of the population to determine the characteristics of the population (Coldwell & Herbst 2004). Sampling is a subset of the population selected for investigation (Bryman & Bell 2007).

Two types of sampling exist in research, probability and non-probability sampling. Probability sampling is a sample that has been selected using random selection “so that each unit in the population has a known chance of being selected” (Bryman & Bell 2007: 182) and non-probability sampling is the sample that has been selected from the population by the researcher, where it is difficult to assess whether the sample is representative of the population (Coldwell & Herbst 2004).

The two types of sampling stated above have different sampling techniques. Depending on the study, time and resources available, different techniques of probability sampling and non-probability sampling can be used (Sekaran 2003). The common techniques used for probability sampling are (Coldwell & Herbst 2004): Simple random sampling, Systematic random sampling, stratified sampling

and cluster sampling

The common techniques used for non-probability sampling are (Coldwell & Herbst 2004): convenience sampling, purposive sampling and snowball or chain sampling

For the purpose of this study, a quantitative research design has been selected. The quantitative research design was selected so that real data could be collected from participants and analysed (Bryman & Bell 2007). Convenience sampling has been selected because the information which needs to be collected is from elements in the population who are available to provide it i.e. non-probability sample (Coldwell & Herbst 2004). Snowball sampling has also been selected where member of the population who are selected in the convenience sampling know other members of the population who would be good examples for the study (Coldwell & Herbst 2004). In this study, the researcher selected member from the Graduate School of Business (UKZN), colleagues at work, relatives, and members at St. Augustines Hospital who lived in the Greater Durban area. The researcher requested the members selected identify other members who would be good candidates for the study. Non-probability sampling is restricted where the selection of members cannot be determined and can be restricted to the generalisability of the population (Sekaran 2003). The advantage of this type of sample is that every participant will be able to answer the research questions and the researcher can statistically achieve the objectives related to the characteristics of the population based on data collected (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill 2003).

3.5 Sample Size

Research is a cross-sectional design of collecting data through the use of a questionnaire or a structured interview (Bryman & Bell 2007). Cooper and Schindler (2001), argue that research design is a plan and structured investigation into obtaining answers to research questions. Coldwell and Herbst (2004) ask researchers to consider the following when deciding on a sample size:

- The population relating to the study is finite or infinite;
- The precise estimate the researcher wants to achieve;
- The confidence level that is required for the study;

- The number of variables required for the study to be examined;
- The diversity of the population.

The sample size is dependent on the sampling design. Even if a large sample size is drawn, an inappropriate sample design would not yield the correct results to be generalised to the population (Sekaran 2003). Saunders et al (2003) argued that based on probability, the larger the sample size the lower the margin of error. A sample size should be determined after examining the respondents profile (Hair, Money, Samouel & Page 2007).

The population for this study consisted of employees at different levels of management. Mastercard Worldwide Index of Women's Advancement (2010) showed that the female labour force was 16 510 100 and that 30.6 percent were in management positions. However, the survey did not show how many females by ethnic group, nor what percentages are in the Greater Durban Area.

In terms of accuracy, the sample size could produce a degree of bias where the sample elements underestimate or overestimate the population values (Cooper & Schindler 2001). Efficiency can be attained by using a reduced sample size if a level of precision is given (Sekaran 2003).

The estimated population in the Greater Durban Area was 3 million of which 68% of the population was Black followed by Asians (20%), White (9%) and Coloured (3%) (About Durban 2011). According to The Survey System (2007) a sample size (n) of 384 is required in this study for a population (N) of 3 million at the 95 percent confidence level and 5 percent margin of error. This survey attracted 129 respondents of whom only 121 respondents provided valid responses.

3.6 Data Collection Strategies

Data can be collected using several techniques, in different settings, and from different sources (Sekaran 2003). The collection of data is largely determined by the approach required by the study (Cooper & Schindler 2001). The reliability and accuracy of data is dependent on the selection of the data collection method (Hair

et al 2007). Quantitative data is captured through the use of numeric means while qualitative data is captured in narrative form (Hair et al 2007). The quantitative approach is used for a defined research problem whilst the qualitative approach is used to identify a research problem to assist in formulating and testing conceptual frameworks (Hair et al 2007).

The researcher used an electronic self-completion questionnaire for the purpose of the study. The questionnaire was accompanied by a covering letter which explained the purpose of the study before a respondent moved on to the questionnaire. The advantage of using this approach is that it can be completed anonymously, is inexpensive, easy to compare and analyse, can be administered to many people and lots of data can be obtained (Coldwell & Herbst 2004).

3.7 Data Collection Instrument

Saunders et al (2003) raised the importance of data collection wherein the researcher develops a theory and hypothesis, and then designs a research strategy or the data collected develops theory as a result of the data analysis. There are three methods of collecting data i.e. interviewing, using a self-completion questionnaire and observation of people or market phenomena (Cooper & Schindler 2001).

Cooper & Schindler (2001) define interview as a two-way conversation between the interviewer and the respondent to gather information. Interviews can be structured or unstructured conducted face to face or by telephone (Sekaran 2003). A self-completion questionnaire is a method of collecting data where the respondents answer the same set of predetermined questions without the interviewer being present (Saunders et al 2003). According to White (2000) a self-completion questionnaire is a structured interview where the interviewer is absent.

Interview and self-completion questionnaires require the researcher to interact with the respondents using a structured questionnaire, however another technique where questionnaires are not required to gather data is known as observation (Sekaran 2003). Observation is a technique in which the researcher formulates

rules to observe and record behaviour patterns of the participants over a period of time (Bryman & Bell 2007). Observational data can be narrative or numerical in nature (Hair 2007).

It is clear that the advantage of interviews may ensure that the responses are clearly understood and clarify any doubt the researcher may encounter, however questionnaires are a more efficient data collection mechanism where time and cost is a limitation (Sekaran 2003).

An electronic self-administered questionnaire was used to quantify the data of this study. The quantitative method was chosen for their historical origins in science referred to as the “scientific method” based on the collection of facts and observable phenomena (White 2000).

3.8 The Questionnaire as a Research Tool

White (2000) defined a questionnaire as a series of structured questions providing a number of alternative answers from which respondents are able to choose. A questionnaire is a preformulated set of questions with closed defined alternatives within which respondents record their answers (Sekaran 2003). Saunders et al (2003) defined a questionnaire as a data collection technique in which respondents are asked to answer the same set of predetermined questions.

With the advent of computers and the internet, questionnaires are easily designed using sophisticated software that will enable the researcher to not only collect or input but also analyse data (Sekaran 2003).

An electronic questionnaire was used for this study. The electronic questionnaire was chosen due to the great advantage it possesses i.e. easy to administer, wide reach, fast and inexpensive, and respondents can take more time to respond. The disadvantages of using an electronic questionnaire are that respondents may not be computer literate, have access to a computer or not be willing to respond.

3.9 Questionnaire Design

The development of questions is one of the critical tasks in questionnaire design. The questions must be evaluated to determine if the answers will provide information to make a decision, solve a problem or test a theory (Hair et al 2007). The questionnaire for this study consisted of 13 questions including age, race, gender and employment status, which are the dependent variables in the questionnaire (Appendix 2). To ensure confidentiality and anonymity of respondents, social questions were not asked. The questionnaire was designed in QuestionPro. Emails were sent with a covering letter informing the participants about the nature and reason for conducting this survey.

3.10 Statistical Analysis of the Questionnaire

Questionnaires generate data that is quantified, categorised and subjected to statistical analysis in a systematic and orderly fashion (White 2000). The next three sections will describe the steps taken to ensure that the questionnaire met all the criteria required for the study.

3.10.1 Questionnaire Reliability

According to Hair et al (2007), reliability is a measurement of consistency. A questionnaire will in most cases produce numerical results and therefore the consistency of the results depends upon the reliability of the questionnaire to ensure that the results can be trusted.

To test the reliability of a questionnaire, Saunders et al (2003) make reference to three approaches. Test re-test estimates the reliability by using the collected data from the same questionnaire under similar or equivalent conditions (Saunders et al 2003). To test the internal consistency of a questionnaire, the split-half technique is used. If the correlation of the two halves correlate and has a high result, it is said to have high reliability in the internal consistency sense (Cooper & Schindler 2001). Alternate forms refer to long questionnaires where two similar and/or

related questions are asked but different alternatives are provided. These are known as check questions (Hair et al 2007).

3.10.2 Questionnaire Replication

Cooper & Schindler (2001) define replication as a study which can be repeated with different subjects and under different conditions. Not all questionnaires can be replicable. For a study to be replicated, Bryman & Bell (2007) point out that the researcher must spell out the procedures of the research in great detail.

3.10.3 Questionnaire Validity

Most authors refer to validity as the most important criterion of any research. Validity refers to whether a questionnaire measures the objectives of the research (Hair et al 2007). Hair et al (2007) state three approaches to assess the validity of which any one can be used: content validity, construct validity and criterion-related validity.

Content validity refers to the coverage of the investigative questions guiding the study (Cooper & Schindler 2001), whereas Sekaran (2003) refers to validity as an adequate and representative set of items that tap the concept. On the other hand Hair et al (2007) state that validity involves consulting with a small group of typically chosen respondents to make judgements on the questionnaire. For this study an online questionnaire was used with a limited number of questions.

