WOMEN'S ADVANCEMENT TO SENIOR MANAGEMENT POSITIONS IN THE DEPARTMENT OF RURAL DEVELOPMENT AND LAND REFORM

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A research report submitted to the Faculty of Management, University of the Witwatersrand, in 25% fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Management (in the field of Public and Development Management).

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Abstract

The advent of a democratic South Africa in 1994 saw the implementation of legislative and strategic frameworks aimed at balancing opportunities for both men and women at the workplace. The primary focus of these frameworks was implementation of measures to advance women to enable them access to opportunities previously barred to them. Female representation in senior management positions remains skewed despite frameworks put in place to correct such imbalances. In such instances where women were promoted to senior management positions, literature shows they are often met with challenges which hinder their advancement. This study sought to explore perceptions of barriers women senior managers encounter in senior management positions at the Department of Rural Development and Land Reform (DRDLR). A qualitative approach was the preferred method of research, using a single case study. The researcher triangulated data using questionnaires, semi-structured interviews, and documentary evidence. Thematic analysis was used to analyse data. Findings revealed that although the department has partially met the numerical target of women in senior management positions, there are organisational or systemic barriers, professional career pipeline barriers and institutional climatic barriers. The study concludes that direct and indirect barriers exists which hinder women's advancement in the DRDLR. Organisational development interventions are recommended to address the identified barriers at personal and organisational level.

Declaration

I hereby declare that this research study: Women's advancement to senior management positions in the Department of Rural Development and Land Reform represents my own work both in conception and execution. It is submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements of the degree of Master of Management (in the field of Public and Development Management) in the University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg. It has not been submitted before for any degree or examination in any other University.

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Sipho Ngomane

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Dedication

Thanks be to God, the Almighty, for the wisdom to complete this study.

I would like to extend gratitude to my beloved wife, Ndivhuho, for being my sounding board and the children, Lindelani, Nkosinathi, Minkhenso and Ndzalo, for their unwavering support during my time of studies. This is for you. "*Dyondzo a yi lumi*"

To my sisters, Portia and Joyce, for running with the family commitments when I was not available to do so.

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List of abbreviations

ADP	Advanced Development Programme
CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women
CRDP	Comprehensive Rural Development Programme
DPME	Department of Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation
DPSA	Department of Public Service and Administration
DRDLR	Department of Rural Development and Land Reform
EDP	Executive Development Programme
EE	Employment Equity
HRM	Human Resource Management
HRD	Human Resource Development
HR & OD	Human Resource and Organisational Development
ISS	Interpretative Social Science
LR	Labour Relations
MAS	Management Advisory Services
MMDP	Middle Management Development Programme
PDP	Personal Development Plan
PERSAL	Personnel and Salary Administration System
SMDP	Senior Management Development Programme
SMS	Senior Management Service
UN	United Nations
WLB	Work-Life Balance

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Chapter 1: Background and introduction

1.1 Background

The advent of a democratic South Africa in 1994 saw the development of legislative and strategic frameworks that had, as one of their objectives, balancing opportunities for men and women at the workplace. The primary focus was to advance women and provide access to opportunities previously barred to them. Such legislative frameworks include amongst others: The *Constitution of the Republic of South Africa* (RSA) (108 of 1996); The *Employment Equity Act* (55 of 1998) and the *Commission of Gender Equality Act* (Act 39 0f 1996). Not only were the legislative frameworks promulgated, but also the following strategic frameworks: *White Papers on Transformation*, 1995 and *Affirmative Action in the Public Service*, 1998 and *South African National Policy Framework for Women's Empowerment and Gender Equality* (2005-2015) (Department of Public Service and Administration [DPSA], 2008).

The *Employment Equity Act* (1998) requires all employers to implement the equity measures to ensure that their establishments reflect the demographics of South Africa. It requires employers to commit these measures on their Human Resource Plans with set timelines (The Presidency, 2008). The *Employment Equity Act* (1998) provides a framework through which the *Affirmative Action* measures may be implemented. The measures seek to redress past imbalances by giving priority to disadvantaged groups, including women. The *Women Empowerment and Gender Equality Framework* facilitates the appointment and representation of women to decision-making positions. The Framework stipulates that 50% representation of women should be achieved and plans put in place by private and public entities (DPSA, 2008). The *National Gender Policy* articulates certain areas where women should be advanced such as access to management and leadership positions (The Presidency, 2008). Despite these frameworks, women remain underrepresented in leadership positions and in cases where they are appointed to these positions; they experience barriers in the public space.

1.2 Introduction

This study explores perceptions of women in advancing to senior management positions in the South African Public Service, in particular the DRDLR. This study interrogates barriers faced by women when occupying senior management positions in the DRDLR. It discusses some possible measures that may be employed to assist women senior managers to advance to these positions.

The DRDLR was established in 2009 after dissolving the Department of Land Affairs. The key mandate of DRDLR is the realisation of a Comprehensive Rural Development Programme (CRDP) to counter poverty and food insecurity. The CRDP was premised on three pillars, namely, agrarian transformation, rural development and land reform. The first pillar of agrarian transformation focuses on increasing agricultural production through sustainable development principles which aim to result in food security and improved rural livelihoods. The second pillar is premised on improved economic and social infrastructure. The third pillar is about increasing the delivery pace of restitution, redistribution, and land tenure. The view was that, ultimately, these pillars would support an integrated rural development programme and social cohesion through partnerships with all sectors of the society (DRDLR, 2016a). This study brings value to the DRDLR by identifying the potential barriers impacting the advancement of women senior managers and how such may be mitigated. Finally, it contributes to academic debates on why women continue to be hindered in organisations despite enabling frameworks and their appointment to these senior management positions.

The study by Grant Thornton (2017) found that globally, the proportion of women in senior management roles progressed by 1% from 24% in 2016 to 25% in 2017. The progress showed only a 4% increase in the last five years. Africa has been ranked second when compared to other continents with 29% of the proportion of senior management roles held by women in 2017. Eastern Europe continues to top the rankings at 38% where Russia and Poland made significant improvements, respectively. Grant Thornton (2017) further observed that the proportion of female leaders in South Africa increased from 23% to 28%.

On the other hand, McKinsey and Company (2016) reported that women's representation in leadership positions in Africa by region showed that North Africa was at 17%; West Africa, 19%; Southern Africa, 22%; and East Africa 29%. The

East African region tops the list of women represented in leadership positions with North Africa being the least amongst the regions (McKinsey & Company, 2016). Of the 30 African countries examined, South Africa ranked third with 40% women's representation in senior management positions in the Public Sector. Rwanda tops the list at 64% with the highest number in Africa and the world. This is the reason which makes the East African region top the list amongst the four regions in Africa. Nigeria and Swaziland are at the bottom of the list with 6% representation of women in leadership positions respectively (McKinsey & Company, 2016). The South African ranking at both the global and continent level appears better comparatively.

The DPSA *Annual Report on Employment Equity* for the period 2015-2016 showed that representation of women at senior management positions were 41% women and 59% men. There has been an increase of 1% from a 40% that was obtained in 2015 (DPSA, 2016). The report further showed that a huge gap exist at Director-General level between men and women. Men occupying Director-General's posts comprise 74% whereas women are at 26%. The report confirmed that representation of women in senior management positions has not been met. Only 16 departments met the target of 50% whereas 63 departments are within the category of between 40-49%. Also, 61 departments are within the category of 30-39% with 17 departments below the 30% mark (DPSA, 2016). The DRDLR falls within the category of 40-49% since representation of women senior managers is at 40%. The DRDLR *Employment Equity Report* (2016b) showed total percentage of women at 52% and women at senior management echelons accounted for only 40% of total establishment. Given the managerial skills shortage in South Africa and the under-utilisation of women as managers, there is a need for this to be explored.

1.3 Problem Statement

The birth of a new South Africa in 1994 saw government introduce legislation and strategic frameworks to enable change in the workplace. This was grounded in the Constitution of the RSA and the Bill of Rights which prohibit discrimination based on race, gender or disability. The *Employment Equity Act* (1998) was introduced with Affirmative Action measures to redress past imbalances, since women, irrespective of their colour, were discriminated against. Despite the legislative and strategic frameworks introduced by government regarding advancement of women in the workplace, women senior managers remain challenged at senior management

positions in the South African Public Service. The study used DRDLR as a case study to explore the barriers women senior managers encounter in senior management positions. The study interrogates women's advancement in senior management positions at the DRDLR.

1.4 Purpose Statement

The purpose of this study was to interrogate women's advancement to senior management positions in the DRDLR. Firstly, the study focused on the progress that the DRDLR has made to promote women in senior management positions. Secondly, it focused on barriers women senior managers are facing which contribute to their difficulties in gaining access in senior management positions. Thirdly, it focused on the strategies that may be employed to address the identified barriers in the DRDLR.

1.5 Research Questions

The research questions that guided this study are:

1. To what extent have women progressed into senior management positions with regard to numerical targets in the DRDLR since 2012?
2. What are the barriers confronting women in senior management positions in the DRDLR?
3. Can the barriers be addressed through organisational development related interventions in the DRDLR, and if so, which interventions?

1.6 Significance of the study

The study builds on existing research regarding barriers women experience in advancing to senior management positions despite frameworks put in place by government. South Africa cannot ignore the role of women's participation in the social economic transformation agenda. In order for South Africa to experience social economic transformation, there is a need to develop and promote inclusion of women in decision-making positions. The DRDLR *Employment Equity Report* (2016b) showed that women comprise 52% although they remain underrepresented at 40% in senior management positions when compared to men who account for 60%.

During the State of the Nation Address, President Zuma reported that "the pace of transformation in the workplace, the implementation of affirmative action policies as required by the [*Employment Equity Act* (Act 55 of 1998)] also remains

very slow" (Zuma, 2017). He further indicated that the *Employment Equity Commission Report* of 2015/2016 showed men are given more opportunities for "recruitment, promotion and training as compared" (Zuma, 2017) to women. Zuma concluded by mentioning that "at the level of gender at senior management levels, males remain dominant at 67.6% and females at 32.4%" (Zuma, 2017).

The study adds to an existing body of knowledge in leadership and management studies, and may assist research centres, professional women and other government departments who aspire to overcome barriers for women's advancement in senior management positions. This study benefits women managers in the Public Service since the experiences were addressed in a manner relevant to their environment.

1.7 Structure of the report

The following is the structure and outline of chapters contained in this report:

1.7.1 Chapter Two: Literature Review.

The Chapter aims to provide an overview of the regulatory frameworks which gave rise to the promotion of women in senior management positions. Secondly, it reviews previous studies advanced within the field of women progressing to senior management positions in organisations. Thirdly, it discusses the Representative Bureaucracy Theory which underpins the representation of employees in a bureaucratic state. The chapter discusses perceptions and barriers which women senior managers face when occupying senior management positions in organisations. The barriers are highlighted at organisational, professional and institutional climatic level.

1.7.2 Chapter Three: Research Methodology.

The Chapter presents the blueprint of the research strategy employed to conduct this study. This is an exploratory research based on a single case study of the DRDLR. The study adopted a qualitative approach and gathered data using multiple methods of interviews, questionnaires and documentary evidence. The purposive sampling approach was the preferred method for conducting this study, due to its convenience and selection of participants who could provide useful information. The data gathered was analysed using a thematic approach to ensure that there was consistency, reliability and validity of data. The chapter also outlines limitations of the study.

1.7.3 Chapter Four: Findings from DRDLR.

The Chapter presents feedback on data gathered regarding women's advancement into senior management positions at the DRDLR. The chapter presents findings emanating from questionnaires and interviews conducted with women senior managers in the department. The study revealed that there are some challenges which hinder women's advancement into senior management positions. The challenges include: gendered organisational culture and stereotypes, organisational policies, work-life balance, mentorship and coaching, social networking, career development practices; bullying and victimisation, sexual harassment, psychological motivation, communication style and queen bee phenomenon. The participants recommend the following strategies to address the barriers hindering women in the organisations: senior management commitment, review and communication of organisational policies, gender and diversity awareness programmes, attractive talent retention strategy; coaching and mentorship programmes; leadership and management development programmes; establishment of a Women's Forum and creation of a conducive and flexible working environment.

1.7.4 Chapter Five: Analysis of the findings.

The Chapter provides analysis of perceptions and barriers women senior managers face and how such attributes impact on their advancement and representation in senior management positions. This section provides analysis of the questionnaires and interview responses given by the participants in the DRDLR. The analysis involved a process of organising data, generating it into categories, themes and patterns. The barriers to be analysed are categorised in terms of the following themes: women's experience at senior management level; personal barriers; organisational or systemic, professional and institutional climatic barriers. Although organisational and professional barriers play a significant role in hindering women's advancement, institutional climatic barriers at personal level are also prevalent.

1.7.5 Chapter Six: Conclusion and recommendations.

The chapter provides a conclusion and recommendations based on findings revealed in this study. A number of conclusions were drawn in line with the questions which this study addressed. The DRDLR has made considerable progress regarding the advancement of women into senior management positions as per legislative and strategic frameworks introduced by government. Despite the progress that has been

made to appoint women at this level, women senior managers are confronted with barriers which hinder their advancement at this level. There are barriers identified at organisational, professional career pipeline and institutional climatic level. The chapter concludes by outlining recommendations which should be implemented to address the identified barriers in DRDLR.

1.8 Conclusion

The chapter provided background on legislative and strategic frameworks introduced to balance opportunities for men and women at the workplace. The chapter outlined the rationale which led to this study being conducted in the South African Public Service, using the DRDLR as a case study. The trends at international, regional and national levels were discussed which showed that progress has been made regarding the promotion and advancement of women in senior management positions. The chapter clarified the research problem and the significance for conducting this study in DRDLR. The synopsis of the various chapters was given to outline what they seek to cover.

Chapter 2: Literature review

2.1 Introduction

The representation of women in senior management positions has received considerable attention and is on the agenda of various institutions, both nationally and internationally. Women are subjected to discrimination, inequality and under-representation in the Public Service and society at large. Significant progress has been made in the South African Public Service to promote women into senior management positions since the configuration of the democratic government in 1994 (DPSA, 2016). This was done through the enactment of legislation and frameworks to ensure equitable representation of employees in senior management echelons. Despite the progress made, women senior managers in the Public Service face some challenges which hinder their advancement at this level. This chapter provides an overview of regulatory frameworks to support the representation and promotion of women into senior management positions. It provides a synopsis of the representative bureaucracy theory which explains the representation of employees in a bureaucratic state. The chapter discusses barriers facing women senior managers when occupying senior management positions in organisations. The chapter concludes by providing implications for this research study based on the literature review.

2.2 Understanding gender equity

Gender and sexuality are much more than just the physical form (Miller, 2016). The researcher defined the concepts of "sex" versus "gender" and "gender equality" versus "gender equity" to make a clear distinction of their meaning and application in this study. It has been observed that these concepts are used interchangeably due to the lack of proper definition (Mann, 2014). The concepts are defined to broaden the understanding of gender equity towards women's advancement into senior management positions in organisations. Sociologists define "sex" as an anatomical and physiological difference between males and females whereas gender relates to psychological, social and cultural beliefs about behaviour and emotions of men and women (Long, Segalo & Laidlaw, 2016; Omoyibo, Egharevba & Iyanda, 2010). Sociologists posit that social factors and not biology defines what we do (Omoyibo *et al.*, 2010).

The sex of a person does not define their gender; however, it is through gender that an individual interacts with the world around them. Gender equality is a degree in which males and females are afforded the same opportunities to exercise rights and contribute meaningfully in the political, economic, social and cultural development of South Africa (DPSA, 2006). Zulu (2016) contends that fairness between men and women does not mean they should become the same, instead the same opportunities should be given to men and women despite their gender differences. The concepts were summarised as "equity is the means; equality is the result" (DPSA, 2006, p. 28). From the definitions above, gender equality refers to the structure where equality should happen whereas equity refers to the principle or process of ensuring that equality happens in organisations. Equity serves as an 'enabler' for equality in organisations. The understanding of gender and sexuality are critical because this study focuses on barriers affecting women psychologically and physically in organisations. The barriers affecting women senior managers are gender related since it is through gender that women interact with the world around them.

2.3 Regulatory frameworks governing gender equity in the Public Sector

This section provides an overview of policies, strategies and institutions introduced internationally and nationally to promote gender equity in the Public Sector. The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) was adopted in 1979 by the United Nations General Assembly (United Nations [UN], 1995). South Africa rejoined the UN on the 29 Jan 1993 (UN, 2017a). As a State Partner in CEDAW, she is required to exercise equal rights and recognition for women and remove any form of discrimination on the basis of gender (UN, 1995). The Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action was adopted in 1995 at the Fourth World Conference on Women hosted by the UN. The declaration undertook to "advance the goals of equality, development and peace for all women everywhere in the interest of all humanity" (UN, 1995, p. 8). One of the strategic objectives of the Declaration is to focus on women in power and decision making and promotion of institutional mechanisms for the advancement of women in various forms (UN, 1995). In addition, the UN introduced 17 Sustainable Development Goals which replaced the eight millennium developmental goals introduced in 2000.

The third goal seeks to promote gender equality by State parties (UN, 2017b). The above institutions and strategies laid the grounds for the introduction of policies and strategies to promote gender equity in South Africa.

The advent of a democratic South Africa in 1994 saw the implementation of legislative and strategic frameworks to ensure that the public service was representative of the citizenry in order to be considered legitimate, responsive and accountable to the general public. This process required structured legal and policy frameworks to achieve equity and representation in the public service. The *Constitution of the RSA* (1996) makes provision that no person, institution or the state can discriminate against women by excluding them from public service and limiting their advancement to managerial positions. In addition, the *Employment Equity Act* (1998) was introduced which recognised that apartheid discriminatory practices and laws resulted in labour market disparities in terms of income, occupation and employment. The Act requires all employers to implement the equity measures to ensure that their establishments reflect the demographics of South Africa and to commit those measures on their Human Resource Plans with set timelines (The Presidency, 2008). Mello and Phago (2007) argued that equitable representation cannot be achieved if men and women cannot compete equally at the workplace. The *Employment Equity Act* (1998) provided a framework upon which Affirmative Action measures may be implemented. The measures sought to redress past imbalances by giving priority to the advancement of the disadvantaged groups.

The *Promotion of Equality and Prevention of Unfair Discrimination Act* (Act 4 of 2000) was introduced to address inequality and discrimination to rectify the injustices brought about by colonialism, apartheid and patriarchy. The *Skills Development Act* (Act 97 of 1998) was also introduced to promote the development and improvement of skills of the workforce, in particular for disadvantaged groups. Additionally, *Women Empowerment and Gender Equality Framework,* known as *Gender Policy Framework,* was introduced to ensure 50% representation of women into decision-making positions (DPSA, 2008). The policy articulated certain areas to which women can be advanced and developed, such as access to management and leadership positions (The Presidency, 2008).

Institutionally, the Commission on Gender Equality (CGE) was established in terms of Section 187 of the *Constitution of RSA* (1996) for the protection, development and attainment of gender equality (CGE, 2017). The Ministry of

Women was established in 2015 to lead, co-ordinate and oversee the transformation agenda on women's socio-economic empowerment, rights and equality across all sectors of society (Department of Women, 2017). The above legislation, frameworks and institutions were established to support women empowerment and promote gender equality in the workplace. The frameworks were introduced to ensure equitable representation of women in decision-making positions in the Public Service. The theory of representative bureaucracy provides a basis under which a bureaucratic state should be configured to reflect equitable representation and this is discussed in the following section.

2.4 Theory of representative bureaucracy in the Public Service

This research study is underpinned by the theory of representative bureaucracy as the lens for viewing the advancement of women into senior management positions in the Public Service. According to this theory, the public service workforce should emulate the demographic composition of South African citizenry (Meyer, 2014). Kingsley (as cited in Meyer, 2014, p. 1047) mentioned "no group can safely be entrusted with power [that] does not mirror the dominant sources in society". Meyer (2014) was saying that senior management in the bureaucratic state should reflect the representation of women who are majority employees in the Public Service. According to Peters and Pierre (2005), in instances where the government was the lead employer, the public service employment policies should contribute to the socio-economic equality by providing opportunities for social mobility and equitable pay.

The DPSA *Annual Report on Employment Equity in the Public Service* (2016) reported a public service workforce at 1 244 852; women were 749 087 (60%) and men 490 474 (40%), and those whose classification was unknown were 5291 (0.43%) as at 31 March 2016. The *White Paper on Affirmative Action* asserted that a more inclusive public service resulted in improved responsiveness and effectiveness, thereby improving the relationship between the state institutions and citizens of South Africa. Meyer (2014) argued that for the Public Service to reflect the demographic profile of the country, women should occupy 52% of senior management positions however, due to the slow pace, it was unlikely that the government would be able to achieve the set target of 50% in the immediate future.

The creation of a representative bureaucracy in the Public Service has relevance to the implementation of the affirmative action policy in South Africa. The representative bureaucracy in the South African context is based on women who are majority employees in the Public Service (Cameron & Milne, 2011). The theory is grounded on the concepts of passive (sociological) and active (functional) representation (Meyer, 2012). Passive representation is described as the extent to which the public service reflects the demographic origins of the citizenry, which Mosher (as cited in Meyer, 2012) defined as symbolic, for example, the proportion of women, men and racial groups. Groeneveld and Walle (2010) view passive representation as an aspirational aim for making bureaucracy more democratic or to ease social tensions. The passive representation argues that one should get the equity numbers right in order to achieve active representation in a bureaucratic state (Meyer, 2014). Peters and Pierre (2005) mentioned that active participation is an outcome of passive representation. The premise underlying active participation is that people's demographic characteristics determine their attitudes and values. Active representation is realised when officials who are in senior positions act on behalf of the public or those they represent in the areas of policy formulation, implementation and outcomes (Peters & Pierre, 2005; Wise, 2005). Thus, it is assumed that if women are included in the bureaucracy they would ensure that the interests of other women are better served, such as making a difference for women's rights, development and gender equity (Ahikire, Musiimenta & Mwiine, 2015; Wise, 2005). Naff (2007) mentioned that in the South African context, representative bureaucracy was instituted to improve service delivery.

Mosher (as cited in Meyer 2012) argued that women's presence in public service was a demonstration that the government provides equal opportunities to all citizens. Groeneveld and Walle (2010) conceded that active representation would only be effective if designated groups are in decision-making positions. Peters and Pierre (2005) argued that some would reject these definitions of representation on the grounds that not all women occupying senior management positions would promote the interests of other women. The contemporary feminists note that the successful progress of women into senior management positions does not necessarily translate to empowerment of women as a collective (Teferra, 2015).

Adusah-Karikari and Ohemeng (2012) outlined some benefits associated with the introduction of representative bureaucracy in the public service. Firstly, through

passive representation, better communication could be enhanced between employees and public clients on the services that the government is offering. Secondly, it could promote diversity of the general population and promote equal access to power. Naff (2007) viewed this as a check on bureaucratic power and demonstrated the broad dispersal of power in the nation. Thirdly, it could promote the principles of good governance and influence prioritisation of items on the strategic agenda (Adusah-Karikari & Ohemeng, 2012). Conversely, there are challenges associated with representative bureaucracy. The representative bureaucracy may lead to prejudice in policy development which bureaucracy has striven to eliminate. Also, it could influence a recruitment merit system, impacting on effectiveness and efficiency of government. Here, many critics of representative bureaucracy would probably argue that government needs to relax recruitment requirements to achieve the goal of representative bureaucracy (Adusah-Karikari & Ohemeng, 2012). Consideration should be given to other factors which mitigate the linkage between passive and active representation (Meyer, 2014). The factors include dismissiveness and ridiculing of women senior managers by male colleagues (Miller, 2016) and the constant justification of their presence in the leadership roles (Ahikire *et al*., 2015).

There are some debates associated with the passive-active relationship and the theory of representative bureaucracy (Meyer, 2014). One of the debates is whether passive representation would translate into active representation. Secondly, will an increase of women in the bureaucracy necessarily result in female citizens being served better? Thirdly, will the women in senior management positions be able to exercise active representation in light of the barriers experienced at this level? Naff (2007) observed that a representative bureaucracy in terms of gender does make a difference when a particular group is well represented. A case in point, Dolan (as cited in Meyer, 2012) found that a greater representation of women in higher positions led to more 'female-friendly' policies that were supported by both males and females. The above case provided evidence that appointment of women in senior positions was fundamental in realising the benefits of passive representation.

Despite the legislative and theoretical frameworks advanced to promote women in senior management positions, women experience challenges which hinder their progress at the workplace. The challenges are experienced at various levels of the organisations, including the way organisations are structured, professional barriers and institutional climatic barriers.

2.5 Barriers to women's advancement in senior management positions

The representation of women in senior management positions signifies a breakthrough into a male dominated space. Despite the progress that has been made, there are barriers which hinder the advancement of women at this level. This section discusses the barriers that women senior managers encounter in their various positions in organisations. This study categorised barriers hindering women's advancement to senior management positions in terms of organisational or systemic, professional career pipeline and institutional climatic barriers (Booysen, 2007; Du Plessis & Barkhuizen, 2015; Johns, 2013; Latchanah & Singh, 2016).

2.5.1 Organisational or systemic barriers.

The organisational or systemic barriers identified for this study includes: gendered organisational culture and structure, gender stereotyping, organisational policies and work-life balance.

Gendered organisational culture and structure.

Organisational culture shapes the identity and practices of an organisation. The culture of an organisation serves as a barometer to be used for testing the health status of an organisation. The variables of organisational culture include cultural values, norms, beliefs and diversity issues. Gendered organisational cultures and social cultural belief systems (Morley & Croussard, 2015) contribute to women's advancement in senior management positions in organisations. Culture was defined by Taylor (cited in Williams, 2007, p.234) as "the complex whole, which includes knowledge, beliefs, art, morals, law, custom and any other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of society". Senior management determines organisational culture hence they should act clearly and visibly in support of cultural values, norms and beliefs and lead by example (Kahn & Motsoeneng, 2014). The perceptions of society on the culture and gender role undermined and discouraged women's advancement in leadership positions in organisations (Chiloane-Tsoka, 2010).

Eagly and Carli (2007) highlighted that one of the cultural practices is that to be a productive employee, one is expected to be available at the office until late at night to finalise some job assignments in order to impress responsible authorities.

This practice was dubbed 'presenteeism'. Presenteeism has been defined as a barrier to women professional career due to family responsibility, such as looking after children, fetching their children at school and assisting them with homework (Du Plessis & Barkhuizen, 2015; Eagly & Carli, 2007).

Eagly and Carli (2007) assert that some women occupying senior management positions either do not have children, or they had some assistance at home from their partners or full-time nannies. Women resorted in shifting the parenting responsibilities to people around them. The argument was that childlessness to women in management could be associated with lack of transformation in organisational practices (Eagly & Carli, 2007). Diversity is fundamental in the management of employees at the workplace especially in the context of South Africa. Herring and Henderson (2011) mentioned that "Critical diversity is about embracing cultural differences that exist between groups and appreciating those differences. It also includes examining issues of parity, equity, and inequality" (p. 630). Group diversity theory concedes that a better managed diversified group made better informed decisions than homogenous groups. Organisations should transform their culture and retention strategies to harvest the skills of female talent (Lewis-Enright *et al*., 2009). In order to improve the conditions of women in organisations, the focus should not only be on numbers, but also a need to create conducive workplace environments, provide equal opportunity, fair treatment, recruitment and compliance legislation (Botha, 2016a; Timothy, 2015).

Although cultural traditions could be applauded for upholding the fabric of many African societies, the *African Gender Equality Index of* 2015 identified cultural practices as one of the barriers impacting women in achieving their full potential (Hingston, 2016). The belief system and cultural mind-sets impacted shaping of the role and status of women in society. Women complied with cultural tradition such as submissiveness to men for fear of being ostracised (Latchanah & Singh, 2016). Kahn and Motsoeneng (2014) contend that men possessed a potential to perpetuate the dominance of African culture and traditions in organisations. The transactional approach practised in the public service is ineffective to change the thinking that women should be treated equally with men. This is necessitated by the structure of the top management dominated by men, especially white males (Kahn & Naidoo, 2011). The male dominant culture and leadership style excludes women candidates

in organisations, without the adoption of an effective leadership approach, the process of transformation is hindered (Booysen, 2007; Kahn & Motsoeneng, 2014; Miller, 2016). Organisational culture plays a significant role in promoting the values, norms and beliefs in an organisation. The perceptions of society on culture and the gender role undermine the advancement of women into senior management. Effective leadership is necessary to eliminate male dominant culture in the public space.

Gender stereotyping.

Men and women are orientated to develop different occupational roles and skills sets based on what is culturally considered appropriate for their sex. This is due to a long-standing tradition of gender segregation that had a negative impact on the self-confidence of women managers (Botha, 2016b; Du Plessis & Barkhuizen, 2015). According to Meyer (2014), women's behaviour and attitude towards a particular issue is dependent on their socialisation orientation which shaped their values, beliefs, context and attitudes, to name a few. The gender socialisation theory argues that women and men are orientated into gender specific customs from an early age (Aliu, Karyeija & Naggita, 2014). Given the dynamics of the diversified South African environment, women are socialised differently and do not share the same values, belief and experiences (Meyer, 2014).

Piterman (2008) mentioned that most of the highly-talented women are overlooked and eliminated from senior management positions based on unfounded perceptions that women cannot lead. Most of the ambitious women find it difficult to gain recognition and reward in organisations since they become "trapped between an impenetrable male paradigm and an unpalatable female stereotype. Their position as cultural outsiders from senior management inhibits their authentic participation in daily working life" (Piterman 2008, p. 12). Miller (2016) contends that African democracy equates leadership with males and patriarchy, hence women's involvement in senior management roles is hindered by the dominant masculine role of male leadership.

Women in senior management are expected to display double mindsets. On one hand, they should "be masculine, to be in control, strong and powerful whilst on the other hand they need to have traditional feminine characteristics of women of nurturing, cooperating and sharing" (Els, 2008, p. 18). Women find themselves in a

serious predicament due to these double standards since they are expected to be tough and authoritative like their male colleagues, on the other side they are being labelled when they act too aggressively. A case in point, when a woman was direct, bold and strong in her approach, she would be labelled as an "an aggressive manager" not only by her male counterparts, but by the other women as well. In retrospect, a man showing the same action as that of a woman would be viewed as an assertive manager. This inconsistency has created a feeling of women trying to overcompensate and that they had to be polite merely because they are women (Els 2008; Kinnear & Ortlepp, 2016; Wohlbold & Chenier, 2011). The gender socialisation of women contributed to their roles in organisations. Leadership roles are defined and allocated on the bases of gender socialisation. Women senior managers are expected to display double mindsets which compromise their leadership style.

Organisational policies.

Even though organisational policies have been put in place to advance women in senior management, the situation and spaces where those policies are implemented remain unchanged (Long, Segalo & Laidlaw, 2016). Senior management in organisations create an environment in which policies and practices allow women to advance according to their abilities (Kahn & Motsoeneng, 2014). The commitment of leadership to implement organisational policies should be driven by political will, openness to innovation and allocation of resources (Van Dijk & Morwamohube, 2015). Traditional African practices in the South African public space have a tendency to frustrate progress in the implementation of policies on women's advancement into senior management positions (Masango & Mfene, 2015).

Cross and Linehan (2006) assert organisational policies and procedures are the results emanating from the senior management decisions. Examples of such policies include, amongst others: training and development; performance management; recruitment and selection; promotion; and mentoring and coaching policies. These policies are identified as playing a critical role in hindering women's advancement into senior management positions in organisations. If there are no clear policies and procedures on how certain issues must be addressed, such gaps give discretion for decisions to be made by senior management. Cross and Lineham

(2006) mentioned that policies had a significant negative impact due to their lack of transparency and openness in advancing women in organisations.

The process of policy implementation has been identified as one area which impacted the advancement of women in senior management. Masango and Mfene (2015) defined policy implementation as a process which followed policy formulation. Mavundla (2010) warned that training, mentoring and support are articulated in departmental policies however, there is a lack of implementation of those policies. Employment equity interventions failed owing to the perceptions associated with the process of implementation (Sebola & Khalo, 2010). Policies are put in place to promote the advancement of women in organisations, however minimal progress has been observed with the implementation and outcomes of those policies. The male dominated hierarchy gives discretion for policy decisions to be made by male senior managers.

Work-Life balance (WLB).

The balancing of work and family life creates a "sticky floor" which hinders women's advancement in senior management positions (Long, Segalo & Laidlaw, 2016). Work-life balance (WLB) is a comprehensive term without universal definition which refers to the degree of individual satisfaction and engagement level with work and family roles. WLB is comprised of three attributes: time; involvement and satisfaction which determine an individual level of engagement to work and family roles (Aliu *et al*., 2014). Women spend an uneven time performing family responsibilities such as child care, elderly care and other important household responsibilities (Du Plessis & Barkhuizen, 2015; Kahn & Motsoeneng, 2014; Long *et al*., 2016). These responsibilities are classified as unpaid labour which required the engagement of working women even in instances where there is domestic assistance (Lewis-Enright *et al*., 2009; Miller, 2016). Miller (2016) contends that irrespective of sexual preference, the social role is biologically determined, women would still be expected to wash the dishes, cook and it would be viewed as transgressing if they did not perform these roles. Women should be commended for keeping the balance between household responsibilities and their work commitments (Masango & Mfene, 2015).