Construct validity refers to what the questionnaire is measuring (Hair et al 2007). Cooper & Schindler (2001) state, that when evaluating a questionnaire using construct validity, both theory and the instrument must be considered. There are two ways of testing construct validity i.e. convergent and discriminant validity (Sekaran 2003). Convergent validity is established when two operations have the same result and discriminant validity is established when two variables are predicted to be uncorrelated based on theory (Sekaran 2003). In this study the questionnaire was designed to determine whether women were being empowered and the impact of organisational practices to promote women.

Criterion validity is used to reflect the measure for prediction and estimation of the existence of current behaviour or condition namely predictive and concurrent validity (Cooper & Schindler 2001). Predictive validity indicates the ability of the questionnaire to differentiate among individuals using future criterion (Sekaran 2003). In concurrent validity some pre-specified association must be established between the scores of the questionnaire and the dependent variable dependent on theory (Hair et al 2007). Since the researchers' environment is predominantly female, the questionnaire was designed to expect mixed results.

3.11 Administration of the Questionnaire

Hair et al (2007) list the five major ways of collecting data using a questionnaire: through the postal services, via fax, personally, telephonically and electronically via email or hosted website

Emails were sent to colleagues of the researcher and students at the Graduate School of Business who worked in the Greater Durban Area when the questionnaire became available online. Colleagues and students were also asked to pass on the email to others within their organisation so that the sample required for the research could be attained.

3.12 Data Analysis Method

Data was captured using QuestionPro which is a system that has a built-in data analysing facility similar to that of SPSS. The data for this survey was exported to Microsoft Word, Microsoft Excel and SPSS. SPSS is software designed to interpret data from a survey. The researcher used SPSS to analyse the data for this study.

3.13 Summary

This chapter comprises a description of the methodology used in this study. The problem statement is first described followed by the aims and objectives, sampling,

the data collection instrument and the methodology in administering the electronic questionnaire.

In the next chapter the researcher presents the analysis of the data collected from the electronic questionnaires completed by the respondents.

CHAPTER FOUR

Results

4.1 Introduction

Chapter three set out the design and methodology for this study. A questionnaire was administered to obtain the results of the data which are presented in this chapter. An invitation to take the survey was mailed to 180 people, of whom 121 participated. The survey was administered using QuestionPro allowing users to submit their responses securely online.

4.2 Biographical characteristics of respondents

The biographical characteristics shown in Table 4.1 are presented on age, race, gender, and employment status. The majority of the respondents were aged between 35 and 44 (38.8%) followed by 25-34 (28.1%). Forty five years and older only, made up one third of the respondents (33.1%).

The majority of participants were Indians (43.8%) followed by White (26.4%) participants. Black and Coloured participants responded the least (28.1%). The results of the survey show that 36.4% of the respondents were males and 63.6% were females.

The employment status of the participants in this study was significant as it revolved around women and their empowerment in the workplace. Middle management (33.9%) and non-management (27.3%) were the highest number to respond followed by junior management (17.4%). Only 14% of senior management responded.

Table 4.1 Biographical characteristics of respondents

| n=121 | Characteristic | Percentage |
|---------------------------|--------------------------|-------------------|
| Age: | 25 – 34 | 28.1 |
| | 35 – 44 | 38.8 |
| | 45 – 54 | 20.7 |
| | 55 > | 12.4 |
| Gender: | Male | 36.4 |
| | Female | 63.6 |
| Race: | Black | 19.0 |
| | Coloured | 9.1 |
| | Indian | 45.5 |
| | White | 26.4 |
| Employment Status: | Senior Management | 14.0 |
| | Middle Management | 33.9 |
| | Junior Management | 17.4 |
| | Non-Management | 27.3 |
| | Other | 7.4 |

4.3 Objective 1: Ascertain individuals view on women’s career advancement

Since 1996, South African women have strived towards becoming empowered within different industries. The results that follow show the views of respondents towards women’s career advancement in management.

4.3.1 Reasons why women are unable to progress in their careers

Figure 4.1 shows that over one third of the respondents felt that women were not accepted in a managerial role (47.2%). This was followed by 25.6% who felt that women should concentrate on the role of motherhood. Fourteen percent (14%) of respondents felt that women’s career progression was hampered because they did not fit in a managerial role and 13.2% felt that women were more suited to a

supportive role.

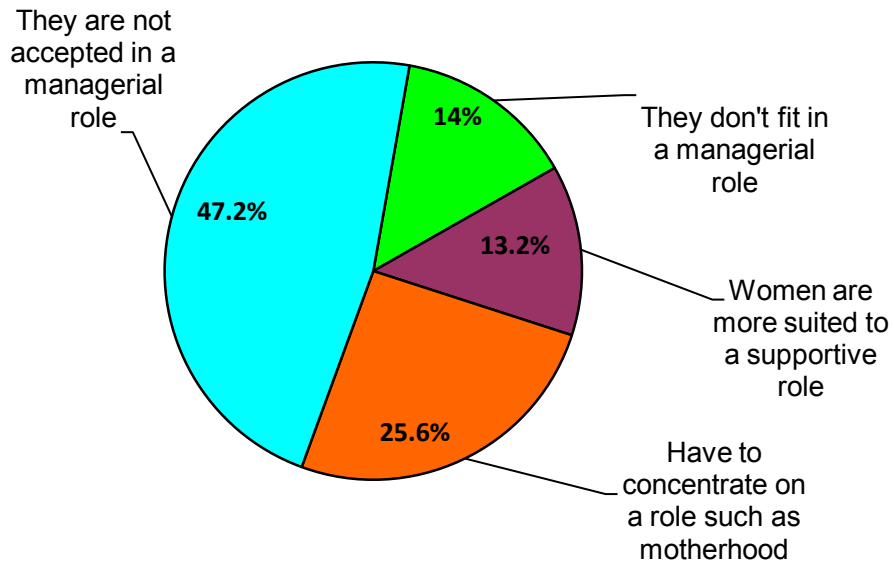


Figure 4.1 Reasons for non-progression of women

The mode is the value that appears most often in a distribution. The mode also represents the highest peak in the distribution graph (Hair et al, 2006). The mode can be in used with all types of variables (Bryman & Bell, 2007).

According to Hair et al (2006) the mean is the average value within a distribution whereas median is the middle value of the distribution when it is set in an ascending or descending order.

4.3.2 Reporting to a woman manager

There were 121 participants who responded to question 6. Figure 4.2 shows that 77% of the respondents would choose to report to a woman manager (57% strongly disagree, 20% disagree). Over one fifth (23%) of the respondents chose not to report to a women manager.

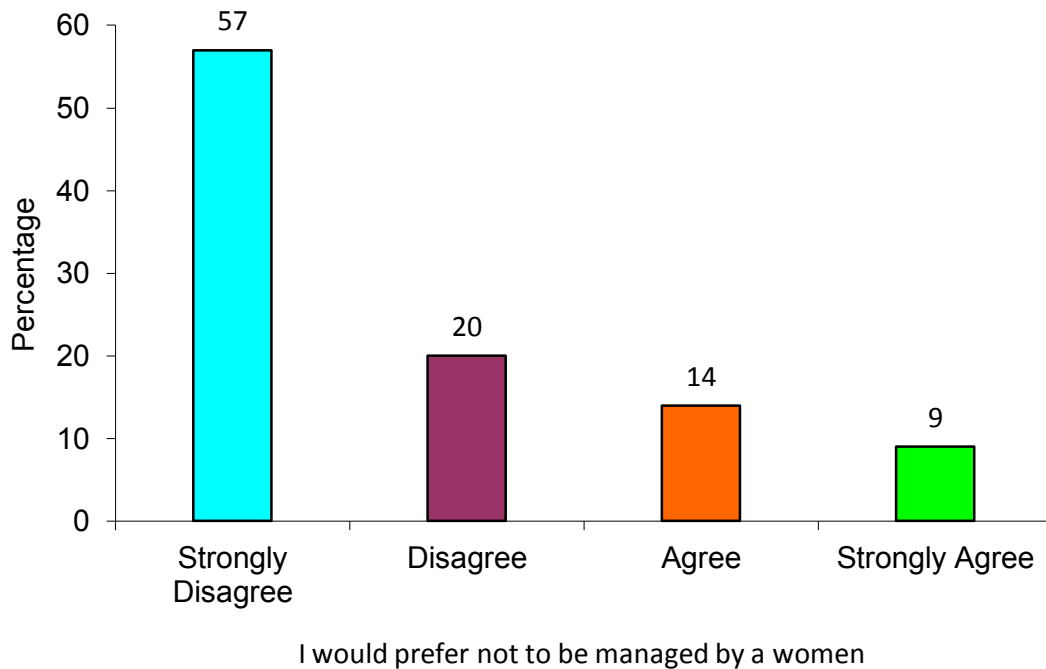


Figure 4.2 Choice of reporting to a woman manager

Table 4.2 Central tendency result of reporting to a women manager

| | |
|----------------|------|
| N | 121 |
| Mean | 1.73 |
| Median | 1.00 |
| Std. Deviation | .992 |
| Variance | .983 |

The median for this distribution is 1.00 which indicates that the perception of respondents is strongly disagree (Table 4.2). The mean ($\bar{x} = 1.73$) which indicates that although the perception of respondents is Strongly Disagree, it is evident that the average is leaning towards Disagree.