Martin and Barnard (2013) assert that most South African organisations are designed in a manner that does not promote women's career advancement and family

responsibility needs. The view was echoed by Lewis-Enright *et al*. (2009) that some organisations are unable to provide flexible working conditions as an alternative to accommodate women managers. Flexitime is regarded as convenient since it gives employees an opportunity to manage work and family responsibilities; reduces work-family conflicts and results in improved performance at work (Downes & Koekemoer, 2011). The balance of work-life is critical for women senior managers in organisations due to family responsibilities. Flexitime has been identified as an alternative strategy to accommodate women managers.

2.5.2 Professional career pipeline barriers.

The lack of mentoring and little or no access to informal networks are categorised as career pipeline barriers by Johns (2013), whereas Du Plessis and Barkhuizen (2015) defined them as professional barriers experienced by women managers. They both referred to the barriers which limit the career advancement of women senior managers at the workplace (Du Plessis & Barkhuizen, 2015; Johns, 2013). This study categorised the following barriers under the professional career pipeline: mentorship and coaching, networking and social networking and career development practices.

Mentorship and coaching.

Men are to blame for lack of access to mentorship and coaching opportunities for women in senior management. Du Plessis and Barkhuizen (2015) argued that in a male dominated environment, access to mentors is very limited since most of the informal mentoring networks are controlled by men. Women need mentors who understand the dynamics of the male-dominated culture so that they are able to share with them the realities of that world of men. Men used to play a significant role in mentoring, but this has changed since women turned out to be better mentors because of their sense of patience, care and innovation (Du Plessis & Barkhuizen, 2015). Despite women being perceived to be better mentors, there are a limited number of women mentors in organisations (Piterman, 2008).

Formal mentorship programmes and opportunities are critical for career advancement and could assist women to become part of the in-group (Du Plessis & Barkhuizen, 2015; Nzukuma & Bussin, 2011). To support this view, Penceliah (2011) mentioned that mentoring and coaching impart leadership and management

skills, career advancement strategies and targeted competencies focused on the female perspective. Mentoring and coaching plays an important role in harnessing the skills of women senior managers at the workplace. Du Plessis and Barkhuizen (2015) are right that in a male dominated environment, access to mentors is very limited, but they seem on more dubious ground when they indicated that women are better mentors than men. Mentorship and coaching programmes are important for women career advancement in organisations. Men are to blame for lack of access   to informal mentoring programmes to uplift women senior managers.

Networking and social networking.

The difficulty in accessing networking opportunities for women has been cited as a challenge which impedes their advancement into senior management positions (Kinnear & Ortlepp, 2016; Zulu, 2016). Networking is an essential social skill women senior managers need to build and enhance their careers in a workplace environment viewed to be dominated by men (Bogaards, De Klerk & Mostert, 2011; De Klerk & Saayman, 2012; Rasdi, Garavan & Ismail, 2013). Networking involves staying in touch with former colleagues, attending conferences, building relationships, gaining the trust and respect of other managers and professionals (Bogaards *et al*., 2011; Rasdi *et al*., 2013). Relationships and trust are critical factors for building a good understanding in networking (De Klerk *et al*., 2012). Networking is categorised in terms of formal networks (business network) and informal networks (social network). The business network is a more structured specified set of relationships whereas the social network is more flexible where the relationships are more work-related or social (Bogaards *et al*., 2011).

Men and women differ in their reasons and outcomes for networking; women network to acquire knowledge and to share experiences whereas men network for career satisfaction (Rasdi *et al*., 2013). Greenhill, Auld, Cuskelly and Hooper (2009) observed that it is easier for men than women to access power through networking as those were traditionally male dominated practices. The study conducted in the Malaysian Public Service found that women are more likely to experience challenges breaking into male dominated networks due to more male managers in decision-making systems compared to women (Rasdi *et al*., 2013). Given the Malaysian women's contribution to society which is regarded as secondary to that of men,

women are expected to take extra family responsibilities. This practice made women have less time for networking (Rasdi *et al*., 2013).

Informal networking also referred to as the "old boys' network" plays an important role in women's advancement in organisations. The network facilitates the exchange of information, career planning and strategising, professional support and encouragement. This type of network increases the rate of women's visibility in organisations (Du Plessis & Barkhuizen, 2015; Latchanah & Singh, 2016). If women fail to attend the informal gatherings, they miss strategic information needed for upward mobility and the advancement of their career opportunities (Du Plessis & Barkhuizen, 2015; Piterman, 2008). Women do not tap into the available network of both men and women or withdraw from networking due to fear of being seen to be self-promoting or hungry for power (Kinnear & Ortlepp, 2016; Timothy, 2015).

Women were found to be modest and tended to present their profiles inadequately, underplaying their achievements and avoiding workplace politics (Latchanah & Singh, 2016; Lewis-Enright *et al*., 2009; Sechele, 2015). The rules for getting to the top for men and women are not the same (Chiloane-Tsoka, 2010; Schoeman (2013). Piterman (2008) argues that women cannot dissociate from men when in senior management positions, since that professional relationship is fundamental for their success. Networking is an essential skill needed by managers in senior positions. It helps to build relationships and to gain the trust of other professionals in the workplace circles. Informal networks are used to exchange strategic information. Women are modest, hence they choose not to participate in networking sessions for fear of emerging as self-promoting.

Career development practices.

Organisations have not invested much in career development opportunities to enhance the skills of women in senior management positions. Lack of career planning by women as compared to their male counterparts contributes to barriers for women's advancement in senior management positions (Chugh & Sahgal, 2007). Career planning is a two-fold process which involves an individual employee and the organisation and has reciprocal benefits for both. Employees develop their abilities and competencies which lead to personal fulfilment or self-realisation whereas organisations enjoy organisational effectiveness and increased productivity (Kahn & Motsoeneng (2014). All the same, Lewis-Enright *et al*. (2009) maintain that it

remains the role of organisations to accelerate women's career paths and help them achieve their aspirations.

On the other hand, Timothy (2015) asserts that women should take individual responsibility to define their career progression plans and these should be communicated during the talent management development sessions. Development of women in different skills, such as behavioural and technical competencies, remains important for success in management (Chugh & Sahgal, 2007). Women senior managers need to recognise and value their own capabilities and experience and keep their knowledge current through reading of magazines, attending leadership development and coaching and mentorship programmes (Burmeister, 2011). The lack of training interventions and guidance in career progression impacts on skills level of women managers and as such reduces their opportunities for advancement (Chugh & Sahgal, 2007; Du Plessis & Barkhuizen, 2015; Latchanah & Singh, 2016).

The exposure of women in developmental interventions and technical skills allows them to grow in senior management roles (Timothy, 2015). The human capital theory asserts that individuals who invested in education, training and experience displayed higher chances of career advancement, progression and success (Aliu *et al*., 2014). Kahn and Motsoeneng (2014) highlighted that women contributed to socio-economic development of organisations provided they were educated and empowered. Bendeman (2007) observed that a number of organisations had developmental interventions arranged specifically for women, however, such interventions lacked penetration in terms of the impact they had of supporting women's progress into senior management positions. The interventions lacked co-ordination and proper monitoring because they are not linked to organisational strategies. Where such strategies exist, they are not supported by top management of those organisations. Organisations need to invest in career development opportunities to build the capacity of their senior managers. Organisations and individual senior managers are responsible for career planning. Women senior managers are disadvantaged due to lack of career development opportunities.

2.5.3 Institutional climatic barriers.

There are barriers happening in organisations which personally impact women senior managers in the workplace. Johns (2013) refers to differing gender communication style and behaviours as climatic barriers since they are influenced by the environment of a particular workplace. Other scholars, such as Du Plessis and Barkhuizen (2015), defined this as personal barriers hindering women advancement. This research study discusses discrimination/harassment, psychological motivation, communication style and femocracy and the 'queen bee' phenomenon as institutional climatic barriers which hinder women's advancement in senior management positions.

Discrimination/Harassment.

Discrimination and sexual harassment remains prevalent in the workplace despite frameworks put in place to manage this indecent behaviour. These attributes remain a barrier for women's advancement in a male dominated environment. Gender discrimination has been viewed as one of the labour market discriminations which represents a job inequality that cannot be categorised under job requirements, such as education, experience, past qualifications or achievements. This act is viewed as unfair treatment and results in women leaving their organisations (Du Plessis & Barkhuizen, 2015).

Aliu *et al*. (2014) highlighted that gender safety tended to focus on sexual violence and bullying against women. Bullying is any form of verbal, physical or psychological aggression instituted by an employer against employees or by an employee against another employee. Examples of bullying include "intimidation, isolation, victimisation, exclusion, shouting, abusive behaviour, constant criticism or nagging, verbal threats, physical threats, humiliation, excessive controlling behaviour, unreasonable behaviour or task assignment or posters, banners, e-mails and emblems that cause offence to women" (pp. 675-676).

Sexual harassment practices impact women managers psychologically and contribute negatively on their performance at work (Du Plessis & Barkhuizen, 2015). Sexual harassment refers to any unwelcome behaviour of a sexual nature ranging from physical, verbal and non-verbal conduct. Although women and men may be victims of that practice, studies show women are at a higher risk of experiencing sexual harassment than men (Botha, 2016b). There are a number of theories which

seek to enlighten the reasons sexual harassment is happening at the workplace. The theories are: natural/biological; socio-cultural; organisation; sex-role spill-over and four-factor theories (Botha, 2016b).

Firstly, the natural/biological theory does not regard sexual harassment as a harmful act, hence it does not recognise a need for procedures to deal with the consequences of sexual harassment (Botha, 2016b). The theory believes sexual harassment occurs as a result of natural attrition between men and women. This belief was disputed by the socio-cultural theory which views sexual harassment as a mechanism that functions to maintain male dominance over women (Botha, 2016b). The organisation theory posits that sexual harassment occurs as a result of power differentials created by hierarchical structures. The organisational characteristics contributing to incidences of sexual harassment include contact with the opposite sex on the job and the ratio of men to women in the workplace (Botha, 2016b).

Sex-role spill-over theory argues sexual harassment happens in male dominated environments where women's gender is noticeable because of their singularity and distinctiveness (Botha, 2016b). Finally, the four-factor theory offers one comprehensive model to explain a wide variety of sexually harassing behaviours. The theory argues that for sexual harassment to occur, four basic conditions must be present. The individual must be motivated to harass, overcome internal and external inhibitors not to harass, such as viewing sexual harassment as illegal or immoral, and overcome the victim's resistance (Botha, 2016b).

Sexual harassment incidents reported in the public space include "whistling, name calling, use of vulgar or derogatory language; display of body parts; physical contact ranging from touching to sexual assault and rape" (Botha, 2016b, p. 4). Women are reluctant to report unethical conduct because they feel vulnerable to consequences that come as a result of their actions, such as dismissal, opportunities for promotion, reduced prospects and victimisation (Schoeman, 2013).

Psychological motivation.

The attributes of self-concept, self-efficacy and self-confidence are widely researched in an endeavour to show how they impact women's advancement into senior management positions. Self-efficacy can be defined as the determination for a person to successful discharge a task to meet a pre-determined goal (Riordan & Louw-Potgieter, 2011). Women's lack of advancement is associated with limitation

to resources, poor networking, ambition and lack of confidence (Latchanah & Singh, 2016; Mukangara, 2013). The view is supported by Lewis-Enright *et al.* (2009, p. 1) that "poor self-esteem, personal inadequacy, reticence, the 'imposter' syndrome and fear of rejection are all factors that contribute to women not advancing to their full potential". Kinnear and Ortlepp (2016) indicate that stereotypical questions which women are asked, contribute to their inadequacy and lack of self-efficacy. Lack of motivation and confidence are identified as some of the attributes which hinder the advancement of women into senior management positions.

Communication Style.

Women senior managers need to adopt a masculine communication style if they want to be successful in their leadership roles. Von Hippel, Wiryakusama, Bowden and Shochet (2011) present a difference between feminine and masculine communication. The former refers to "more direct, in detail and emotional while the latter is more direct, brief and instrumental" (p. 1313). In order for women to be successful, they need to possess a masculine communication style which undervalues women's management competencies because of gender-based stereotyping (Von Hippel *et al.*, 2011). On the contrary, Chiloane-Tsoka (2015) disputes that equating maleness with effectiveness and femaleness with inappropriateness and inadequacy is unsubstantiated.

Women display four linguistic features in their communication style namely, "Hedges, hesitations, tag questions and verbosity and directness" (Von Hippel *et al.,* 2011, p. 1314). The hedges feature is defined as using words in a statement that reduce the strength of assertion which make the person sound unsure. Secondly, hesitation is when the speaker paused between words by using expressions such as "uh" or "um". Thirdly, the tag questions are explained as short questions that come after a statement, which invite the listener to confirm what was said. These questions are viewed as showing a lack of confidence by the speaker. Lastly, verbosity and directness are regarded as lacking a direct response to questions (Von Hippel *et al.,* 2011). The features are regarded as communication stereotypes which create preconceived ideas that women are unsure of their capabilities hence they act in a more masculine way to counter those stereotypes. Women are judged based on their looks and communication style (Piterman, 2008). The feminine communication style makes women senior managers unsound hence the expectation for them to adopt the

masculine style to be successful on their roles. Women are judged based on their communication style which is compared to that of men.

Femocracy and the queen bee phenomenon.
The ascendance of women to leadership positions confines them from being able to pursue the interests of other women. Mama (as cited in Miller, 2016) indicated that many women leaders globally and within the African region of 'femocrats' are anti-democratic and neoliberal. The practice of femocracy has been witnessed in most of the African States including Kenya, Somalia, Ghana, Zimbabwe and more prominently in Nigeria, where the concept emerged. Femocracy is a term which emerged from the concept of feminism. Mama (1995) defined feminism as the struggle of African women for their liberation from all forms of oppression that they bear, whereas femocracy has been described as the anti-democratic female power structure controlled by a small powerful elite which claims to exist and promote the interest of the ordinary people. The femocrat elite dubbed 'first lady' phenomenon draw power from their spouses who are heads of state. Femocracy promotes the interest of a few elites at the expense of a bigger community by operating alongside the patriarchal system (Mama, 1995). A prominent case is that of Mrs Maryam Babangida who led the Better Life for Rural Women Programme (BLP) from 1987 under the auspices of empowering the women in the poor rural communities of Nigeria. The program lacked accountability from the first lady despite several suits launched to hold the programme accountable. Femocracy was vibrant when President Babangida was still the head of state. Based on the experience of femocracy in Nigeria, Mama (1995) concluded that femocracy is not a viable political phenomenon since it does not lead to sustainable change in women's wellbeing.

Women senior managers need recognition for their own talents, abilities and knowledge and not for being representatives of other women (Johnson & Mathur-Helm, 2011). This is referred to as the 'Queen Bee' phenomenon, a name given to women who pursue individual success in a male-dominated environment (Kinnear & Ortlepp, 2016). Women in senior management positions distance themselves from other women colleagues once they are on top, for fear of losing benefits made in achieving their current status of being on top (Derks, Van Laar & Ellemers, 2016; Kinnear & Ortlepp, 2016; Sechele, 2015). Women present themselves more like men and endorse and legitimise the existing gender hierarchy (Derks *et al*., 2016). The

desire for women to remain unique contributes to this phenomenon (Johnson & Mathur-Helm, 2011). The practice of women senior managers not promoting other women pose a challenge if they would be able to introduce alternative power models to challenge the traditional patriarchal ones (Kinnear & Ortlepp, 2016).

Research conducted in South Africa with the women senior managers in the banking industry revealed that women are competitive, irrespective of the gender they are up against (Johnson & Mathur-Helm, 2011). Further studies conducted in Italy and the Netherlands confirmed that women in senior management positions are more assertive, competitive and status-oriented than other women and even men (Derks *et al*., 2016). These results suggest that rather than women adding feminine perspective to leadership, women assimilate to masculine leadership as they move up the organisational ladder. Women distance themselves only from those women who have not yet reached the senior management level (Derks *et al*., 2016).

On the other hand, studies conducted in Switzerland and Albania found that women senior managers claimed they made larger sacrifices for their career success compared to other women (Derks *et al*., 2016). Hence the gripe from the queen bees that those other women wanting to rise have to work hard and on their own, just as they themselves had done (Johnson & Mathur-Helm, 2011). The Queen bees legitimise gender differences at the expense of junior women, even in situations where such differences are found to be biased towards women. The phenomenon is triggered in work settings which women were devalued and negatively stereotyped. Thus, in situations where women are in a minority in senior management positions or surrounded by stereotypes of being unsuitable leaders, their identity is threatened. Queen bees adopt the masculine characteristics in order to protect themselves from social identity threat (Derks *et al*., 2016).

There are serious consequences associated with the existence of queen bees in the workplace environment (Derks *et al*., 2016). Firstly, the consequence for women as leaders is witnessed when appointing one queen bee into an influential position to alleviate the social identity threat. Queen bees come with substantial costs for the support women senior managers receive. The main source of support for queen bees seems to be other senior women however, in organisations where senior women are less represented, other senior women managers are not always accessible. Due to the fact that queen bees do not recognise junior women because of the low status that

they hold, they are unlikely to receive support from the junior women (Derks *et al.*, 2016).