4.3.3 Influence of women managers in the workplace

Figure 4.3 shows that eighty one percent (81%) of the respondents felt that women are influential in the workplace (52% strongly disagree, 29% disagree). The distribution skews to the left showing that the respondents totally agreed that women are influential in the workplace. The reason for the leftward shift is that the question was asked in the negative.

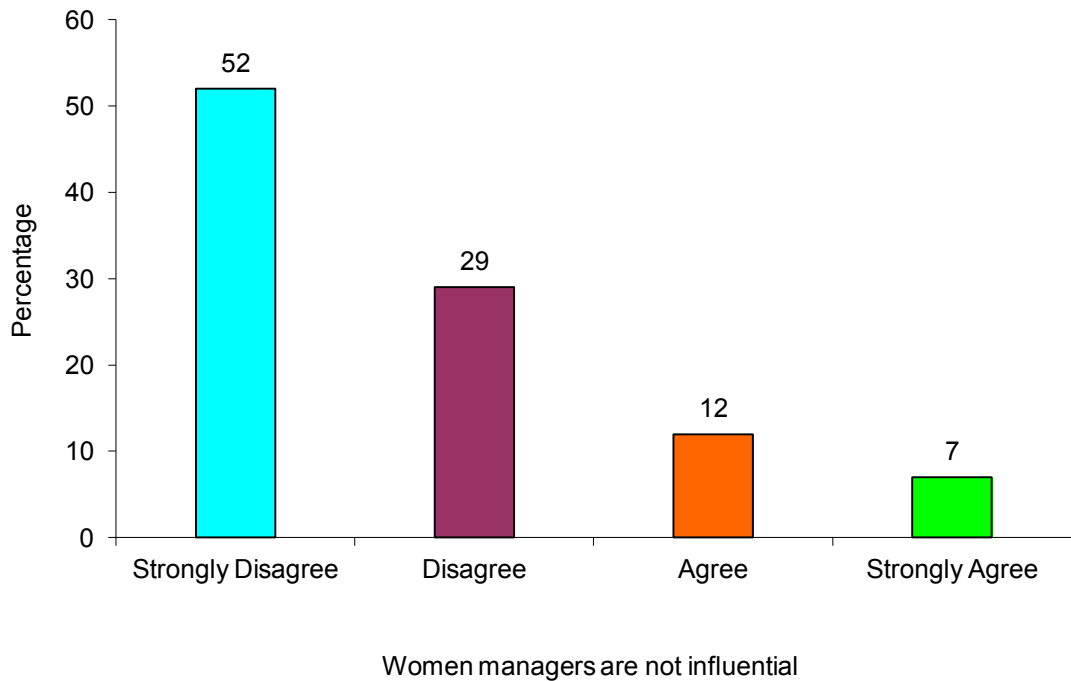


Figure 4.3 Women managers not influential

The results shown in Table 4.3 show that the median is 1.00 for this question, which indicates Strongly Disagree. The mean is 1.74 which demonstrates that the respondents were leaning towards Disagreement

Table 4.3 Central tendency result for influential women managers

| | |
|----------------|------|
| n | 121 |
| Mean | 1.74 |
| Median | 1.00 |
| Std. Deviation | .918 |
| Variance | .842 |

4.3.4 Barriers to career advancement for women

The respondents agreed (39.3 %) that there are no barriers to progression for women, followed by 26.2% who strongly agreed. Collectively, 34.5% of the respondents agreed that barriers for progression for women exist. Figure 4.4 show that the distribution skews to the left where respondents disagreed with the statement that there are barriers to career progression for women (65.5%).

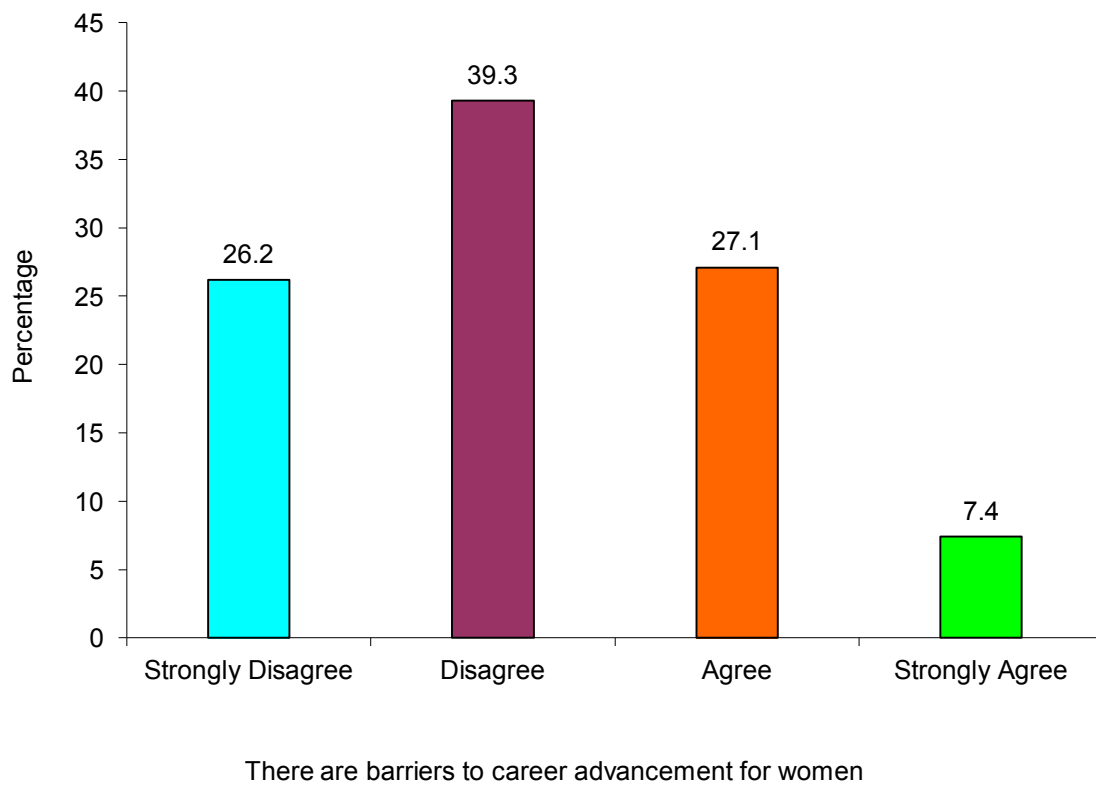


Figure 4.4 Barriers to career progression for women

Table 4.4 Central tendency result for barriers to progression

| | |
|----------------|------|
| n | 121 |
| Mean | 2.17 |
| Median | 2.00 |
| Std. Deviation | .898 |
| Variance | .806 |

The median is 2.00 and the mean is 2.17 which indicates Disagreement. It is evident that as the median and mean being so close, the respondents agree that there are no barriers to progression for women (Table 4.4).

4.3.5 Barriers to progression faced by women

Although only 39.3% of the respondents agreed that there are no barriers to progression for women (Figure 4.4), Figure 4.5 illustrates the barriers that exist. Out of the 121 respondents, just over a quarter of the respondents held that all the barriers (26.4%) were a major barrier followed by societal-related (19.8%) barriers for womens progression in the workplace. Family-related (18.2%), gender stereotyping (17.4%) and organisational-related (15.7%) barriers were seen to be a minor barrier for the respondents. Some respondents believed that there are other (2.5%) barriers faced by women in their organisations.

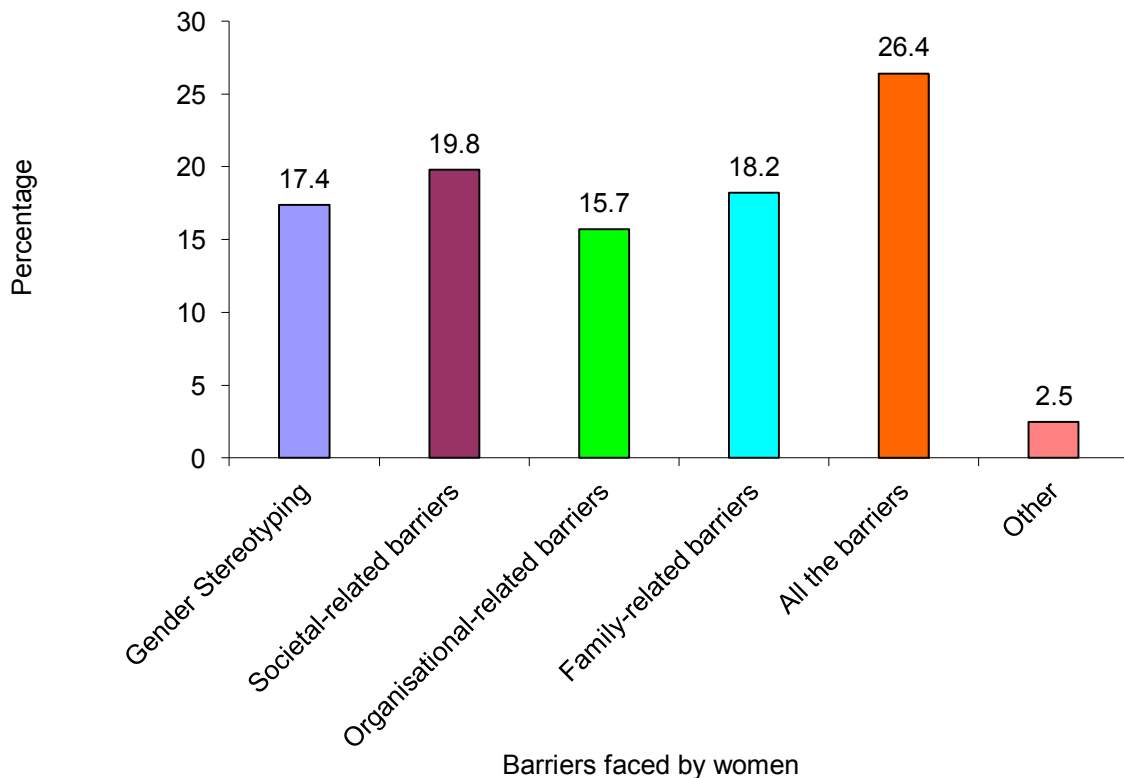


Figure 4.5 Barriers faced by women

4.3.6 Women need to be given equal opportunities

Figure 4.6 shows that 60.7% of the respondents strongly agree that women should be given equal opportunities for career progression. This was followed by 33.5% who also agree to the statement. Only 5.8% of the respondents disagree with the statement. The distribution skews to the right showing that the majority of the respondents agreed that women should be given equal opportunities for progression.

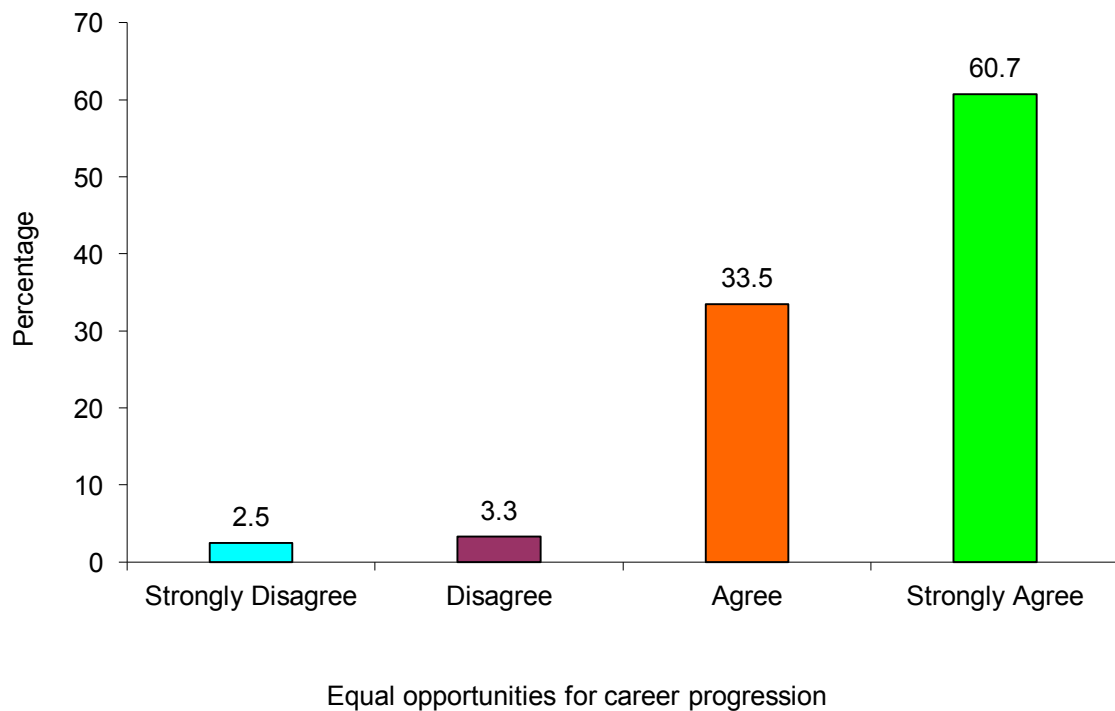


Figure 4.6 Equal opportunities for career progression

Table 4.5 shows the values of central tendency for this question. The variance (0.467) is low which indicates that the respondents were very close to the mean (Table 4.5). The median of 4.00 indicates strongly agree and the mean 3.54 indicates that the respondents were leaning towards Strongly Agree.

Table 4.5 Central tendency for equal opportunities

| | |
|----------------|------|
| N | 121 |
| Mean | 3.54 |
| Median | 4.00 |
| Std. Deviation | .684 |
| Variance | .467 |

4.3.7 Outcome of Objective 1

The view of respondents was that women were not accepted in a managerial role followed by the role of motherhood; do not fit in a managerial role and more suited to a supportive role. The majority of the respondents preferred to report to a female manager and felt that women managers were influential in the workplace. Although respondents initially felt that there were no barriers faced by women for their advancement, when given the choice, they felt that the major barrier was societal-related barriers. Respondents also felt that women should be given equal opportunities for career progression.

4.4 Objective 2: Gender and race impact on progression

4.4.1 Barriers to progression faced by women

As shown in Figure 4.5, the most common barriers faced by women are family-related barriers, societal-related barriers, organisational-related barriers and gender stereotyping amongst others of which the most prominent barrier faced by women was the societal-related barrier (19.8%).

4.4.2 Gender versus barriers to career advancement for women

Table 4.6 shows that 14 percent of male and 26% female respondents agree that there were no barriers within their organisations. In totality 24% of males and 42% of females were in agreement that there were no barriers with their organisations

versus 12% of males and 22% of females who disagreed.

Table 4.6 Gender versus barriers to progression

| n=121 | | Barriers to progression | | | | |
|--------|--------|-------------------------|----------|-------|----------------|-------|
| | | Strongly Disagree | Disagree | Agree | Strongly Agree | Total |
| Gender | Male | 10% | 14% | 10% | 2% | 36% |
| | Female | 16% | 26% | 17% | 5% | 64% |
| Total | | 26% | 40% | 27% | 7% | 100% |

4.4.3 Gender versus women's ability to progress in their career

Table 4.7 shows that both men and women agreed to the same options given in the questionnaire.

Table 4.7 Gender versus choice for non-progression

| n=121 | | Women are unable to progress in their career because: | | | | |
|--------|--------|---|--|--|--|-------|
| | | They don't fit in a managerial role | Women are more suited to a supportive role | Have to concentrate on a role such as motherhood | They are not accepted in a managerial role | Total |
| Gender | Male | 5.8% | 5.8% | 5.8% | 19.0% | 36.4% |
| | Female | 8.3% | 7.4% | 19.8% | 28.1% | 63.6% |
| Total | | 14.1% | 13.2% | 25.6% | 47.1% | 100% |

Women outnumbered the opinion of men in all categories with the largest 28.1% where women stated that they were not accepted in a managerial role.

4.4.4 Race versus women’s ability to progress in their career

The respondents in all categories felt that women are unable to progress because they were not accepted in a managerial role. In general Indian respondents were the highest in all categories (Table 4.8). Black (3.3%) and Coloured (2.5%) respondents felt that the other factor that constrained women from progression was that women are more suited to a supportive role. Indian (14.9%) and White (6.6%) respondents felt the other factor was that women had to concentrate on a role such as motherhood (Table 4.8).

Table 4.8 Race versus choice for non-progression

| n=121 | | Women are unable to progress in their careers because | | | | |
|-------|----------|---|--|--|--|-------|
| | | They don't fit in a managerial role | Women are more suited to a supportive role | Have to concentrate on a role such as motherhood | They are not accepted in a managerial role | Total |
| Race | Black | 2.5% | 3.3% | 2.5% | 10.7% | 19% |
| | Coloured | 0.8% | 2.5% | 1.7% | 4.1% | 9.1% |
| | Indian | 6.6% | 6.6% | 14.9% | 17.4% | 45.5% |
| | White | 4.1% | 0.8% | 6.6% | 14.9% | 26.4% |
| Total | | 14% | 13.2% | 25.7 | 47.1 | 100% |

4.4.5 Outcome of Objective 2

In objective 1 it was established that there are barriers that exist in the workplace. Objective 2 was looked at from a gender and race perspective wherein respondents identified which barriers affected women in acquiring higher positions

in their companies. Although the respondents claimed that there were no barriers to progression within their organisation, it is shown later that, in general, the barrier that most affected women's progression is that they were not accepted in a managerial role, be it in gender or race.

4.5 Objective 3: Organisational practices

4.5.1 Organisational policies and procedures in place for the progression of women

It is clear from Figure 4.7 that most respondents acknowledge that their companies have policies and procedures to facilitate the progress of women as shown by 71.4% who agreed (agree 49.5% and strongly agree 21.9%). It can be noted that very few respondents strongly disagreed with this question.