Secondly, the queen bee phenomenon has consequences for junior women because their career aspirations and opportunities suffer when their female supervisors and potential role model distance themselves from them (Derks *et al*., 2016). Senior women who express gender stereotypes about their female subordinates could be very influential because their stereotypical evaluations are more credible and damaging to women's careers. Other colleagues, such as men, are more likely to accept such evaluations since they are coming from a woman who understands other women better. Hence, junior women in male dominated environments rate women lower compared to men (Derks *et al*., 2016).

Thirdly, the queen bee phenomenon consequences to the organisation are that it could diminish the outcomes for the organisation to promote diversity since women senior managers change themselves when they reach the top to the character of men (Derks *et al*., 2016). The phenomenon has been presented as evidence that it is not the system that was unjust, but the rivalry between women cause senior women managers to limit career opportunities of other women. The queen bee phenomenon has been found to be a powerful force that limits opportunities for women and preserves gender inequality in organisations (Derks *et al*., 2016). Women distance themselves from other women once they ascend to senior management positions. This type of practice limits the career growth of other women who aspire to be in senior management positions.

2.6 Conclusion

For many years, women have been subjected to discrimination, inequalities and excluded from leadership positions. This chapter concludes that equitable representation of women in senior management positions is supported by various legislative and strategic frameworks at national and international level. The theory of representative bureaucracy provides a conceptual basis for passive and active representation of women in the public space. However, this representation does not always translate into active representation of women in bureaucracies. There are barriers at organisational, professional and institutional climatic level which hinder women senior managers from being able to exercise active representation.

Women senior managers do not have direct control over some barriers happening at the organisational level. The organisational or systemic barriers discussed in this section include gendered organisational culture and structure, gender stereotyping, organisational policies and work-life balance. It has been learnt that there are professional career barriers which hinder the career growth of women in senior management positions. Without the necessary skills and nexus, women senior managers are limited in their opportunities to perform their roles successfully. The professional career barriers discussed in this study include mentorship and coaching, networking and social networking and career development practices. Lastly, there are institutional climatic barriers which affect women senior managers personally. Such barriers are influenced by the environment which the senior managers are exposed to on a day-to-day basis. The literature review showed that there are barriers impacting the advancement of women at various levels in organisations. The review provides a basis to interrogate whether barriers exist at senior management level for women in DRDLR which hinder their advancement to exercise active representation. It also provides some of the categories to interrogate if there are direct or indirect issues which affect women as a result of their advancement in senior management positions.

Chapter 3: Research methodology

3.1 Introduction

Chapter 2 explored barriers hindering women's advancement into senior management and outlined the theory of representative bureaucracy while Chapter 3 presents the blueprint of the research strategy employed to conduct this study. This is an exploratory research based on a single case study from the DRDLR. The study adopted a qualitative approach and gathered data using multiple techniques such as interviews, questionnaires and documentary evidence. The chapter shows how reliability and validity of information received was dealt about. It also highlights some ethical considerations and limitations. The chapter concludes by showing what has been learnt from the research methodology process.

3.2 Research design

The success of any research undertaking is primarily dependent on the careful selection of a research methodology. The methodology provides guidance on the technique applied and the intention of the results at the completion of study. Yin (2011) defined research design as the logic blueprint which created the link between the research questions, collection of data and analysis strategies. The blueprint helped to strengthen the validity of the study and the accuracy. This is an exploratory study which sought to gain in-depth understanding of women's perception on their advancement into senior management positions within the DRDLR. The research strategy selected the case study approach. According to Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill (2009), case study strategy is of particular interest if the researcher wishes to gain rich understanding of the context of research.

3.3 Research approach

The researcher adopted a qualitative approach to gather appropriate data to answer the research questions pertaining to women's advancement in senior management positions at DRDLR. Qualitative research employs a number of data-gathering techniques which are interpretative, subjective, impressionistic and diagnostic (Wagner, Kawulich & Garner, 2012). The researcher adopted the interpretative approach since it uncovers the underlying common themes and experiences for

women in senior management positions in DRDLR. The research strategy enabled the participants to provide their perceptions and experiences regarding women's advancement in senior management positions. Wagner *et al.* (2012) emphasised that a qualitative approach is more on evaluation and explanation of data gathered. In other words, qualitative research is concerned with the quality of data gathered to make an informed conclusion. In qualitative research, the researcher worked as an instrument to facilitate data collection, analysis and interpretation. Some data presented in this study was in the form of numbers, hence the application of quantitative data to interpret the findings in this research.

This study used interpretivist lens since it is a qualitative approach which requires researchers to invest more time in contact with participants being studied. The Interpretative Social Sciences (ISS) believe a researcher learns better when in contact with the people being studied, since they share their feelings and interpret situations from their eyes (Neuman, 2014). The approach helped the researcher to understand the environment from the participants' point of view (Saunders *et al.*, 2009).

3.4 Data collection techniques

The researcher used a set of qualitative data collection techniques which included interviews, questionnaires and documentary evidence. This is in line with what Wagner *et al.* (2012) mentioned that those data collection techniques are seldom used as a stand-alone, most of the time they are combined in order to triangulate data and increase the credibility of the study. The researcher categorised data collection in terms of primary and secondary techniques. Primary data were collected through personal interviews and questionnaires though secondary data from books, journals, dissertations, conference papers, government and relevant documents were also used (Neuman, 2014). The researcher conducted semi-structured interviews and administered open-ended questionnaires to collect data in this study. All questionnaires were pre-determined and sent to the participants in the same order. The researcher used questionnaires and interviews because the participants could not be pinned down for interviews nor their submission of the questionnaires within the given timelines, due to the nature of their jobs. The rest of the data collected for this research was extracted from the secondary data sources. The researcher used various

channels including the library, internet, electronic search engines such as SA Publications, Emerald Insight, JSTOR, EBSCO HOST, and others, to extract scholarly journal articles on the topic under study.

3.5 Sampling

Sampling is defined as the process of selecting a smaller set of cases in a bigger pool in order to generalise to the total population (Neuman, 2014). Wagner *et al.* (2012) indicated that qualitative research is concerned with the collection of deep and rich data collected over time. This qualitative study used the non-probability sampling to identify the cases to be used for this study. Non-probability sampling was found to be most cost-effective and convenient, although chances for women senior managers in DRDLR to be included in the sample cannot be calculated. Non-probability sampling is categorised as follows: convenience, snowball, quota and purposive sampling (Wagner *et al.*, 2012). The researcher chose the purposive sampling method since the targeted population are departmental officials available to respond to questions. The sample of this study was only women occupying director positions and above. Women senior managers comprise a small population in the department. The researcher targeted most of the women senior managers based in the National Office since they are easier to reach, compared to those in the provinces. The result of purposive sampling was "to sample participants in a strategic way to ensure that those sampled should be relevant to the study" (Bryman, 2012, p. 418). Given details and rich data needed for the qualitative study, the sample was chosen from a list of women senior managers who possessed experience in the subject and the environment of the department. Neuman (2014) affirmed that the technique is appropriate to select unique cases that are very informative.

A sampling frame of women senior managers of the DRDLR was used for this purpose. Senior management is comprised of the Directors, Chief Directors, Deputy-Director Generals and Director-Generals. Due to the fact that two primary data collection methods were selected, the first sample of participants comprised women senior managers targeted for the completion of the questionnaires. The second sample comprised 12 women senior managers targeted for the individual interview sessions. For the questionnaire, the researcher sampled 20 managers in the DRDLR who fall within the category of senior management. A total number of 20 requests were sent individually via email to female senior managers requesting their

participation on the study. The participants were given a deadline to return their completed questionnaires. A total number of 14 participants (70%) returned their completed survey questionnaires as per agreed deadline.

On the interviews, the researcher identified the participants within the senior management category of the department as the sample for collection of data in this study. The researcher made appointments with respective senior managers and requested their availability and willingness to participate in the study. Upon their confirmation, interview meetings were set up with the respective senior managers. The sessions were held with the senior managers in the comfort of their offices. The interviews lasted between 45 – 60 minutes. The researcher explained the study's purpose to participants and requested permission to record the interview so that it could be transcribed at a later stage. The participants were also assured that recordings would be used solely for purposes of study research and that recordings would be disposed once the report has been accepted by the University.

The researcher guided the interview sessions by using the interview questionnaire developed for this purpose. The researcher recorded the responses on the questionnaires and made follow-ups to seek clarity in other responses that were provided by the interviewees. On this research study, an interview method proved to be an effective method to gather information when compared to questionnaires. The interviewees volunteered more information and shared their real-life experiences regarding their roles as women in senior management positions. The data collected was categorised in line with common themes which emerged from questionnaires and interviews. In other instances, themes were extracted from the conceptual framework that has been advanced for this study.

3.6 Data analysis

Data analysis involves the organisation of data received from different sources such as the interviews, questionnaires, documents and other sources. Wagner *et al*. (2012) mentioned that there are many approaches that the researcher may use to analyse the data. This study used the interviews and questionnaires to collect data hence the thematic analysis is applicable to be used with these techniques. Wagner *et al*. (2012) mentioned that thematic analysis involved identifying themes or patterns in data. The data was also coded according to the various themes or patterns using "key words" and different form of colours to mark responses that were on the same theme. Data

quality was critical in the process of conducting research. This is why planning for research is so important, because once the quality of data is compromised at any stage in the process, which threatens the validity and reliability of the findings. This can render the study as not credible and the results would not be credible.

3.7 Data validity and reliability

According to Neuman (2014), it is imperative that measures are reliable and valid when conducting qualitative research. To enhance validity and reliability of data, the researcher used questionnaires that were uniform to all the participants in the study. The researcher piloted the drafts questions with female participants before the final questionnaires were distributed. This entailed testing early versions by asking participants' questions and ascertaining their interpretation and understanding on the questions. According to Neuman (2011, p. 153), qualitative researchers have "checks on their evidence". This means that the researcher should consider what people say and confirm their evidence and consistencies.

The following strategies were employed to ensure greater consistency with the data collected. Firstly, maintenance of the audit trail; note taking and filling of questionnaires received. Secondly, the researcher reviewed the participants' responses to check if they are in line with the data collected from other participants. By constantly re-examining the data at hand, this study ensured consistency and reliability. The researcher enhanced the credibility and trustworthiness by being neutral. During the interviews, the researcher did not comment when a reference was made to men. Neither did the researcher showed a lack of interest in what was being said. The researcher maintained a good composure from the beginning to the end of the interviews. This made the interviewees comfortable to such an extent that they forgot that they were being interviewed by a male researcher. Neutrality eliminates researcher's biases (Neuman, 2014).

A total of 14 questionnaires were received; they were captured in Microsoft Word and Excel documents designed with the tables showing the number of participants and the questions used. Data analysis of the questionnaires was done on the table and responses categorised according to themes and were translated into the main research document. The participants were coded as Participant (P) 1 – 14, in order to protect their identity and to enable the researcher to analyse the responses

without prejudice. The same approach was repeated during the interview process, interviewees were tagged according to their numbers from Interviewee (I) 1 – 12.

3.8 Description of participants

The participants in this research study are full-time employees of the DRDLR who are based in National Offices, including Provinces. The majority of the employees who responded, are from the National Office based in Pretoria. The participants are senior managers since the study was limited to this category of employee. There are two categories of participants for this study. The first category outlines the women senior managers who participated on the interview process whereas the second category shows the managers who participated by responding to the questionnaires.

Table 1 depicts the salary levels of management categories and groupings in the Department.

Table 1. Description of salary levels and job titles

SALARY LEVEL	MANAGEMENT CATEGORY	GROUPING LEVEL	JOB TITLE
16	Executive Manager		Director-General
15	Executive Manager		Deputy Director-Generals and equivalent
14	Executive Manager	Senior Management	Chief Directors
13	Senior Manager		Director

Source: Author

Figure 1: Number of interviewed participants per salary level

Number of interviewed senior managers per salary level

	Level 13	Level 14
Series1	9	3
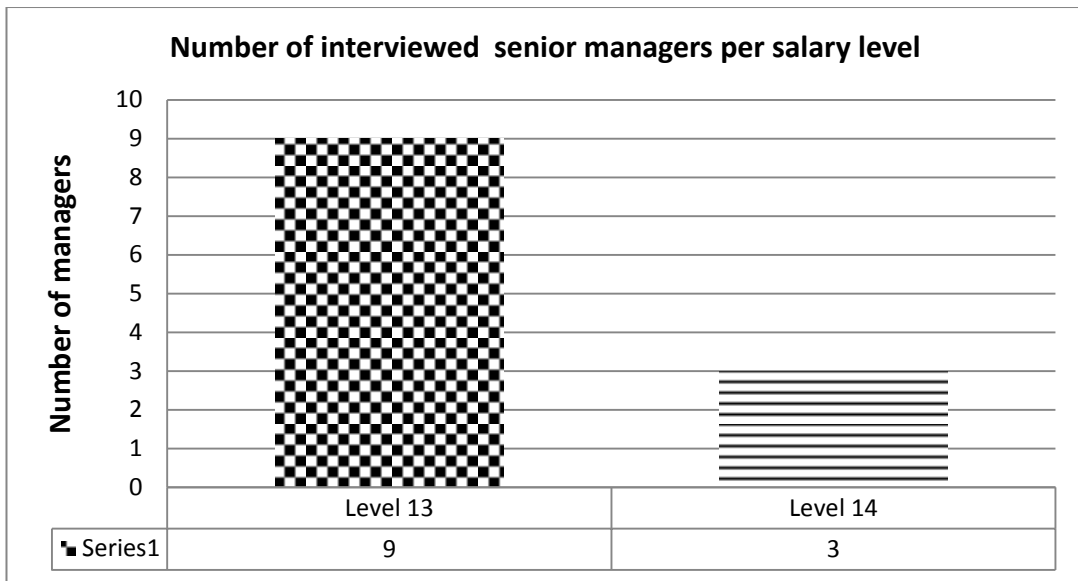
Source: Author

The figure above depicts the number of women senior managers who participated in the interview process for this study. The figure further shows that the highest number of senior managers accessible for the interviews is Directors.

Figure 2: Number of participants for questionnaires per salary levels

Number of participants for questionnaires per salary level
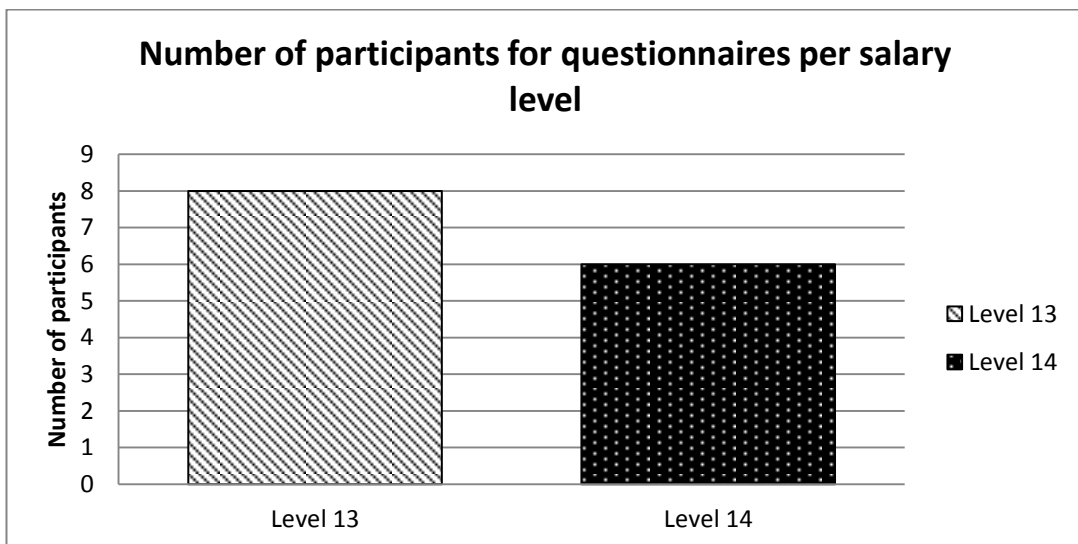
Source: Author

The figure above shows the number of women senior managers who participated in the study through the completion of the questionnaire. The figure further shows that

there are a total number of 14 female senior managers who responded. There are eight Directors and six Chief Directors who returned their completed questionnaires.

Figure 3: Number of participants for questionnaire per age and salary level

Source: Author

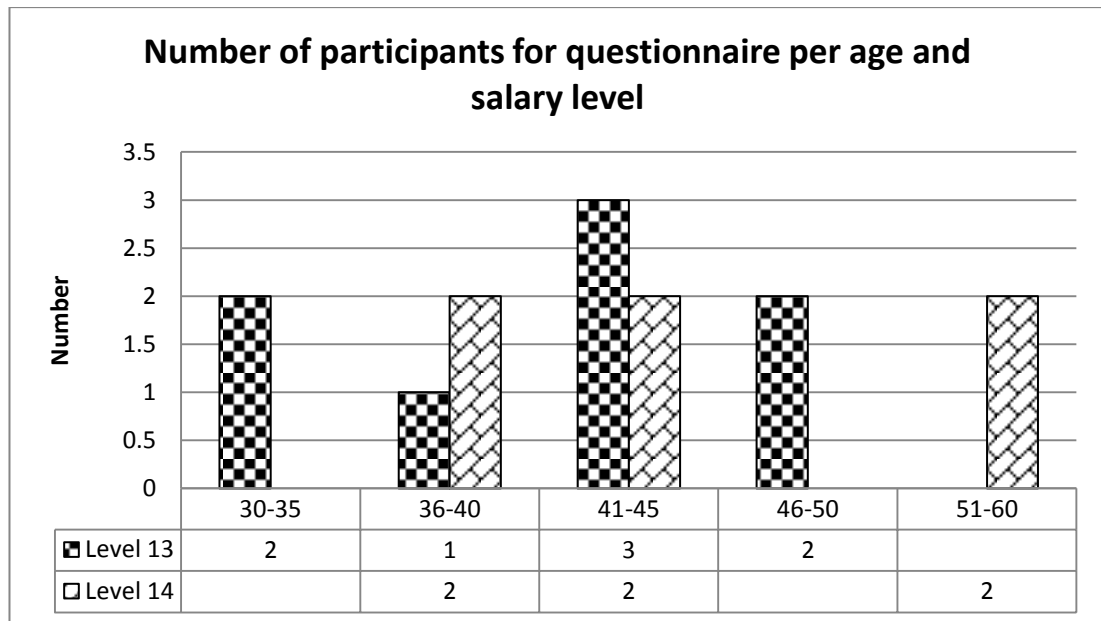The figure above shows that there are two participants aged 30-35 who occupy level 13 in this category of participants. The number of females who occupy the senior management positions is at their peak between the ages of 41-45. There is no level 14 between the ages of 30-35; this is an indication of the progression level that senior managers should go through before they can be promoted to a higher senior management level.

Summary on the participants

The summary shows there are more directors than all the other levels of senior management who participated in the study. This is an indication that senior management at the director level are more accessible compared to other higher ranks. The profile of the participants shows that the department has a different mix of generations which signals diversity related issues informed by the preferences of these generations. The generation of participants range from generation Y born between 1977-1985, generation X born between 1964-1977 and baby boomers born between 1946-1964 (Hobbs, 2017). The data shows that there are more women senior managers in generation X and Y. This could pose a challenge to baby boomers

if they are expected to coach or mentor the other generations due to the ratio imbalance. The data also show that there is a correlation between the age and the rank of officials in the department.

3.9 Ethical considerations

In any study undertaken, ethical matters should take priority. Whilst the researcher focused on realising the objectives of the study, it was imperative that the rights and privacy of others are protected. Elliott (2007) mentioned that any form of study that involved the participation of human beings requires consideration of the potential impact of that study on those involved. Ethical clearance for conducting this research study was obtained from the University during the presentation and acceptance of the proposal. Permission to conduct the research was obtained from the DRDLR.

To allow participants to open up, the researcher assured them about the confidentiality of their information. The request to participate in the study was done via email and the purpose of the study outlined in that email. The researcher clarified certain queries with participants via email and follow-up telephone calls. The questionnaire did not require any biographical details of the participants. The data was obtained from the Personnel and Salary Information System (PERSAL) report which is centrally administered by the Department of National Treasury. Also, permission was sought for the participants to participate freely. This view was corroborated by Babbie and Mouton (2007, p. 64), who mentioned that "the clearest concern in the protection of the subject and their wellbeing is the protection of their identity".

The participants were individually briefed of the purpose of the study. They were also sensitised that DRDLR granted approval for the study to be undertaken. All participants gave consent via email of their willingness and commitment for participation on the study. The copy of the report is available to the DRDLR who is the sponsor of this study.

3.10 Limitations of the study

The study targeted solely women senior managers (Directors and above) within the DRDLR. One of the limitations for this study was that participants may have been subjective in their responses which could have affected the quality of the findings. Time constraints remained a limitation to perform some of the study related activities, such as interviews and completion of questionnaires; since the participants identified were senior managers, they were not available to complete the questionnaires or conduct interviews due to other pressing business demands. Some of the questionnaires were not returned by due date because of tight schedules and work commitments of the participants. Due to the small number of participants sampled for this study, the findings could not be generalised or regarded as representative opinions of all women employees across the DRDLR.

Another limitation which was critical for this study is that it was conducted by a man exploring the experiences of women which may have influenced the data obtained. This raised a lot of interest in the women managers participating in the study as they were keen to understand why there was interest in this topic from a male colleague on this study. The researcher had to maintain neutrality in order to eliminate any form of bias which might appear as a result of this gender difference. Also, the researcher had to explain to the participants that the study was meant for academic purposes so that they could be comfortable that their responses would not be used for purposes other than the one explained.

3.11 Conclusion

This chapter focused on the research methodology and design that was employed whilst undertaking this study. It outlined the elements followed to undertake this study such as research paradigm, methodology, design, data collection and sampling and data analysis techniques. The researcher adopted the qualitative method since it is more concerned with issues of richness and texture in the data collection process.

The study adopted a qualitative approach to gather appropriate data to answer research questions pertaining to women's advancement into senior management positions in the DRDLR. The study was conducted using an Interpretivist lens in order to study the participants closely. A set of data collection techniques was used which included questionnaires, interviews and documentary evidence. Purposive

sampling approach was the preferred method for conducting this study due to its convenience and relevance to the participants being studied. A total number of 14 participants responded to the questionnaires, while 12 participants were interviewed through a semi-structured interview process. The data were categorised and synthesised using themes which emanated from the questionnaires and interview responses. Thematic analysis was used to analyse data to ensure consistency, reliability and validity. The researcher took ethical considerations into account to ensure participants in the study participated of their own accord. Some limitations were observed for the study however, these did not impact on the quality of the information pertaining to the study. The following chapter presents the data using the thematic approach.

Chapter 4: Findings from DRDLR

4.1 Introduction

The chapter presents feedback on the data gathered regarding women's advancement into senior management positions at the DRDLR. The demographic profile of the department is presented to show how employees are structured from the top management level to the lower level positions. The demographics show the progress with regards to the changes that the department has made regarding advancement of women in senior management positions. The chapter presents findings emanating from interviews and questionnaires conducted with women senior managers in the department. The chapter shows some barriers hindering women's advancement in senior management positions and possible strategies to address those barriers.

4.2 DRDLR demographic profile

Figure 4: Geographical spread of employees in the DRDLR

Source (DNT, 2017)

EC =	Eastern Cape
FS =	Free State
GP =	Gauteng
KZN =	Kwa Zulu-Natal
LP =	Limpopo
MP =	Mpumalanga
NC =	Northern Cape
NW =	North West
WC =	Western Cape
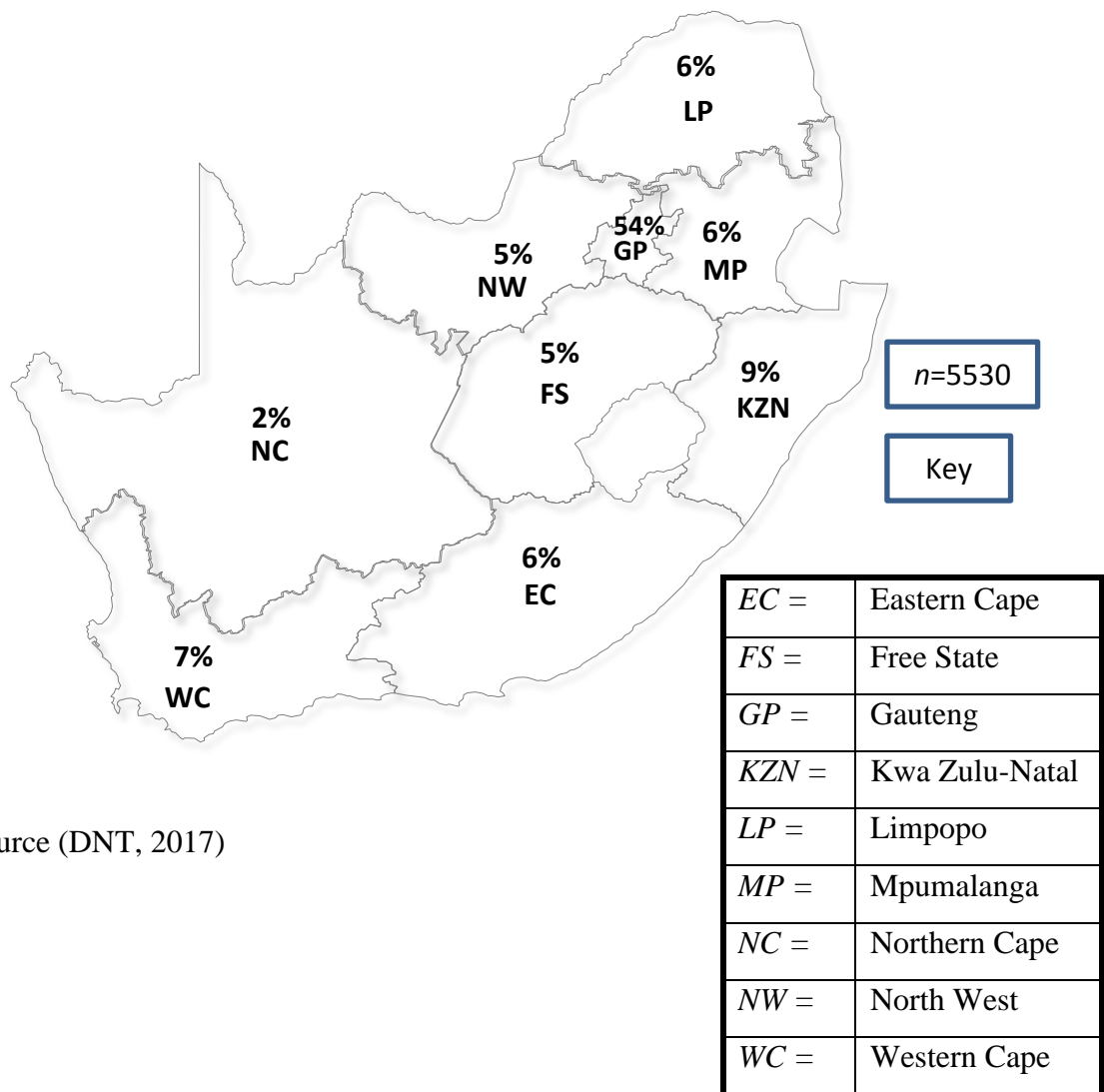
The above figure shows the breakdown of DRDLR employees across the nine Provinces. Gauteng Province has the highest number of employees at 54%, followed by KZN with 9%. The highest number of employees in the Gauteng province is due to the National Office which is located in the Province. The Northern Cape is the least Province with only 2% staff complement of the Department. This map shows that DRDLR has a footprint in all the Provinces to deliver on the national competency. It further means that senior management component in all these provinces should be representative of provincial demographics with women senior managers equally represented at senior management levels.

Figure 5: Number of employees per race and occupational category

Number of employees per race and category

	Top Management	Senior Management	Professionally qualified and experienced specialist and mid-management	Skilled technically qualified workers, junior management, supervisors, foremen, and superintendents	Semi-skilled and discretionary decision making	Unskilled and defined decision making
Males	8	168	1010	781	672	45
Females	6	109	881	1051	867	55

Source: (DNT, 2016)

The figure shows the number of employees per occupational level and sex. It depicts that there are more males occupying senior management positions as compared to the females in the DRDLR, with 176 males and 115 females respectively. The figure indicates that women comprise 43% at top management level which shows progress on the appointment of women senior managers at this level. There are more females as compared to males occupying skilled technical and academically qualified occupational levels with 1453 males and 1918 females respectively. More developmental interventions are needed at this level to ensure the development of women aspiring to be senior managers.

Figure 6: Percentage of senior management per sex and financial year
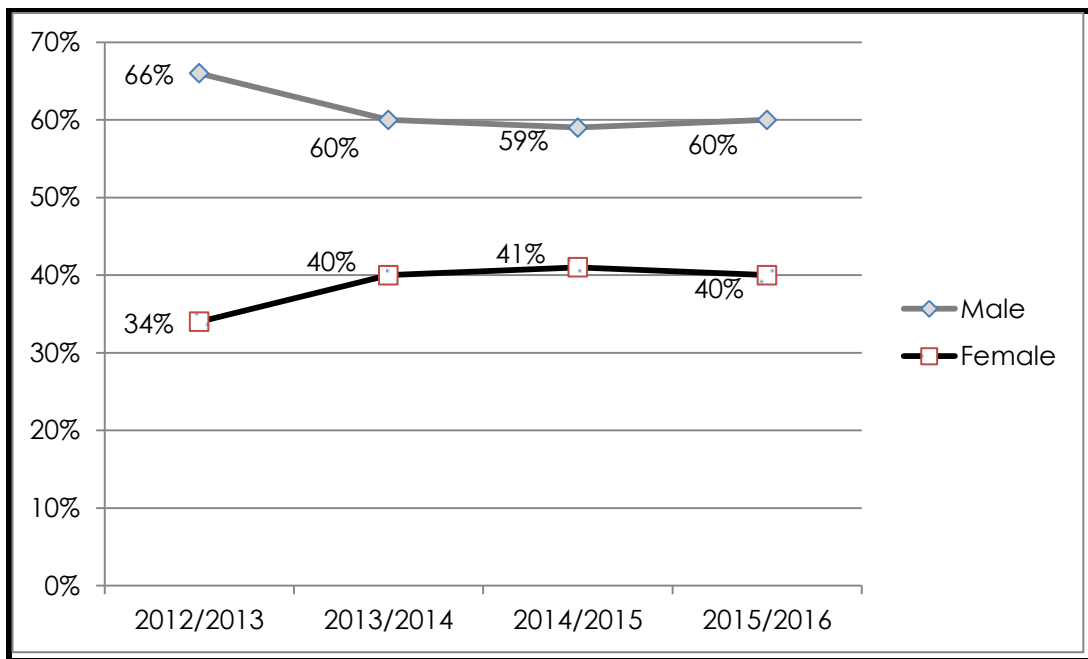
Source: (DNT, 2017)

The figure above indicates the percentage of senior management positions in the department per sex and financial year. The figure further shows that there are more males occupying higher positions in the department as compared to females. In financial year 2012/2013, 66% were males and only 34% females. Given the environment of the department which is more technical, especially in the field of Geomatics and Surveying, previously regarded to be occupations for men, there is an improvement with the appointment of women senior managers in the department since 2012. In 2015/2016, 60% were males and 40% females. The percentage of representation shows an improvement that the department has made to meet the target of 50/50 parity as required by the gender equity policies.

Figure 7: Representation of female managers per race and salary level
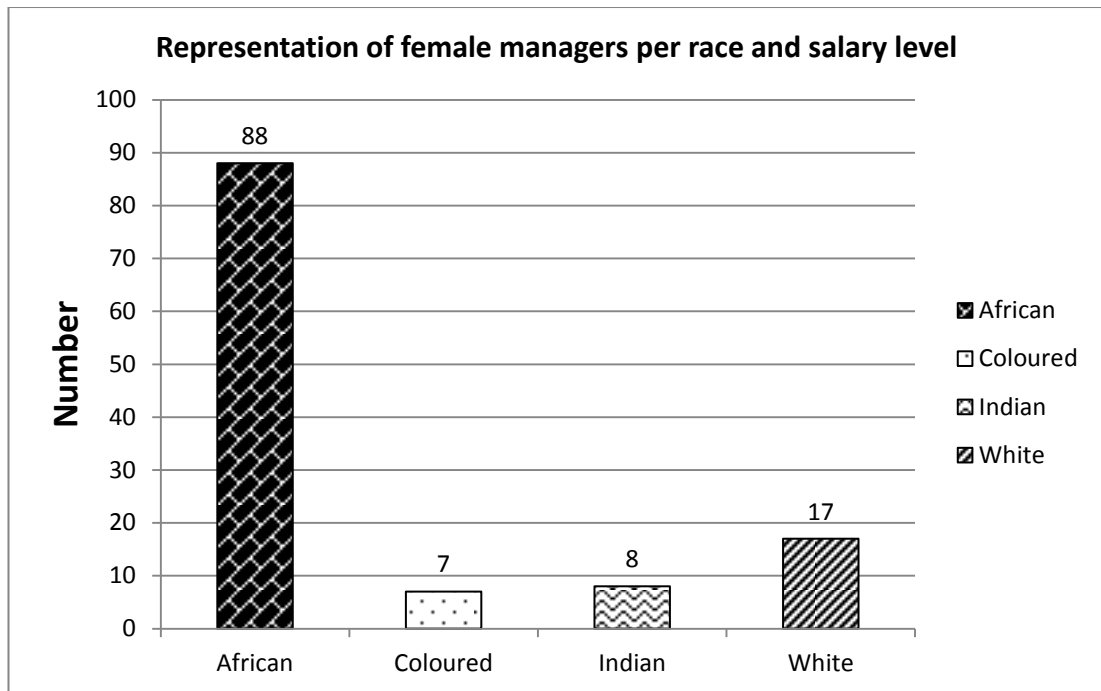
Source: (DNT, 2016)

The figure above indicates the number of women senior managers per population group in the DRDLR. The figure further indicates that there are more African female senior managers as compared to other population groups. There are 88 senior managers in the department followed by 17 white seniors managers, the least being Indians with only eight senior managers in the department. This figure is representative of a South African population where Africans comprise the highest number compared to other racial groups.