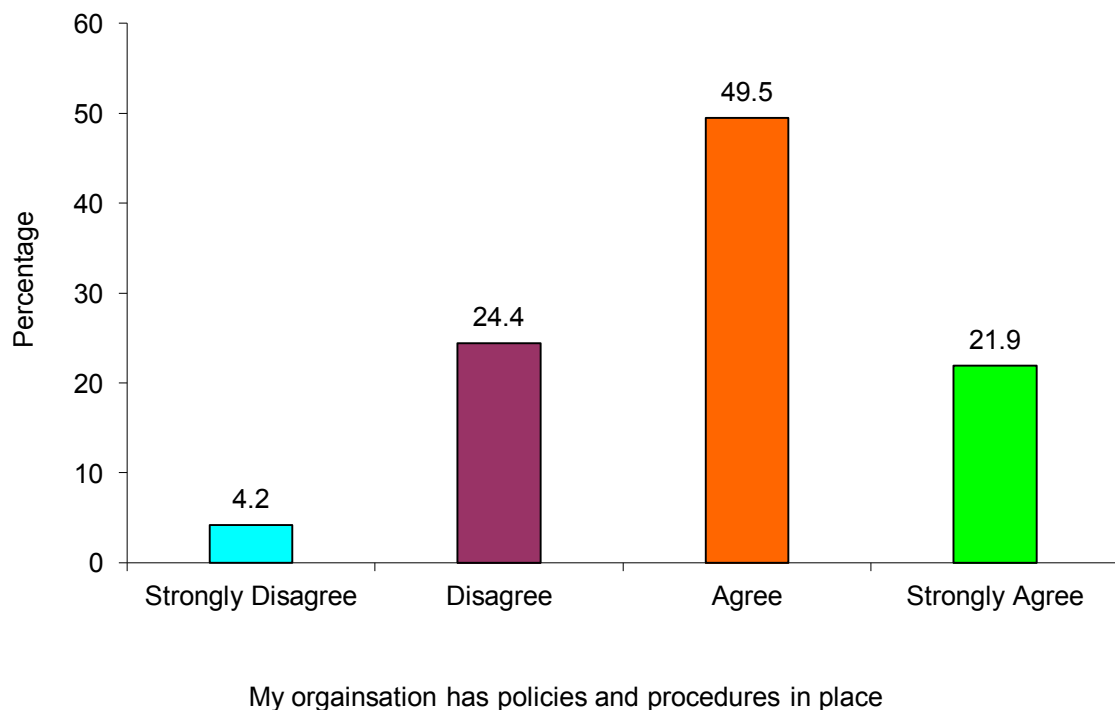


Figure 4.7 Organisational policies and procedures

Figure 4.7 shows that the mode is 3 (Agree) and as can be seen from Table 4.9 the Median (midpoint) is also 3. This means that the majority of respondents

agreed that their companies had policies and procedures in place. It must be noted here also that the mean is also close to the median and mode.

Table 4.9 Central tendency for policies and procedures

| | |
|----------------|------|
| N | 121 |
| Mean | 2.89 |
| Median | 3.00 |
| Std. Deviation | .783 |
| Variance | .613 |

4.5.2 Organisational investments in developing female leaders

Figure 4.8 clearly reveals respondents agree (74.4%) their organisations develop female leaders.

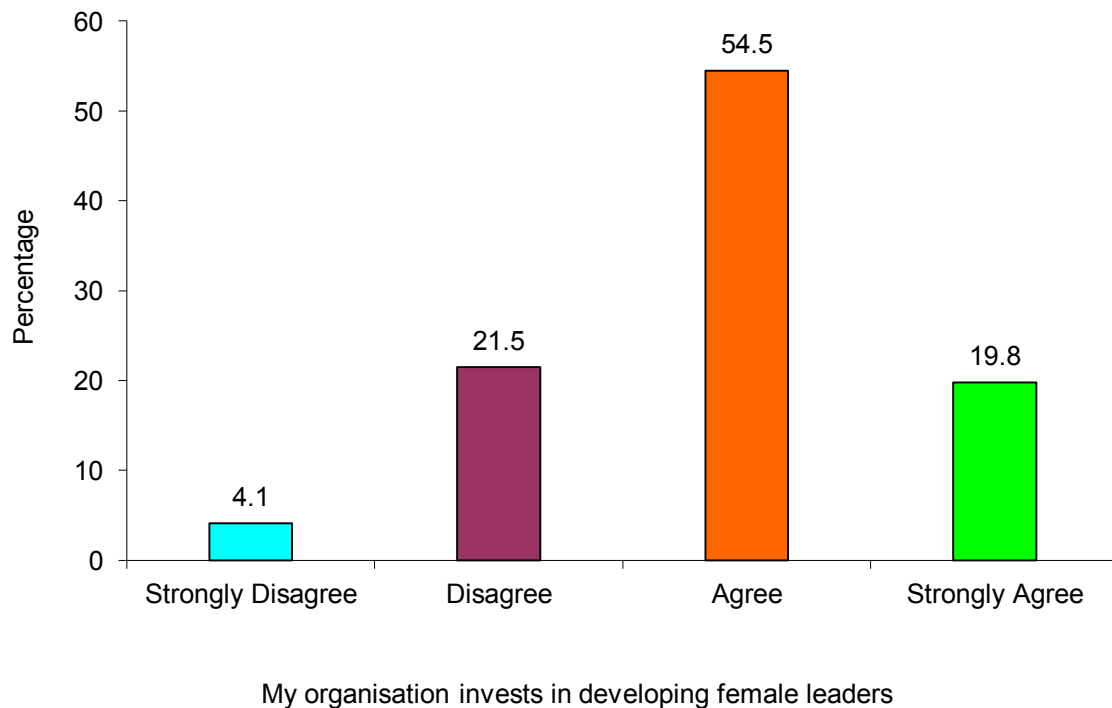


Figure 4.8 Developing female leaders

Table 4.10 Central tendency for developing female leaders

| | |
|----------------|------|
| n | 121 |
| Mean | 2.90 |
| Median | 3.00 |
| Std. Deviation | .757 |
| Variance | .573 |

The result from Table 4.10 shows the mean for this question is 2.90% which indicates that it is leaning towards agreement. This shows that organisations invest in developing female leaders.

4.5.3 Women in my organisation who have received necessary training are excellent managers

Figure 4.9 reveals that just over seventy nine percent (79.4%) of the respondents were in agreement that women who received training in their organisation were excellent managers.

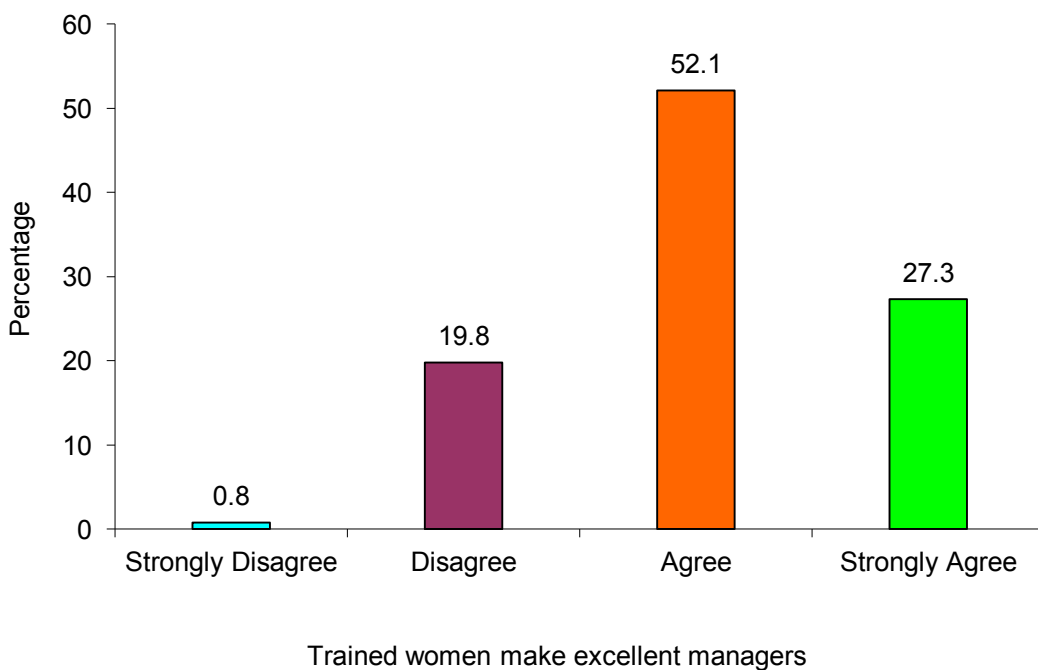


Figure 4.9 Excellent managers

The average for this distribution is 3.06 and the central point is 3.00, which indicates agreement. This means that the respondents believe that having received the necessary training women tended to be excellent managers.

Table 4.11 Central tendency for excellent managers

| | |
|----------------|------|
| n | 121 |
| Mean | 3.06 |
| Median | 3.00 |
| Std. Deviation | .711 |
| Variance | .505 |

4.5.4 Outcome of Objective 3

Objective 3 was observed from an organisations perspective. It reveals that organisations had policies and procedures in place for the progression of women, organisations are investing in developing female leaders and women in organisations. Overall, results shown in Figures 4.7, 4.8 and 4.9 skew to the right which proves that organisations are ensuring that women are given assistance and empowerment from their organisations.

4.6 Summary

In this chapter the results of the analysis are presented. These show that there are barriers that exist in the workplace and that the barriers affect the progression of women in the workplace. The objectives demonstrated that the barrier that most affected women was that they were not accepted in a managerial role. The results also reveal the impact organisations have on the progression of women. The results of this chapter will be discussed further in the next chapter in comparison with other similar studies.