*Figure 8: Number of newly appointed senior managers per sex and salary levels
from 2013-2016*
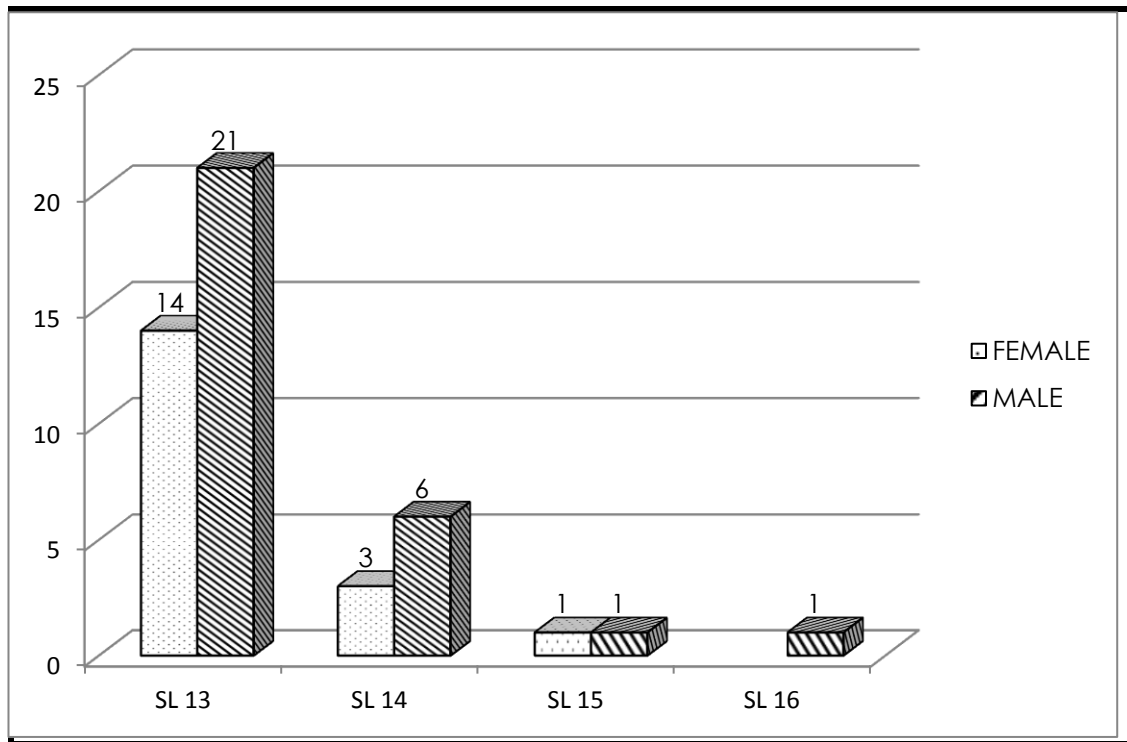
Source: (DNT, 2017)

The figure above depicts the number of newly appointed senior managers per sex and salary levels since 2013. For salary level 13 (Directors) there are 21 males and 14 newly appointed females, which is a difference of seven male senior managers and as for level 14, which is the Chief Director level, there are six male and three female Chief Directors. For salary level 15, there is gender balance. This figure indicates the extent that the department is making to support the advancement of women in senior management positions in the DRDLR.

Table 2: Number of bursaries awarded to employees per sex and financial years

Academic Year	Number Awarded Bursary	Sex	
		Male	**Female**
2013	25	12	13
2014	21	13	8
2015	20	11	9
2016	23	11	12
TOTAL	**89**	**47**	**42**

Source: (DRDLR, 2017)

The table above depicts the number of senior managers awarded bursaries per sex and academic years. The figure further shows that 47% of women senior managers are afforded an opportunity to study further as compared to men at 53%. Given the current 40% representation of women at senior management level in DRDLR, this is a reflection that women senior managers are afforded the same developmental opportunities compared to men in the department.

Summary on the demographic profile

Based on the demographic profile of the department, there is a greater concentration of employees in Gauteng province compared to all other provinces combined. It shows that senior management representation is high in Gauteng comparatively. The number of employees shows that there are more professional and skilled technical employees which confirm the nature of services offered by the department that is more technically based. The chances are that employees at this level could consider career growth in the field of their specialisation as compared to the management stream. If there is no specialisation stream, employees could apply for senior management positions for financial incentives upon which they could exit the system.

The data show the department has made progress with the appointment of women senior managers since 2012. The gap in the percentage between men and women has narrowed from 16% in 2012 to 10% in 2016. This is an indication that

the department is committed to promoting representation of women in senior management positions. African females are the majority when compared to other races. The department affords equal opportunities to both male and female to allow employees to further their studies.

4.3 Findings from interviews and questionnaires

The section below provides a summary of the findings gathered from the interviews and questionnaires administered to the sampled participants. The responses are categorised in terms of the organisational or systemic, professional and institutional climatic factors.

4.3.1 Organisational or systemic factors.

The participants outlined a number of organisational or systemic factors which impacts the advancement of women senior managers at the workplace. The factors include cultural stereotypes, gender stereotyping, working for extended hours, organisational policies, work-life balance, treatment of women managers by other colleagues, competition amongst women, rank consciousness and tribalism.

Cultural Stereotypes.

The majority of participants indicated that cultural stereotypes are highly prevalent. The following quotes are illustrative of the points made.

> "Because of the society and community where we are coming from,
> there is a belief that men are the best and they will give good results
> without even hearing them out" (I07).

> "There are men who still believe that they cannot be led by women or
> women cannot take decisions on their behalf" (I10).

> "Stereotypes also affect some of the male officials at the junior
> positions; they refuse to report and accept women as their supervisors
> and managers" (R06).

> "Generally, in the African culture men still expect women to perform
> household and parental work despite their professional status" (R14).

Gender Stereotyping.

The majority of participants mentioned that women can be themselves when occupying senior management positions, provided they receive the necessary support.

> "Women can be themselves if they are trained properly. They are
> changed by the policies and procedures in the working environment"
> (I02).

> "Women all start the same. Organisational culture pressurises them to behave
> like male in order to survive at that level" (I05).

> "Women can be themselves if they get the necessary support from
> men in senior management positions" (I06).

> "Women take off the feminine position and put on the male position.
> Women can be themselves but failed many times because they are
> weak" (I07).

> "There is a perception that when you become a manager in a male
> dominated environment you have to behave like them and do things
> like men" (R12).

Working for extended hours.

The participants revealed that there is an organisational culture of senior management working until late in the office.

> "The organisation creates a culture of long hours. No conscience of
> how the organisation allocates roles to women in the department"
> (I03).

> "Women sit until it is late in the office to catch up their work" (I06).

> "The culture in the department is also patriarchal and more male
> biased; for example, meetings can end very late in the evening
> meaning that female managers are expected to drive at night to get back home" (R07).

Organisational policies.

The majority of participants indicated that human resource policies within the DRDLR are user friendly, reasonable, supportive and accommodative. They indicated that there is a need to improve the implementation of the departmental policies.

> "I find the HRM policies supportive to women's issues as there are
> leave provision only applicable to women like maternity which is very
> necessary as women always have a bigger role to play in family
> structures" (R13).

> "The policies are user friendly for example, regarding flexi working
> hours which might be helpful for women, however; application of this is limited and
> based on the supervisor and subordinate relationship" (R03).

> "The Department has good policies but the implementation is still a
> challenge in the department" (R08).

Work-life balance.

The majority of participants indicated that women are hindered by the balance of work and family life and lack of a conducive workplace environment which supports parenting.

> "Women perform dual roles - the home and work. They are never able to dismiss the
> home responsibilities and work-life is always a challenge" (I04).

> "Balancing work and family responsibilities - as compared to men,
> women need to also take care of their families, raising kids, taking
> care of their families' health issue. This means they have to work
> overtime to ensure that they perform at work and at home" (I10).

> "The environment that the organisation creates is not conducive such as hygiene and
> safety. There are no practices that support parenting" (I03).

"Women generally want a workplace environment that will recognise
and encourage family orientation" (R07).

Rank consciousness.

The element of rank pulling has been identified as one of the factors which hinder women in senior management. It was highlighted that this element affects men as well.

"Men and women occupying senior management positions are too
rank conscious and that result into bottlenecks when it comes to
implementation or carrying out of work" (I09).

"The issue is more on rank levels. Senior managers want to engage
with colleagues on the same rank. This does not happen due to status of being a
women senior manager" (I11).

Tribalism (Ethnicity).

The participants mentioned that there is favouritism done by women senior managers on tribal background.

"Favouritism - where employees are not treated equally or fairly.
Diversity management - the tribes are playing a bigger role than the
work itself and that leads to demoralising staff at large" (I09).

4.3.3 Professional career pipeline factors.

The participants mentioned professional factors which hinder advancement of women into senior management positions. The factors were categorised as mentoring and coaching, social networking, career development opportunities and personal career development.

Mentoring and coaching.

The majority of participants indicated that they never had mentoring opportunities.

"There is no mentoring and coaching support, after appointment you
just have to run your work without induction" (I10).

"No formal mentoring exists. I mentor myself through identifying specific knowledgeable colleagues and engage them where I need guidance. Further I read extensively on management and work related fields" (R01).

"Mentoring, as defined in the social sciences, does not exist in the department. Senior managers need to initiate "mentoring" from immediate supervisors by requesting for guidance when they require assistance" (R10).

Very few participants had formal and informal mentoring and coaching experiences.

"It was a formal arrangement however the mentor was chosen for me. The approach used by the mentor was to focus on my strengths and forget about my weakness" (R14).

"I had an informal mentoring from the respected colleagues in the profession. I had an opportunity to meet with great influential leaders" (I07).

Social networking.

The majority of the participants mentioned the following regarding networking in the department.

"I am honestly not sure as the department hardly host any social events for senior managers" (R07).

"I realised that women are not engaging enough in the department. Women do not network on work issues - they network on social issues" (I07).

"There are some women forums in place, these forums' mandate are to look into the issues that affect women and recommendation solutions. They are not effective or beneficial at all" (I10).

Career development opportunities.

The participants had different views on the career developmental opportunities accessible to women senior managers.

> "There are a lot of programmes in place and differ from
> components, they are addressed through PDP for individuals for
> their training needs" (R05).

The other participants mentioned that there are not enough customised programmes to develop women senior managers.

> "There are not enough learning and development opportunities to
> cater for women for example, customisation of developmental
> programmes to accommodate women" (I04).

> "There are no specific interventions directed or targeting women.
> Training is provided on demand based on the performance
> development plan and /or individual specific requests" (R11).

Personal career development.

The majority of participants indicated they had opportunities to attend developmental programmes, worked very hard and read a lot.

> "Attended Accelerated Development Programme. The programme has
> been successful. It has moved me from comfort zone of being a
> middle manager to the right level of senior management" (I02).

> "I have studied, attended courses and seminars/workshops, networked
> and read a lot of documents. I have also transferred my skills from
> one field/sector to another thus enabling me to move from one level to
> another" (R11).

> "Work extremely hard and long hours, always aim to be professional
> and achieve targets. Do additional work in related fields to gain the
> competitive edge in terms of work knowledge" (R01).

Very few participants never had the opportunity to attend the programmes due to work demands.

4.3.2 Institutional Climatic Factors.

There are a number of factors which individually affect women based on the climatic conditions of the institutions. The participants identified bullying/victimisation, sexual harassment, treatment by other colleagues and competition by women senior managers as some of those factors.

Bullying/Victimisation.

The majority of the participants mentioned that there are elements of bullying/victimisation happening to women senior managers at the workplace. This took different forms as the quotes below indicate.

> "There is lot of bullying in the workplace for example, women senior managers pulling the rank on other women. Even officials below the senior management tend to bully women" (I01).

> "Victimisation will always be there especially when working with men who always exert power" (I07).

> "Told to "shut up" in a meeting by other male senior management colleague because they claimed I did not know what I was talking about" (I01).

> "Experienced negative attitude from other women senior managers at my level, they indicated that I am making myself their supervisor" (I11).

Sexual Harassment.

The participants indicated that sexual harassment is rife at the workplace and women are punished when they do not accede to this demand. Although they might not have experienced it personally, they indicated that there are number of unreported cases at junior level.

"Sexual Harassment in senior management is very subtle. At senior

management level when women refuse sexual advances, men

find a way to punish you. With junior levels, it is different since they are the most

vulnerable ones" (I01).

"Sexual harassment - women are required to pay in kind. When you are in senior

management position, it is done in a subtle manner" (I07).

Treatment by other colleagues.

The majority of participants indicated that female colleagues are undermined and treated with disdain.

"Female colleagues belittle the female e.g. if there are two

Directors, male and female, the males one receives more

respect than the female ones. They take instructions from male

colleagues than the female colleagues" (I01).

"Women are still treated with disdain" (I07).

"Women senior managers are treated differently compared to

men in many ways for example, they are being undermined by

all levels when it comes to accepting instructions. The Pull

Down syndrome amongst women is highly noticeable" (I09).

Other participants indicated that leadership style defines the perception of women senior managers by colleagues.

"Women perceived to be "tough" are taken more seriously than

women perceived to be more 'nurturing' " (R10).

Competition amongst women managers.

The participants revealed that women compete against each other and also compete with men hence it is difficult for them to uplift each other.

"There is a competition amongst the women managers in the
workplace which turns out to be unhealthy at some stage. The female
colleagues will even turn out to compete personally" (I01).

"Women are competing with men and end up dropping off and be
admitted in psychiatric hospitals because of stress" (I06).

"Women are competitive-it is their nature. Women have nothing good to talk about
each other" (I07).

"Women are their own worst enemies - they do not support one
another in development, they rather compete with one another" (I04).

4.3.3 Recommended Interventions.

The participants proposed different interventions which the department can implement to improve the prospects of women in senior management positions. The interventions vary from senior management commitment, providing gender and diversity awareness programmes, conducting workshops on organisational policies, providing conducive and flexible working environment, designing of attractive talent retention strategies, mentorship and coaching programmes and delivery of leadership and management development programmes.

Gender and diversity awareness programmes.
The participants recommended awareness programmes to sensitise both men and women of gender and diversity dynamics at the workplace.

"Sensitising men to challenges women feel and have - arrange some
gender sensitivity programmes" (I04).

"Conduct some surveys on how people feel about the gender equity
related issues" (I06).

"Training on diversity management. Closing of gender gap on
management appointment" (I10).

"Women need to be inducted to the culture and dynamics of the
department. There is an information overload when you are first
introduced in the department" (I11).

Organisational policies.

The participants are of the view that the DRDLR should enforce compliance with the
policies and legislation pertaining women advancement at the workplace.

"The Department needs to put policies in place that support women
empowerment and women issues. If they are already there, they need to make us
aware of them" (R09).

"The department should have policies that get to a level that men and
women are forced to transfer the skill" (I07).

Conducive and flexible working environment.

Participants had several suggestions for improving the environment. Below are some
of the recommendations made.

"We need flexi hours to attend to other roles we play in the society. It
could be useful to be provided with child care facilities such as
crèches for nursing mothers, preschools, health care facilities for
birth control, check-ups, gym, healthy food services, etc." (R12).

"Create an environment conducive to improved quality of life in the
form of a balance between work and personal life" (R07).

Attractive talent retention strategy.

The participants indicated that to improve the current practice in DRDLR, the
department should formulate an attractive retention strategy.

"Clear strategy adopted in the department on retention/career pathing for women
managers" (R10).

"The department should also introduce the retention policy in order to keep woman within the organisation especially if they have scarce skills and they are being offered better positions somewhere" (R06).

"Involvement of women in critical roles and projects" (I03).

Establishment of women's forum.

The establishment of a forum to address women's issues has been cited as one of the factors to improve the advancement of women in the department.

"Women fora could also assist where women in more senior positions can share their experiences and equip other women in senior positions even if it is women from other departments or even in the private sector" (R08).

"Opportunities for network such as Women's Forum" (I04).

Senior management commitment.

Participants recommended that "There must be a political will from the top to support the initiatives" (I03).

Mentorship and coaching programme.

The participants recommended that the department should introduce the above programme to empower women.

"Formal mentoring for women who would like to pursue a career in the department" (R10).

"The department will also have to look at formalising mentorship programmes" (R08).

Leadership and management development programmes.

Most of the participants agreed that the department should introduce developmental programmes aimed at developing women within the department.

"Specifically design or ensure there is training programmes aimed at preparing women for senior positions" (R11).

"Identify training and development programmes that are more
targeted towards women in leadership. Allow women to attend more
leadership conferences and develop a formal mentorship programme"
(R07).

"Build the capacity of women to be managers through for example,
management development programmes" (R03).

4.4 Conclusion

The demographic profile showed some progress regarding representation of women in senior management positions in the DRDLR. Senior management is supportive of the legislative and strategic frameworks to promote gender equity in the department. However, there are some challenges which hinder women's advancement in senior management positions. The challenges include organisational and systemic barriers: cultural and gender stereotypes, extended working hours, organisational policies, work-life balance and rank consciousness. Professional barriers identified include: mentorship and coaching, social networking, career development practices and personal career development. The institutional climatic barriers include bullying/victimisation, sexual harassment, treatment by other colleagues and competition experienced by women senior managers. In order to ensure women senior managers are effective in their roles, these challenges should be eliminated.

Possible interventions to address these barriers include senior management commitment, attractive talent retention strategy, review and workshop of organisational policies, conducive and flexible working environment, establishment of a women's forum, mentorship and coaching programmes and leadership and management development programmes.

Chapter 5: Analysis of the DRDLR findings

5.1 Introduction

This section provides an analysis of perceptions and barriers women senior managers' face and how such attributes impact their advancement and representation in senior management positions. It provides an analysis of the questionnaires and interview responses given by the participants in the DRDLR. The analysis involved organising data, generating it into categories, themes and patterns. This is in line with what Neuman (2011, p. 458) mentioned that researchers should compare related evidence gathered. They should "identify for multiple process, causes, properties, or mechanisms within the evidence". Researchers should also look for patterns in terms of similarities and differences or alike and unlike evidence. The barriers for discussion were categorised according to the following themes and sub-themes: organisational or systemic barriers (gendered organisational culture and stereotypes, organisational policies, work-life balance and rank consciousness, favouritism and ethnicity); professional career pipeline barriers (mentoring and coaching, social networking and career development opportunities) and institutional climatic barriers (bullying and harassment, psychological motivation, treatment of women senior managers by colleagues, queen bee phenomenon and communication style).

5.2 Thematic presentation of the findings

5.2.1 Organisational or systemic barriers.

Gendered organisational culture and stereotypes.

Although cultural traditions should be applauded for upholding the fabric of many African societies, the *African Gender Equality Index of* 2015 identified cultural practices as one of the barriers impacting women from achieving their full potential (Hingston, 2016). The belief system and cultural mind-sets impacted the shaping of the role and status of women in society (Latchanah & Singh, 2016). Men possessed a potential to perpetuate the dominance of African Culture and traditions in the organisation (Kahn & Motsoeneng, 2014). This study revealed that some males still hold stereotypes about women occupying senior positions; some men believe that women are not good enough to hold and make decisions in senior management roles. Despite the promotion of women to senior management positions, they are not

accorded the same respect as their male counterparts. The participants in this study mentioned that women are appointed in senior management positions to comply with legislation and meet the requirements of passive representation. Cultural practices are used by men as a scapegoat not to respect women and the positions they hold. It is engraved in men's mind that they cannot be led by women, irrespective of the competencies and professional credentials that women possess.

Women in senior management are expected to demonstrate double mindsets. On one hand, they should "be masculine, to be in control, strong and powerful whilst, on the other hand, they need to have the traditional feminine characteristics of women of nurturing, cooperating and sharing" (Els, 2008, p. 18). The study confirmed that in the DRDLR, women perceived to be "tough" are taken more seriously than women perceived to be more "nurturing". Women lead differently by nurture, rather than nature (Miller, 2016).

This study confirmed that women senior managers move from being female to male whilst at the same time trying to strike a balance of acceptance by both male and female colleagues. The findings showed that organisational culture pressurises women to behave like men in order for them to survive at that level. Women are changed by the policies and procedures in the working environment. Findings in this study revealed that officials do not want to be asked or challenged on the right things that they are doing wrongly. Also, women senior managers become more like men when they want to put their point across. Despite all these interventions, women senior managers still remain outsiders, not accepted by men and fellow women.

This study suggests that women can be themselves when occupying senior management positions. Women start the same but due to pressures, they change their character. Organisational practices contribute to women senior managers adopting the masculine style. The male dominant culture pressurises women to unwittingly adopt the way things are done in the department. The consequences of women not adopting these practices are very high and costly. It render women inadequate and contribute to poor work performance. In order to save face, women are compromised to change their feminine character to adopt the masculine style.

Men and women are orientated to develop different occupational roles and skills sets based on what is culturally considered appropriate for their sex (Botha, 2016b; Du Plessis & Barkhuizen, 2015). This study confirmed that gender discrimination and bias existed in technical fields of work in the department, for

example, women were previously not employed as Survey Technicians nor considered for senior positions based on their gender orientation and experience. Males were considered as better suited employees in the Survey Profession, and they had better opportunities to get promotion than females because of their years of experience.

One of the cultural practices in organisations is that to be a productive employee, one is expected to be available in the office until late at night (Eagly & Carli, 2007). This study showed that the department promotes a culture of working long hours and there is a lack of conscience on how work assignments are allocated to women senior managers in the department. The working culture in the department is male biased, for example, sometimes meetings end very late in the evening meaning that female managers are expected to drive at night to get back home. Eagly and Carli (2007) noted that this culture of working until late at night placed men at an advantage. The women in senior management positions in the department are exposed to a culture of working until late due to the manner in which management meetings are organised in the department. This practice could be career-limiting for women when they do not attend senior management meetings as arranged. Women are regarded as not taking their work seriously the moment they start giving excuses about their unavailability due to other family commitments. Performance can be enhanced if the focus is to limit the time spent in the meetings and focus on the deliverables which need to be done.

Organisational policies.

Leadership should create an organisation in which policies and practices allow women to advance, according to their abilities (Kahn & Motsoeneng, 2014). This research study showed that departmental policies are user-friendly, for example, a flexi-working hours policy make provision for employees to work flexi-hours, however application of this provision is dependent on the supervisor and subordinate relationship. Women appreciated the maternity leave policy that the DRDLR introduced for the female employees. The study noted that as much as the department has good policies in place, the implementation of those policies remains a challenge. Some of the women senior managers are not aware of certain policies or the benefits that are provided by those policies. It can be argued that as much as the department has policies in place, some of the employees might not be aware of the benefits such

as the flexi-working hours that the department offers to the employees. This could render the policies non-effective since employees are not aware of the implications or benefits offered by those policies.

Work-Life balance (WLB).

Du Plessis and Barkhuizen (2015) mentioned that women in South Africa perceived working long hours and weekends as a barrier to their professional career. This study confirmed that women senior managers are expected to attend weekend meetings and when they indicate their unavailability to attend the meetings, it is regarded as if they are uncooperative and not committed to their work. It was noted that it is very rare for women senior managers to find nannies who can work over the weekend. Women take more time off from work due to the responsibility of taking care of children and other members of the family. This creates a loss of confidence in women managers as they are deemed to be unreliable and less committed to their work.

This is similar in the United States where lifestyle issues such as work-life balance and individual mindsets held women back (Burmeister, 2011). The study showed that senior management positions are demanding with regards to time spent at work and mostly, this is to the detriment of family and quality of life which are important to most family-oriented women. Schoeman (2013) supported this view when she indicated that men treat women differently and hold them back. This study revealed that workload becomes excessive to the extent that women senior managers carry some work home. This has created some tension with their spouses since they are viewed to prioritise work over family. The tension from home affects the performance level at work. On certain occasions, women managers do not attend family functions over the weekend due to work commitments. These experiences discouraged other women from applying for senior management positions based on the current practices that are happening at the senior management level in the DRDLR.

The participants in this study expressed that women senior managers with teenagers or those without children are less affected with the balance of work and family life as compared to those with small children. Women are expected to strike a balance which has proved to be a very difficult pendulum to balance. They need support at home and work in order to assume the role of senior management which requires full engagement.

Rank consciousness, favouritism and ethnicity.

The study revealed that rank level played a role in the execution of instructions by colleagues and senior managers in the department. This practice does not happen to women senior managers only, but male managers as well. An example provided in this regard was that some Chief Directors cannot accept initiatives from the Directors. This practice can be attributed to the bureaucratic nature of the public service which is hierarchical in nature. This study also revealed that ethnicity and favouritism play a major role amongst women senior managers in the department. An example has been cited where senior management promotes interests of certain ethnic group because of association with them. This practice has impacted staff morale and the performance of work in those components. The above practices are some of the new findings which this study noted to hinder women's advancement in senior management positions.

5.2.2 Professional career pipeline barriers.

Mentoring and coaching.

Formal mentorship programmes and opportunities are critical for women's career advancement in senior management positions (Du Plessis & Barkhuizen, 2015). This is confirmed by Penceliah (2011) that mentoring and coaching should provide leadership and management skills, career improvement strategies and organisational competencies from a women's perspective. This study revealed that the majority of women senior managers are appointed in senior management positions without proper mentoring because the department does not have a mentorship programme in place. Women senior managers who had an opportunity of a mentorship programme are from previous employers done by their supervisors. They indicated that even though the mentorship happened, it was very informal.

This study also revealed that other women received mentorship from family members such as their parents, siblings and spouses. The lack of a formal mentorship programme for women senior managers in the DRDLR could have a negative impact on their personal growth and development. Mentorship provides an opportunity for women to be properly introduced in the senior management roles and also provides guidance and encouragement when women are facing challenges at this level. It is therefore, critical that the DRDLR introduces the mentorship programme and enrol women senior managers so that they are able to benefit from this intervention.

Social networking.

Networking involves being able to stay in touch with former colleagues, attending conferences, building relationships with other managers and professionals inside and outside an organisation (Rasdi *et al*., 2013). The participants in this study find the environment unreceptive to engaging in networking opportunities. Women senior managers prefer to engage in networking opportunities with their social partners outside the workplace environment. They observed that women are very busy with work to the extent that they do not find time to engage in other activities outside work. The networking process is critical to break the barriers between men and women at the workplace.

This study revealed that networking is important since senior managers miss an opportunity to touch base with other colleagues because of working in a closed environment. Other participants expressed concern that social events are not typically in line with what they can do, such as playing golf on a Sunday morning or staying in the bar with men enjoying drinks. The participants in this study are not keen to network owing to the consequences that emanate from this engagement, such as negative comments which colleagues make and use these comments against them when they return to the office. This practice contradicts what Bogaards *et al*. (2011) mentioned that networking provides individuals with an opportunity to build friendship and rapport and to gain trust, respect and regard for other people. Trust plays a major role in building a relationship amongst people especially in senior management roles; once the trust is broken, colleagues would not be in a position to build a good rapport with each other. This will even affect their working relationship since the trust element would be missing.

Career development opportunities.

The development of women senior managers in different skills such as behavioural and technical competencies has been found critical for success in management (Chugh & Sahgal, 2007; Timothy, 2015). The participants in this study experienced that women are given opportunities in senior management roles but, due to lack of adequate skills needed and responsibilities which come with the job, they are intimidated in their roles. This can be attributed to lack of senior management-specific induction programmes or support to enable them to find balance in their new roles. The study showed that there are training and development programmes and

bursaries available to employees to pursue their studies for both men and women employees.

Lack of training interventions in organisations impacted on skills levels of women managers and reduced their opportunities for advancement (Du Plessis & Barkhuizen, 2015). Although there are training opportunities available in the department, the participants revealed that there is a gap in relation to specific training targeted at women's development or advancement. Training and development plays a significant role in imparting the knowledge and skills which women managers need in order to perform in their relevant roles.

According to the human capital theory, individuals who invested in education, training and experience display greater chances of career advancement, progression and success in organisations (Aliu *et al*., 2014). The study revealed that some women managers initiated personal interventions to advance themselves and attended outside short skills programmes, conferences and enrolled in post-graduate qualifications.

The participants in this study indicated that they work extremely hard and long hours to be professional and to achieve their work targets. The developmental programmes that women senior managers attend helped them to be able to deal with the challenges that are associated with a senior management role. This was in line with what Burmeister (2011) mentioned, that women need to recognise and value their own capabilities and experience and keep their knowledge current through reading of magazines, attending leadership development, coaching and mentorship programmes. The training and development interventions close the gap that women are adopting from men which result in them changing their character.

More women progress to senior roles in support functions or specialist roles compared to general management functions (Sandler, 2014). The findings of this study showed that progress has been made to empower women in decision-making positions in the department. An example was cited of a Chief Financial Officer (CFO) who is a woman and able to make decisions on the finances of the DRDLR. Also, the department appointed more women compared to men at the Deputy Directors'-General positions. This category of management possesses the necessary skills to bring other women senior managers on board and provide them with developmental opportunities.

5.2.3 Institutional climatic barriers

Bullying and harassment.

Gender safety at the workplace tends to focus on sexual violence and bullying against women (Aliu *et al*., 2014). Bullying is any form of verbal, physical or psychological aggression instituted by an employer against employees or by an employee against another employee. Examples of bullying include "intimidation, isolation, victimisation, exclusion, shouting, abusive behaviour, constant criticism or nagging, verbal threats, physical threats, humiliation, excessive controlling behaviour, unreasonable behaviour or task assignment or posters, banners, e-mails and emblems that cause offence to women" (Aliu *et al*., 2014, pp. 675-676). The participants in this study felt that victimisation in senior management will always be there because men exert power over women at this level. Women senior managers reported being emotionally affected which result in feeling a certain level of incompetency in the performance of their roles. They are even called "incompetent" and this makes them lose self-esteem, for example, a woman senior manager was told over and over again to "shut up" in senior management meetings and that they should not respond when blame is shifted to them for the departmental poor performance. The study indicates that this type of bullying is experienced mostly from Africans and Coloureds males against fellow females. It can be seen from the above that women in senior management are exposed to bullying practices despite the policies and legislations introduced in the department.

The participants indicated that women are bullied by being given names when they start performing the work that was ordinarily performed by men. Some of the typical isolations are experienced when African men use indigenous languages in meetings that they know very well that their female white colleagues do not understand. There are elements of bullying in the form of name dropping to push women senior managers to do some work, for example, using the names of higher authorities such as Minister or Director-General to get women senior managers to deliver certain assignments.

Women face open antagonism, sexual harassment and discrimination when entering the workplace (Botha, 2016b). This study revealed that women experience sexual harassment in very subtle ways at senior management level in DRDLR since they know their boundaries and this makes their counterparts respect them accordingly. The participants in this study observed that sexual harassment is

reported as being more prevalent at junior levels because women at this level are found to be vulnerable. The female interns experience more sexual harassment from male colleagues than other levels. They report that if they say "no", male managers would find a way to punish them. To some extent, women are required to pay in kind and if they refuse, they are victimised. The participants indicated that women at junior levels shy away from reporting incidents of sexual harassment until they exit the department. The female colleagues choose to keep quiet or report the cases with the external appointed health and wellness service providers in order to protect their identity. Schoeman (2013) confirmed that women are reluctant to report unethical conduct because they feel vulnerable to consequences that will come as a result of their actions such as dismissal, opportunities for promotion, reduced prospects and victimisation. This study revealed that although sexual harassment is subtle at senior management level, there are incidents of victimisation which happen as a result of refusal to sexual advances. Women who refuse sexual advances from men are subjected to subtle punishment which happens in the form of negative feedback on their work performance.

Psychological motivation.

Despite hard work and effort, women contribute to their own lack of advancement when occupying senior management positions. Lewis-Enright *et al*. (2009, p. 1) mentioned that "poor self-esteem, personal inadequacy, reticence, the 'imposter' syndrome and fear of rejection are all factors that contribute to women not advancing to their full potential". The participants in this study indicate that women senior managers work very hard to prove their worth due to the perception that people hold about them, for example, they spend a lot of time preparing their work to be presented in meetings compared to men. Upon presentation of the work at meetings, the forum decides whether to endorse it or not. Since most of the fora are male dominated, men do not accept women's ideas and sometimes they do not even make a comment about women's work.

The participants in this study experienced that male senior managers only recognise the ideas brought by women after a long time, for example, an Information Technology (IT) personnel assisting one of the offices was on leave for two weeks and the office encountered some IT challenges during that time. There was another official (not IT qualified) who was enthusiastic to assist other officials when they had

IT challenges in the absence of the other IT personnel. During the management meeting, a woman senior manager raised a suggestion that there is an official who can assist with the IT related issues whilst the other official was still on leave and to train him to be an understudy for IT qualified personnel. The decision was taken to use the official on a trial basis for two weeks however, the part on developing the official was rejected on the spot. At the end, that very decision which was shot down was implemented by the male senior manager, the official was trained and mentored and later appointed to the Chief IT Personnel Officer position. The male senior manager claimed that he was the one who came with the idea to develop the official who is doing an excellent job as IT personnel. This experience showed a lack of appreciation for the initiatives women senior managers bring to the workplace.