CHAPTER FIVE

Discussion

5.1 Introduction

Since the move for democratic change in South Africa toward empowering women in the workplace began, women have made a huge contribution to the economy. However, far from reality are the days of the 'glass ceiling' where men ruled the higher positions in organisations. Women have the ability to create their own 'glass ceiling'. This will be revealed in the discussion to follow.

The discussion of the results are linked to the literature review in chapter two in order to provide a more detailed understanding of the results of this study.

5.2 Demographics

The frequency analysis presented in section 4.2 shows that most of the respondents were between the ages of 25 to 44 (66.9%). According to Statistics SA (2010), the estimated population in South Africa was 49 991 300, of which 25 662 300 were females. Only 64.3% of the female population makes up the female workforce (age 15-64) in South Africa (Statistics SA 2010).

The largest population group in South Africa is Black, yet mainly Indians (45.5%) responded to the questionnaire. The largest population in South Africa was Black (79.4%), followed by White (9.2%), Coloured (8.8%) and Indian (2.6%) (Statistics SA 2010). The estimated total population in KwaZulu-Natal was 21.3% made up of 86% Black African, 8.1% Indian, 4.4% White and 1.4% Coloured (The Province of KwaZulu Natal 2010). Only 13.4% of the estimated population in KwaZulu-Natal who speak English (The Province of KwaZulu-Natal 2010). This would mean that people that received the questionnaire might not have understood it.

5.3 Findings of the study

It was argued in the previous chapters that the 'glass ceiling' which was introduced in the 1970s prevented women from advancing to higher managerial positions. It was shown that there are four types of barriers that exist for the progression of women. Women have to balance family and work life unlike their male counterparts. The findings support those discussed in the literature review. The empirical research highlights the following findings, namely the inability of women to progress, the influence women managers have, the existence of barriers, and the barriers which affect women in acquiring higher management positions, women and equal opportunity and the impact of organisational practice on the progression of women.

5.3.1 Objective 1: To ascertain individual's view on women's career advancement

Despite their continuous endeavor to progress, women do not reach higher levels of management (Nagy 2005). Section 4.3 presented the results of individuals understanding of women's inability to progress within their organisations or elsewhere. The focus of this objective will be on the understanding for the reasons why women do not progress easily, the relationship with managers, the barriers faced by women and their impact on being empowered and highlighting issues of equal opportunities.

5.3.1.1 Reasons for non-progression

Section 4.3.1 showed that just over forty seven percent (47.2%) of the respondents agreed that they are not accepted in a managerial role. This was followed by 25.6% of the respondents who believed that a woman's inability to progress is hampered by the role of motherhood and 14% who believed that women do not fit in a managerial role whilst 13.2% felt that women were more suited to a supportive role. Nagy (2005) confirmed that attitudinal and organisational prejudices prevented women from advancing to senior managerial positions. On the other hand, O'Connor (2001) and Kargwell (2008) argued that

female managers tend to pay more attention to their families than their jobs. According to Wood (2008), the low number of women managers was due to the fact that they were perceived to be seen as an inappropriate fit in a managerial role because females were perceived to be more suited to a supportive role and the role of motherhood rather than being on management - making decisions. Furthermore, these gender biases against females adversely affect their performance evaluations, impacting on career advancement of women managers (Wood 2008).

5.3.1.2 Relationships with managers

Section 4.3.2 shows the relationship patterns adopted by female managers. Figure 4.2 shows that 77% of the respondents would choose to report to a woman manager and at least one fifth (23%) of the respondents would choose not to report to a woman manager. Since the gender characteristics of respondents in this study were 63.6% female and 36.4% male, it could be inferred that a possibility exists where female respondents prefer female managers and male respondents prefer male managers. The leadership style and behaviour of male and female managers have been of great interest to researchers during the past three decades (Weyer 2007). Leadership is defined as the process by which an individual influences a group of individuals to achieve a common goal (Kreitner & Kinicki 2008). Leadership styles and behaviour are important because they affect the advancement of women (Weyer 2007).

The two types of leaders namely: transformational and transactional leaders are discussed in Section 2.3. Transformational leadership alters the mindset of individuals to pursue the goal of the organisation rather than their self-interest. On the other hand, transactional leadership focuses on the role of the individual in the organisation and is based on rewards and punishment (Kreitner & Kinicki 2008). Male leaders tend to use rewards and punishment to influence production, a behaviour associated with transactional leadership whilst women employ a behaviour pattern that is built on interpersonal relationships and sharing of power and information which leans towards transformational leadership (Weyer 2007).

A female manager who adopts transformational leadership could certainly have great influence in the workplace as can be seen in Figure 4.3. In section 4.3.3 respondents were in agreement (81%) that women managers are influential in the workplace. On the other hand, Mathur-Helm (2005) argued that although women are having difficulty in climbing the corporate ladder, they are making slow progress to get to management levels.

5.3.1.3 Barriers and their impact

In section 4.3.4, respondents disagreed that there were barriers to progression for women in the workplace. However, in section 4.3.5 just over a quarter of the respondents held that all the barriers (26.4%) were major barriers. The 'glass ceiling' which was introduced in the 1970s was one of the first barriers that came about (Nagy 2005). Thereafter, women faced many barriers such as family-related, societal-related, and organisational-related barriers and gender stereotyping (Ismail & Ibrahim 2007). According to Mathur-Helm (2005), women continue to face barriers such as the 'glass ceiling' even though gender inequality awareness was raised after the transformation in South Africa. Implementing gender equity and affirmative action legislation did not benefit the inequality of women's career advancement. Women hold fewer senior positions due to management's strategic use of social and cultural theory thus creating barriers to women's progression making it difficult for them to be integrated into mainstream management. The under-utilisation of women in a South African market is a wasted resource (Mathur-Helm 2005). The biased attitude towards women in management has created barriers to progression and has been a significant factor affecting the status of women in management worldwide (Wood 2008).

Out of the choice of four barriers, 19.8% of the respondents held that the barrier most often faced by women is societal-related. According to Guy (2003) the 'glass ceiling' is also due to societal-related barriers. The career progression of women in the workplace will not be achieved in isolation of these barriers but will be necessary for a sustainable, diverse and competent workforce to be competitive in the global market (Guy 2003). The inequality between genders is due to societal

expectations (Weyer 2007). D'Agostino and Levine (2010) believe that understanding the importance of career progression to senior management levels in society which hampers women's opportunities will render the gender gap extinct.

According to Ismail and Ibrahim (2009), women's commitment to family life is so high that they find it difficult to maintain a balance in their work life and are therefore required to spend less time on their careers. Just over eighteen percent (18.2%) of the respondents were of the opinion that women's progression in the workplace was due to family-related barriers. Women sacrifice their careers to take care of their children (Kargwell 2008). Women risk the chances of career advancement when they decide to start a family and a career at the same time (Nagy 2005). This further coincides with Ezzedeen and Ritchey (2009) who found that women have a difficult choice balancing their life when it comes to career and family. Ismail and Ibrahim (2008) recommend that women understand the barriers they face from career and family life and devise strategies early to achieve their career and family goals.

The gender bias against female managers affects their performance evaluations which in turn impacts on their career advancement (Wood 2008). The respondents felt that gender-stereotyping (17.4%) was a barrier that hindered women's progressions to management levels. The dearth of women in a management role may be affected by the gender-stereotyping perception that female managers lack the skills related to the role of a manager, thus creating a barrier for women's career advancement (Wood 2008). According to Catalyst (2007), gender stereotyping is a powerful tool used against women in senior positions and in the organisations they worked. Catalyst (2007) also argues that gender stereotyping reflect the behaviour of individuals and, if not addressed correctly, could cost companies talented senior managers.

Certain respondents were of the notion that the organisational-related barrier hampered the progression of women. Organisational culture is defined as the shared values and beliefs that characterise a company's distinctiveness (Kreitner & Kinick, 2008). According to Mullins (2005), the traditions, values, policies and

attitudes constitute the way individuals think and do everything in an organisation. Even though women are put into a position to manage others, they get devalued instead of being put into competitive business oriented positions where they can engage with important networks (Pesonen et al 2009). Companies prefer to employ single women rather than married women because of other commitments (Nagy 2005).

5.3.1.4 Equal opportunities

There were 121 respondents who responded to this question. In section 4.3.6 the results show that 94.2% of the respondents were in agreement that women should be given equal opportunities for career progression. However, most organisations, private and public claim to have implemented equal opportunities into their mainstream business policies but are under pressure because of the lack of transforming and translating these policies into reality (Mathur-Helm 2005).

Equal opportunity exists for both men and women within organisations; however, men and women have different skills and therefore play different roles in society and the economy. This perception results in inequalities in opportunities and hierarchical order of work as far as gender is concerned (Nagy 2005).

Regmi et al (2009) in their study found that employees continue to face all forms of discrimination, despite numerous Employment Acts to protect them against unequal treatment, due to their gender or ethnic origin. They advised that organisations can tackle discrimination and promote a more diverse workforce by educating and changing managers' and employees' attitudes, perceptions and behaviours (Regmi et al 2009).