Treatment by other colleagues.

The study revealed that women senior managers feel they are treated with disdain by other colleagues when compared to male senior managers. For example, if there were two Directors, the males receive more respect than the female ones. The female colleagues prefer taking instructions from male senior managers than the female senior managers. In addition, the way these officials interact with both senior managers is different. Female officials belittle their fellow women senior managers. Lewis-Enright *et al*. (2009) mentioned that women support one another at an early stage, however once the competition element is introduced, their relationship is affected to the extent of petty fighting. The study confirms other studies on women managers that there is a competition amongst women senior managers in the workplace which turns out to be petty and personal at some point. Women senior managers compete with each other on personal issues such as their looks, possessions, families and marital status.

The study pointed out those women managers compete professionally with men and end up dropping out and being admitted to psychiatric hospitals because of stress. Women senior managers put a lot of pressure on themselves to meet the standards at that high level. The participants in the study reported that women are competitive by nature, due to the level of competition involved amongst women, some women opted to have male friends who could support them and not criticise unnecessarily. The participants in this study feel that there is a competition amongst the women in the workplace environment which undermines the possibility of

women being able to support each other. They cannot make other women great in case they become their competitor. The question remains if the highest number of women in senior management positions (passive representation) would be in a position to promote active representation considering that they are not empowering others when they occupy senior positions.

Queen Bee phenomenon.

Women in positions of authority distanced themselves from junior colleagues once they are on top because they feared losing gains made in achieving their current status of being on top (Kinnear & Ortlepp, 2016). In addition, Sechele (2015) mentioned that women do not support each other to get to the boardroom level. The findings revealed that women who progress to senior management positions provoked anxieties and ambivalence in other women and men, hence they do not get the same support they would get if they were men. The participants revealed that women were resentful towards women officials who are more highly qualified than them. The findings of this study revealed that "women are their worst enemies" since they do not support one another in development. The Pull-Her-Down syndrome amongst women has been reported as a critical barrier to women's advancement in the department.

Sechele (2015) highlighted that women are too concerned with their own success instead of empowering others, as they moved up the ranks. This study confirmed finding that women in senior management positions want to be seen to know what they are doing and to claim personal glory. Women senior managers are too conscious of their "position" and as such, overcompensate, wanting to prove that they are capable as leaders. The study also revealed that women want to impress, show power and call the shots, hence they change their character when occupying senior management positions. It was further revealed that women have pride naturally and this attribute plays itself out when they ascend to senior management positions. At some point, women take power home which affects their personal relationships with the people around them.

Communication Style.

The belief system and cultural mind-sets impacted the shaping of the role and status of women in society. Women complied with cultural tradition, such as submissiveness to men, for fear of being ostracised (Latchanah & Singh, 2016). The participants in this study experienced that women managers allow men to make the last comments. This means that it is mainly the males whose voices have impact. Women's voices are not strong enough to be in a position to be heard. Because of the stereotypes, men are regarded as the best who give good results without even hearing them out, for example, when women present in male dominated fora, sometimes they make mistakes due to the pressure of the environment. It becomes difficult for women to restore themselves and convince the panel on the issues they are presenting. Men regard this as lack of proper preparation or knowledge on the content of the work being presented. The participants experienced that when women make mistakes they get punished, but when men make mistakes it is allowed.

It was for this reason that Piterman (2008) mentioned that women are judged based on their looks and communication style. The DRDLR needs a breed of men who understand the thinking of women and support them during the process of development.

5.3 Strategies for women empowerment

The participants on this study made suggestions about interventions that should be considered to ensure that the barriers affecting women's advancement in senior management positions are eliminated. Some of those interventions include firstly, the introduction of an attractive retention strategy which should address amongst others, a training programme for middle managers to prepare them to enter senior management roles and retention of women managers with scarce skills. Secondly, the department should introduce a formal coaching and mentorship programme. Thirdly, design of leadership and management development programmes to accommodate managers at various levels. The Induction Programme for senior managers has been recommended as one of the interventions to induct women senior managers in the culture of the department, dynamics and strategic priorities. In addition, the department should resuscitate the Women's Forum, especially at the senior management level. Furthermore, the department should implement all measures to provide a conducive and flexible working environment.

The participants suggest that women feel comfortable when they are trusted and involved in critical roles and projects. There must be a trust relationship amongst men and women senior managers at the workplace. Assignments can only be delegated when there is a trust relationship. The participants in this study indicate that there must be a political will from the top to support women's initiatives. Some of the participants indicated that not all women are planning to be in senior management positions because of fear of the unknown. If the categories of these women are pushed into senior management positions, the department runs the risk of poor service delivery. Lastly, the participants suggest that the department should increase compliance and implementation of the legislative and strategic frameworks, including policies.

5.4 Conclusion

The analysis of this study revealed the existence of barriers at various levels of the department which hinders women advancement in senior management positions. Women senior managers perceive their appointment at senior management level as tokenism and symbolic since their contributions are not appreciated or supported by their male counterparts. The participants in this study feel women are undermined and devalued by all the levels of employees in the department. They feel the workplace environment is not conducive to support parenting or dual responsibilities assumed by women. The research study showed that there are good policies in place however, the implementation of such policies are dominated by male managers. Women senior managers are exposed to different treatment which compels them to change their feminine character so that they are able to withstand the workplace challenges. The women managers who participated in this study perceive the workplace as lacking tolerance for women to learn and grow from their mistakes. In addition, their experience is that women are not supportive of each other; hence they lose the ability to work together and to challenge the circumstances that they are confronted with on their roles. The competition amongst women exacerbates their detachment to work collectively to resolve the challenges at the workplace. There is a need for the department to institute developmental interventions to orientate women senior managers in order for them to be able to overcome these challenges.

Chapter 6: Conclusion and recommendations

6.1 Conclusion

This chapter provides the conclusion and recommendations based on the findings in this study. A number of conclusions were drawn in line with the questions which this study addressed. The DRDLR has made considerable progress regarding equitable representation (passive representation) of women into senior management positions in line with legislative and strategic frameworks; however women are confronted with barriers which hinder their advancement at this level. There are barriers at organisational or systemic level, professional career pipeline and institutional climatic levels.

The DRDLR senior management component is comprised of 40% women and 60% men respectively. This is a positive progress since it is in line with the broader Public Service attained target where women comprise 41% and men at 59% (DPSA, 2016). It should be further concluded that although there is a challenge in the Public Service with regards to the appointment of women in Deputy Director-General and Director-Generals' positions, the DRDLR has appointed 56% women senior managers at this level. This is commendable in light of the nature of the department which is defined to be more technical and characterised by gender stereotypes for appointment of women at this level.

Secondly, the study revealed that not all women aspire to occupy senior management positions, due to personal reasons and choice of career. Some women prefer to be specialists in their own technical field without having to manage other people. It can therefore, be concluded that it is not a given that women in middle management positions aspire to be promoted into senior management roles. Women managers are challenged to exercise active representation and promote other women to senior management level, given the barriers that they face in senior management positions.

Thirdly, it can be concluded that as much as there is notable progress in advancement of women in senior management positions within the DRDLR, a lot still needs to be done regarding implementation of qualitative measures. The study concludes that women in senior management positions experience various challenges which hinder their advancement and ability to make a contribution at this level. The

barriers women face, were categorised at organisational or systemic, professional career pipeline and institutional climatic levels. The barriers hindering women at the organisational level include organisational policies, gender and cultural stereotypes and work-life balance. The DRDLR contributes to hinder women senior managers because of the organisational practices which are driven by male senior managers. Some of the practices include holding meetings until late at night and lack of flexi-working times and support for women managers with family responsibilities. In addition, due to stereotypes that are still prevalent, women senior managers are not regarded as the same as their male counterparts when they are occupying senior management positions. The junior employees prefer to take instructions from the male senior managers compared to the female senior managers. The study concludes that the balance of work and family life remains a barrier to advance women in senior management positions. The participants in this study indicated that there is an organisational culture which disrespects and undermines women.

In addition, the study found that professional career pipeline barriers contribute to women's advancement into senior management positions. The barriers include mentoring and coaching, social networking and career development opportunities. In order for senior managers to succeed in their roles, there is a need to provide mentorship and coaching so that they can learn and acclimatise into their new roles. The study revealed that women senior managers are appointed into these roles and left alone without the necessary support. Women senior managers do not participate in social networking due to their hectic schedules and workloads. The study concludes that although there are training opportunities in place, there is limited targeted training and development opportunities aimed at women senior managers.

Lastly, this study concludes that institutional climatic barriers contribute to women's advancement in senior management positions. The barriers include bullying and victimisation, sexual harassment, treatment of women managers by other colleagues and competition amongst women managers, communication and the queen bee phenomenon. The study concludes that as much as men in senior management positions are holding back, women are also responsible for their advancement. There are institutional personal challenges which hinder women from being able to promote other women. Bullying, victimisation and sexual harassment are still prevalent in the workplace which contributes to women senior managers from being able to bring out their best.

6.2 Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, a lot more needs to be done in order for meaningful change to be realised in the DRDLR. The study recommends the design of an integrated talent retention strategy to improve the advancement of women in senior management positions in the DRDLR. Firstly, senior management must show full commitment and high visibility to support gender equity programmes in the DRDLR. The gender equity must be part of the strategic imperatives of the department with set targets and timeframes. The transformation element should form part of the performance agreement for all senior managers in the Department. Senior management should be held accountable for the progress made on their various components regarding the promotion of gender equity. Both men and women senior managers need exposure to interventions that are about building and challenging patriarchal assumptions.

Booysen (2007) supported the above recommendation that senior managers' performance agreements should include policies and regulations compliance. In addition, rewards and recognition should be offered to those managers who show consistent compliance. The political and bureaucratic leadership must show commitment to gender equality to realise a diverse and inclusive organisation (Adusah-Karikari & Ohemeng, 2012; Botha, 2016b; Wohlbold & Chenier, 2011). Wohlbold and Chenier (2011) indicated that senior managers drive the strategy of the organisations and provide the resources to facilitate the implementation process. Senior management in organisations are the epitome of values, attitudes and beliefs which the entire organisation should uphold. It is only through leadership commitment that the department may realise the successful implementation of gender equity related interventions.

Secondly, the departmental policies should be aligned to address issues affecting women such as flexible working hours and introducing child care facilities. This will improve the structure of how programmes are co-ordinated in the department. The policies should protect women against the violation of rights and bullying in the workplace. There is a need to capacitate the gender equity unit and create a safe environment where these interventions can be addressed. Booysen (2007) and Botha (2016a) mentioned that management should implement and operationalise the policies and communicate through workshops details of the

policies to all employees. Attention should be given to gender and diversity awareness training, discussion fora and dialogue in order to change towards an inclusive culture. There is also a need to create awareness on sexual harassment practices as some staff members are not aware of its existence and details (Aliu *et al*., 2014).

To add, the department should consider strategies to provide an holistic programme to balance work-family life. These strategies should take into consideration the differentiated male and female requirements. Some of the considerations include giving the senior managers critical resources such as 3G cards and cell phones to work from home and also help them with infrastructure at alternative locations (Downes & Koekemoer, 2011).

Thirdly, the DRDLR needs to introduce networking opportunities, formal mentorship and management coaching programmes. These developmental interventions will ensure that women managers have a point of reference when they need to discuss their career related aspects. This approach was supported by Lewis-Enright *et al.* (2009) when they mentioned that networking events not only give women opportunities to broaden their professional exposure but also to raise profile of female leaders in organisations. In addition, networks foster relationships for women at senior levels and help managers establish mentoring relationships. A Women's Forum should be reconfigured on how women should interact amongst each other. External professionals with subject matter expertise should be brought in to lead roundtable discussions. The frequency of engagements should be increased to allow discussion of different topics.

Women senior managers should be assisted to craft their future career plans. These should be aligned with their Personal Development Plans (PDPs) that are reviewed on an annual basis. The career plans should include training and development interventions that managers should do at short, medium and long-term planning. Booysen (2007) mentioned that talent management should be formalised through coaching, mentoring and support.

Furthermore, women senior managers need to be exposed to various leadership and management developmental programmes which will close the gap at different levels depending on the seniority level. To illustrate, middle managers can be exposed to a Middle Management Development Programme (MMDP); Senior managers can be taken through the Advanced Development Programme (ADP) or

Senior Management Development Programme (SMDP), whereas the Executive Managers may attend Executive Development Programmes (EDP). In addition, the above programmes should be structured to include personal, team and business mastery themes. The personal mastery component will build the manager's emotional intelligence so that they are able to deal with self-esteem and assertiveness. Latchanah and Singh (2016) indicated that the building of self-confidence and self-esteem is imperative for women's advancement into senior management positions. Sandler (2014) and Shangase and Gerwel Proches (2014) recommend that management development, grooming of female senior managers and provision of meaningful work and opportunities are critical for women senior managers to articulate their leadership brand. The department should forge partnership with institutions of higher learning to deliver these leadership and management related programmes. Hewlett, Mukadah, Kouakou and Zandamela (2016) support this view that higher education provides new knowledge, skills and ideologies to participants who enrol in the learning and development programmes.

Moreover, the department should consider a dual career path which will focus on management and specialisation dispensations. The specialised path will allow women senior managers the option to meander through the ladder without being in managerial positions. To add, the department should consider identifying talent and provide succession planning initiatives. This process will ensure that there is a pool of potential leaders at the middle management level who are ready to take up senior management positions in future. Moreover, it is also recommended that the DRDLR should recognise and acknowledge the performance and contribution of women in the department. When women see female role models in their organisation receiving recognition and acknowledgement, they internalise the idea that they can achieve such goals if they perform similarly well. Role models can also help others learn to deal with organisational politics and pressure (Lewis-Enright *et al.,* 2009).

Lastly, the department should consider profiling women managers and offering them opportunities for job rotation. Such profiling should ensure that they do not destabilise the family responsibilities. Lewis-Enright *et al.* (2009) support this view that job rotation has a potential to improve the job satisfaction of women managers since it gives them an opportunity for exposure into other areas of work in the organisation. In addition, it will broaden their career horizons and keep them fully engaged in their jobs.

In conclusion, this study focused on the challenges facing women senior managers within the department, future research is recommended to focus on the effectiveness of the programmes assigned to women senior managers and their impact on service delivery. Secondly, other research should be conducted on the perception of women middle managers towards women senior managers and how their relationship impacts on career growth into senior management positions.

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Questionnaire

1. What is your view of how senior management address gender equality in the DRDLR?

_____
_____
_____

2. Do you find the departments' human resource policies to be user friendly and supportive to women issues or empowerment? Elaborate your answer.

_____
_____
_____

3. Based on your experience in the department, are men and women provided with equal opportunities to advance to decision-making and managerial positions? Can you provide me with an example to that effect?

_____
_____
_____

4. What representation of men and women are there at a senior management level within your immediate work environment?

_____
_____
_____

5. What in your view are the most challenges hindering women to move up the ladder to senior management positions? Provide an example.

_____
_____
_____
_____

6. What training and development opportunities are available to advance women in the department?

_____

_____

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7. What have you done to ensure that you shape your career progression?

_____

_____

_____

8. Are you included in social events to the same extent as your male counterparts?

_____

_____

_____

9. Tell me about a situation where you have been mentored in your workplace. Was it formally or informally? What form of structure did that mentoring have?

_____

_____

_____

10. What do you suggest are the possible measures that the department may employ to retain and promote women into senior management positions?

_____

_____

_____

Interview questionnaire

1. Tell me about your experiences of how colleagues and senior management treat men and women occupying senior management positions in the Department.

   _____
   _____
   _____
   _____

2. What in your view are the challenges hindering women from performing optimally at senior management positions? Can you think of any specific examples?

   _____
   _____
   _____
   _____

3. Have you ever experienced any prejudice or negative attitudes towards you as a woman senior manager? Do other women colleagues also have these experiences?

   _____
   _____
   _____
   _____

4. Do you think women can be themselves in order to lead or manage in senior management positions?

   _____
   _____
   _____
   _____

5. What strategies have you personally initiated to enhance your career development or growth? Have they been successful?

_____

_____

_____

_____

6. What support mechanisms are in place to support women senior managers in the department? Do you find this beneficial to you? Is there anything missing?

_____

_____

_____

_____

7. Do you have mentoring or coaching support? Can you tell me about a situation where you have been mentored or coached in your workplace. Was it formally or informally? What form of structure did that take?

_____

_____

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_____

8. What do you suggest are the possible measures that the department may employ to retain and promote women in senior management positions?

_____

_____

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_____

9. Finally, what would you like to share regarding your experiences in a senior management position as a woman which have not been mentioned in our discussion?

_____

_____

_____

_____