Based on the information from sections 4.3.1 to 4.3.6, it is evident that women have to strike a balance between work and family life. The role of motherhood seems to play a significant role in terms of advancement in the workplace. Gender bias also adversely affects performance and impacts on women's career advancement. Female managers are likely to exhibit the transformational leadership style more than their male counterparts thus would rather answer to a

female manager than a male manager. The societal barrier has a major influence on the advancement of women due to its origination in the glass ceiling. Equal opportunities for career progression for women are slow but with development can become an objective for the future

5.3.2 Objective 2: To investigate barriers faced by women in achieving higher positions in companies

Figure 4.5 show the common barriers faced by women in their endeavor to progress to higher positions in companies. These are family-related, societal-related, organisational-related barriers and gender stereotyping.

5.3.2.1 Advancement for women

In section 4.4.2 and 4.4.3 the results show the outcome in terms of gender, and in 4.4.4, the results show the outcome against race. In this study, both male and female (14% and 26% respectively) believe there were no barriers to progression for women in South Africa; however, this is contrary to the fact that in the 1970s the first barrier that emerged in industries that prevented women from progressing was the 'glass ceiling' (Nagy 2005). The Employment Equity Act of 1998 was a strategy implemented to create more opportunities for women in South Africa; however, women are still failing to break the barrier to reach senior-level management but are able to reach middle management and some in senior management (Mathur-Helm 2005).

According to Kargwell (2008), women sacrifice their careers due to family commitments. Nagy (2005) found that women, who decided to start a family which coincided with their career, reduced their chances of advancement with their organisations. On the other hand Nagy (2005) found that society did not reward and value women who rise in their career; the thinking is that it goes against traditional values such as being a mother or housewife.

5.3.2.2 Ability to progress in a gender and race perspective

Respondents were given the option to choose barriers affecting women in their ability to progress in the workplace. Respondents agreed that women were not able to progress because they were not accepted in a managerial role (28.1%). The theoretical perspective considered by previous research was that women are different and did not possess the skills to be in a managerial position (Wood 2008). The gender bias created the perception among women that they did not fit in a managerial position or were not accepted in a managerial role (Wood 2008).

The majority of respondents were Indian (17.4%) followed by White (14.9%) then Black (10.7%) and Coloured (4.1%) who claimed that they were not accepted in a managerial role. Racial discrimination played a huge role in South Africa before 1994 and so women were adversely affected in their progression to levels of management with the exclusion of white women who were permitted to be part of the workforce. This did not mean that white women moved to management level that easily. Discrimination has been defined as the exclusion from the sharing of power or the unequal treatment of certain groups (Ataov 2002). Individuals are enormously affected by racial discrimination in the workplace (SEEDA 2006).

With the arguments above it is evident that women are not easily accepted into managerial positions because of the time spent on family matters. This may sound sexist but Ismail and Ibrahim (2008) confirmed in their study that women found it difficult to balance work and family life when promoted to a managerial level leading to resignations. It also proves that the discrimination of the past has not yet been fully overcome by the non-acceptance of women in managerial positions.

This objective was looked at from a gender and race perspective wherein respondents enlighten the readers more about which barriers affect women in acquiring higher positions in companies. The South African Government implemented the Employment Equity Act of 1998 to enhance the progression of women, however it has not yet had a major effect on women's progression. Although the respondents claim that there are no barriers to progression within

their organisations, it is shown that, in general, the barrier that most affects women's progression is that they are not accepted in a managerial role, be it as responded to by both gender or race

5.3.3 Objective 3: To examine the impact of organisational practices in promoting women to executive positions

According to Mathur-Helm (2005) the South African government enacted a new legislation to protect women from being discriminated against in the workplace and to facilitate the smooth implementation of their career progression to senior level positions. Legislation fostered the implementation of promoting women past the pervasive 'glass ceiling' using organisational policies and procedures (D'Agostino & Levine 2010). Arguably, despite the enactment of policies and procedures, women remain underrepresented in senior level executive positions. South Africa endeavors to meet global needs by making the change to gain respect and promote the rights of women irrespective of age, gender, race, class and disability (Mathur-Helm 2005).

5.3.3.1 Policies and Procedures

Section 4.5.1 shows that 71.4% of the respondents agreed that their organisations had policies and procedures in place for the progression of women. Having policies and procedures does not prove that organisations promote women to senior level positions. According to D'Agostino and Levine (2010), the underutilisation of women within organisations is due to the lack of understanding of the policies and procedures. They add that policies and procedures are designed to foster opportunities for the progression of women in an organisation. The lack of female role models could prevent women from ascending to senior management level positions (The Economist 2005). Organisations that engage in work-life balance programmes need to review the culture policies in order to develop a successful tool for advancing women's careers (Straub 2007). In many cases employees do not remember what the policies and procedures are in an organisation which would suggest that in day-to-day practice, a formal document is not referred to in a case of a dispute (Regmi et al 2009). This could become an

act of discrimination where policies and procedures for the progression of women are not formalised.

D'Agostino and Levine (2010) recommend that the first step to overcome gender inequality towards women's advancement was to institutionalise policies and procedures at organisational level. They further encourage businesses to use organisational policies together with other processes to create a better work environment for the advancement of women.

5.3.3.2 *Investment in female leaders*

Figure 4.10 clearly reveals respondents have agreed that their organisations developed female leaders. According to Jellal et al (2008), organisations do not like investing in female managers because of their commitment to family life. However, Ismail and Ibrahim (2008) argue that organisations are retaining female employees in response to legislation. In addition they believe that training and development should be aligned with career planning. Mathur-Helm (2005) state that training and advancement in South Africa are relatively slow and affirmative action has provided entry for women into jobs but not into senior positions.

5.3.3.3 *Training to be excellent managers*

In section 4.5.3, it is discussed that just over seventy nine percent of the respondents were in agreement that their organisations trained women to be excellent managers. According to McCall (2010), managers are leaders and leaders need to face today's challenges to become better leaders for the future. He added that company heads need to send their managers into the field to gain experience in order to become excellent managers.

Ismail and Ibrahim (2008) said that female managers who receive the appropriate training and development from their organisations would have to be tracked in order to provide desirable results both for the women and the organisation. Furthermore, they added that whilst organisational support is important to retain managers, women in the organisation would need to value and enhance their

participation towards the organisational goal. This would create an incentive to allow senior management to develop women in middle management (Ismail & Ibrahim 2008). On the other hand Mathur-Helm (2005) argues that organisations do not always implement initiatives for female managers and thus talented women who have the potential to become excellent managers leave for greener pastures. Mathur-Helm (2005) further adds that although women in South Africa face a socio-economic struggle, training and advancement are relatively slow.

It is evident that South African organisations are implementing initiatives to develop female managers to become more efficient, confident and autonomous.

Although respondents agreed that their organisations are taking the step to have policies and procedures in place for the progression of women, it does not follow that the policies and procedures are in effect within those organisations. Respondents also agreed that their organisations are investing in developing managers and that women in organisations who have had the necessary training are becoming excellent managers. South African women are still struggling to be empowered and find it difficult to reach management positions (Mathur-Helm 2005).

5.4 Summary

The analysis of the empirical data relating to the objectives of the study has been presented and discussed. For each objective the analysis of the results of this study are discussed in relation to the literature review. The findings of this discussion will be further discussed in the conclusion and recommendations in the next chapter.

In chapter six, the key findings will be presented; recommendations will be made for future studies, and the limitations of the study will be put forward.

CHAPTER SIX

Recommendations and Conclusions

6.1 Introduction

This chapter summarises the key findings and suggests recommendations for empowering women in the workplace based on the discussions from previous chapters. The limitations of this study and recommendations for future research are highlighted.

6.2 Key findings

The literature reviewed for this study, started by describing the different barriers that prevent women from progressing to senior management levels. The efforts of various organisations involved in the development of empowering women in the workplace strengthened the basis on which this study was undertaken. The survey, conducted in the Greater Durban Area, shows that respondents understood the barriers that exist for the progression of women in organisations and the impact of organisational practices in ensuring the advancement of women to senior management levels.

Employment equity and affirmative action provide women with jobs but not progression into senior management levels in sufficed numbers. The gender bias prevents women from being accepted into a managerial role and frequently perceives women as unsuitable for or do not fit in a managerial role because they are seen to be more suited for a supportive role and the role of motherhood rather than a decision making role of management. Nagy (2005) holds that women reduce their chances of career advancement when they start a family but also believes that women's chances of career advancement need not be reduced since they have the ability to obtain their degrees whilst working and raising a family.

Modern-day women have to balance their lives by making tough decisions as to whether they would prefer to stay at home to raise their children or continue the

path of a career. The effects of this difficult decision have left women on a slow path of being empowered in the workplace combined with the stereotypical society they live in. Women who make the decision of staying at home to raise their children are being labelled unambitious whilst women who choose career are ridiculed by society as being uncaring mothers. This study reveals that the low number of female managers is because women are not accepted in a managerial role and are more inclined to concentrate on choosing the role of motherhood over their career. This supports the research carried out in the western literature where female managers make their first priority family and then their jobs (Kargwell 2008).

The study shows that respondents prefer to report to a woman manager rather than male managers. Women who moved to managerial levels tended to adopt certain leadership styles and behaviour patterns that are either conducive or non-conducive to the working environment. In many cases, this could be due to the transformational leadership style female managers have a propensity to assume where sharing of power and information is of the utmost value. In this way female managers can be influential in the workplace.

Barriers have impacted on women's progression since the 1970s when the 'glass ceiling' was first introduced into the working environment. The implementation of legislation to eradicate gender inequality in the workplace has not markedly benefitted women in progressing to levels of management. The under-utilisation of women has not only affected the South African market but has been significantly affecting women throughout the world making them a wasted resource (Mathur-Helm, 2005). The expectations of society have driven women away from reaching management levels and contribute to gender inequality towards women's career progression. Some women have sacrificed their careers for the simple reason of balancing their career and family life. The gender-stereotype perception that women lack the skills to be in a managerial position has affected their career advancement inhibited by the behaviour of individuals thus companies may lose their most talented women.

The transformation and translation of equal opportunities for career advancement

for women have not fully materialised. The South African government amended the Employment Equity Act of 1998 to facilitate the protection of women against unequal treatment and to create more opportunities but women continue to be discriminated against and fail to break the barriers to reach levels of management.

Organisations design policies and procedures to foster opportunities for the progression of women but women are underutilised in organisations which appears to be due to the lack of understanding and implementation of these policies. It is unfortunate that organisations do not readily invest in female managers due to their family commitments. Furthermore, organisations in South Africa are slow in terms of training and development. Women who receive training and reach senior management level unfortunately leave the organisations due to lack of support structures. This statement is supported in a journal by Kargwell (2008: 212) wherein it is stated that organizations are unwilling to aid in support structures for managers with children. Affirmative Action has paved the way for women to enter industries in South Africa, however women are still struggling to enter senior positions in organisations.

6.3 Recommendations resulting from this study

The success of an individual is dependent on their own merit regardless of their gender (Straub 2007). Women who want to achieve success in their careers should rather pursue training on their own to enhance their qualities, values and characteristics allowing them to excel in male dominated businesses (Straub 2007).

To overcome the challenges of family-related barriers, women need to set aside time to spend with their spouses and children. Taking up a position in management does not mean that a female manager needs to forget her family days e.g. birthdays, sports matches, anniversary, school plays, etc. Mothers who work should not feel guilty. They need to give themselves a pat on the back for doing the things they do for their family. Become role models to their children who surely want to see their mothers successful at work. Society will in no way value or reward women because of traditional thinking but can make a difference by

allowing and accepting change (Mathur-Helm 2005). There are also plenty of equal opportunities out in the world for women; they just need to find the right one.

Organisations should look into supporting career progression of women and creating a work environment that is family friendly through flexible and part-time working options. Providing childcare facilities in the work environment would assist women in managing their family life and thus reflect on the organisation's interests in supporting women in the workplace.

Companies should identify aspirant females within their organisations and develop them. Female employees need to be understood and obtain support from their organisations. Professional development needs to be tracked so as to provide the desirable results for both the organisation and the woman. "South African organisations need to respect women as professionals, accept their perceptions and attitudes whilst working towards a common goal" (Mathur-Helm, 2005).

Companies could influence empowered behaviours if they can develop a positive mindset among their employees with regard to their work role and their contribution to the organisation. Organisations can elevate their female employees by delegating or power sharing, fostering skills development, improve communication, recognise and reward performance and maintain positive relationships amongst employers and employees.

Although legislation has made every effort in changing the laws in South Africa to protect women against discrimination in the workplace, the government needs to develop ways in which to implement the promotion of women to management levels other than affirmative action and equal opportunities. Organisations need to make sure that their policies and procedures to promote women to senior levels of management are implemented and monitored on an ongoing basis. Even though training and development is costly, companies need to ensure that they retain their female managers who receive training by using incentive schemes. Although training and development in South Africa is slow, government and organisations need to focus on the issue more rapidly.

6.4 Limitations of the study

- This study was conducted in the Greater Durban Area and not nationally. Conducting a national study would have provided a clearer perspective of the issue at a national level.
- The respondents of the survey conducted were majority female. Since more males are in management positions than females, it would be interesting to see what responses the survey would have raised if there were an equal number of male and female respondents.
- The population in the Greater Durban area is ethnically diverse with Blacks making up 68% of the population followed by Asians (20%), White (9%) and Coloured (3%) (About Durban 2011). Since the respondents for this study were predominantly Indian, the population as a whole cannot be representative in terms of race. A proportional number of respondents from all races would have been more accurate.
- The questionnaire was designed to identify barriers and understand how these affect women in reaching senior levels of management and the impact organisational practices had on empowering women in the workplace in South Africa. Questions of how women could overcome the barriers and how organisations could help them to overcome the barriers were not posed.
- The questionnaire could only be sent to individuals who had access to the internet. A larger number of responses could have been achieved if the study was not done electronically only and the questionnaire sent to individuals who do not have access to a computer or internet.

6.5 Recommendations for future studies

- A study of the training and development of women in the workplace and its impact on the progression of women can be conducted.
- The work-life balance practices and policies in South Africa can be identified and compared to test the enhancement of women's career advancement to senior management positions.
- Married female managers play a dual role. The support received from South African companies to balance this dual role would be an interesting study to determine work life balance.
- Despite government legislation and company policies and procedure to enhance the career opportunities in the workplace for women in South Africa, very few female managers reach senior management levels. A study into the implementation of legislation, and company policies and procedures can be conducted.

6.6 Summary

The progression of women has been of great importance not only in South Africa but throughout the world. Researchers have been conducting surveys on the topic since the 1970s when the 'glass ceiling' was identified. The objectives of this study are achieved in that it identifies the barriers and how these impact on the career progression of women in South Africa. It also identifies the impact organisational practices have on women from a gender and race perspective. The literature review from all parts of the world was considered in the South African perspective. The data collected identifies that there are barriers to the progression of women in the workplace and the impact of organisational practices towards their progression to senior management levels. Legislation has made every endeavor to promote women in the workplace but that reality has only provided jobs and not management posts. Government and organisations need to be steadfast in

promoting women to senior management levels at a much more rapid rate.

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Appendix 1



MBA Research Survey Informed Consent

Informed Consent

MBA Research Project

Researcher: Mr. A.R. Daya (031-201 6667)

Supervisor: Prof A.M. Singh (031-260 7061)

Research Office: Ms P Ximba 031-2603587

I, Ajaikumar Ratelal Daya an MBA student, at the Graduate School of Business, of the University of Kwazulu Natal invite you to participate in a research project entitled Empowering women in the workplace: A South African Perspective. The aim of this study is to determine why women in the workplace fail to achieve senior management positions after fifteen years of democracy in South Africa

Through your participation I hope to understand why women fail to achieve senior management position in the workplace. The results of the focus group are intended to contribute to increase the awareness of career advancement of women after 15 years of democracy.

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

If you have any questions or concerns about completing the questionnaire or about participating in this study, you may contact me or my supervisor at the numbers listed above. The survey should take you about 5 minutes to complete. I

hope you will take the time to complete this survey.

Sincerely

Mr. A.R. Daya

1. Age group:

- 25-34
- 35-44
- 45-54
- 55 >

2. Race:

- Black
- Coloured
- Indian
- White
- Other

3. Gender:

- Male
- Female

4. Employment status

- Senior Management
- Middle Management
- Junior Management
- Non-Management
- Other, please specify _____

5. Women are unable to progress in their careers because:

- They don't fit in a managerial role
- Women are more suited to a supportive role
- Have to concentrate on a role such as motherhood
- They are not accepted in a managerial role

6. If I had a choice, I would not report to a woman manager

- Strongly Disagree
- Disagree
- Agree
- Strongly Agree

7. I think women managers will not be influential in the workplace
- Strongly Disagree
 - Disagree
 - Agree
 - Strongly Agree
8. There are barriers to career advancement for women within my organisation
- Strongly Disagree
 - Disagree
 - Agree
 - Strongly Agree
9. Which barriers to progression are faced by women? (you may choose more than 1)
- Family-related barriers
 - Societal-related barriers
 - Organisational-related barriers
 - Gender stereotyping
 - All of the above
 - Other _____
10. My organisation has policies and procedures in place for the progression of women.
- Strongly Disagree
 - Disagree
 - Agree
 - Strongly Agree
11. My organisation invests in developing female leaders.
- Strongly Disagree
 - Disagree
 - Agree
 - Strongly Agree
12. Women in my organisation who have received necessary training are excellent managers.
- Strongly Disagree
 - Disagree
 - Agree
 - Strongly Agree

13. I believe that women need to be given equal opportunities for career progression.

- Strongly Disagree
- Disagree
- Agree
- Strongly Agree

Appendix 2



20 March 2010

Mr A R Daya
Graduate School of Business
Management Studies
Westville Campus
DU-447N

Dear Mr Daya

PROTOCOL: Empowering women in the workplace: A South African Perspective
ETHICAL APPROVAL NUMBER: HSS/0138/2010 M: Faculty of Management Studies

In response to your application dated 18 March 2010, Student Number: 207526539 the Humanities & Social Sciences Ethics Committee has considered the abovementioned application and the protocol has been given **FULL APPROVAL**.

PLEASE NOTE: Research data should be securely stored in the school/department for a period of 5 years.

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

Yours faithfully

Professor Steve Collings (Chair)
HUMANITIES & SOCIAL SCIENCES ETHICS COMMITTEE

SC/sn

cc: Prof. A.M. Singh (Supervisor)
cc: Mrs C Haddon