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The role of business executive coaching in addressing the "glass ceiling" for black female South Africans

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The role of business executive coaching in addressing the “glass ceiling” for black female South Africans

A research report submitted by

Mapheello Maria Khunou

A research report submitted to the Faculty of Commerce, Law and Management, University of the Witwatersrand, in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Management in the field of Business Executive Coaching

Johannesburg, 2019

ABSTRACT

This exploratory research was conducted to find out the role that “glass ceiling” barriers play in the progression of African women into senior and top management position the private sector in South Africa and to identify perceptions of the ways in which business executive coaching can serve as a tool for the African female to address these barriers.

A qualitative research approach of an interpretive nature was chosen for the research methodology. Semi structured interviews were conducted with three African women that had received coaching and seven African females that had not received coaching to find out how they have perceived the glass ceiling in their respective industries. The African female participants were part of junior management, middle management and senior management respectively. Two business executive coaches were interviewed to find out more about their perceived ideas on how coaching can assist African females in breaking the glass ceiling. Thematic content analysis was the method utilised to analyse the data.

The glass ceiling barriers that exist in the social and business context for the Black African female covered factors such as; cultural factors, demographic factors, individual factors, career barriers, external support, internal support, educational level. The research findings showed that the Black African females have all had experience with these barriers in some way or another. Some of the African females have mentioned the positives of the factors on their career progression journey, whilst for some the factors have proven to be barriers that were still there preventing them to break the glass ceiling.

The African female participants and the coach participants all provided coaching areas of concerns and the tools and value drawn from utilising the tool were therefore provided. The value and tools of business executive coaching focus was given to the different models of coaching and how each of these can be used as tools and the value of using them as tools.

Business executive coaching was found to be a useful tool in helping to address glass ceiling barriers for black female in the private sector in South Africa. It is important to implement coaching from an organisational perspective and from an individual perspective as an aiding tool to be used when building on the career progress of the black female.

KEY WORDS

Glass ceiling; business executive coaching; African females

DECLARATION

I, Mapheello Maria Khunou _, declare that this research report is my own work except as indicated in the references and acknowledgements. It is submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Management in the field of Business Executive Coaching at the University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg. It has not been submitted before for any degree or examination in this or any other university.

Name: Mapheello Maria Khunou Signature:

Signed at ……..……

On the …….. day of …… 20…..

DEDICATION

I dedicate this research to my late father, Tefo George Louw, who taught me that I have the power and ability within me to achieve anything I set my heart and mind to. Your teachings remain engraved in my heart. To my mother, Mamanyakalle Julia Louw my husband Michael Tshepo Khunou and my family, I thank you from the bottom of my heart for the support, patience and love you have shown me through this journey. To my children, I am doing this for you to show you nothing is impossible. To my Creator and the reason I get to live out my purpose each and every day, Jehovah I honour and glorify you with my whole being and I thank you for seeing me through this journey.

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LIST OF ACRONYMS

African female participant – AFP

Agree – A

Commission of employment equity – CEE

Disagree – D

Employment Equity Act – EEA

Neither agree nor disagree – NaoD

Strongly agree – SA

Strongly disagree- SD

CHAPTER 1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Purpose of the study

This is an exploratory study to research the role of business executive coaching in addressing the “glass ceiling” barriers that are contributing to the slow advancement of black females into senior management positions in the private sector in South Africa.

This research uses racial jargon that is found in the Employment Equity Act 55 of 1998. According to Nevin (2008) the “Black” racial grouping has been stretched out to integrate the following races; African, Coloured, Indian and most recently to include Chinese-born South Africans. The research will, however, focus on African females within the “Black” racial category. These will be females who are within the private sector in South Africa and the “glass ceiling” impediments they face that slow their progress towards working in senior and top management positions and how business executive coaching can bridge the gap in progress.

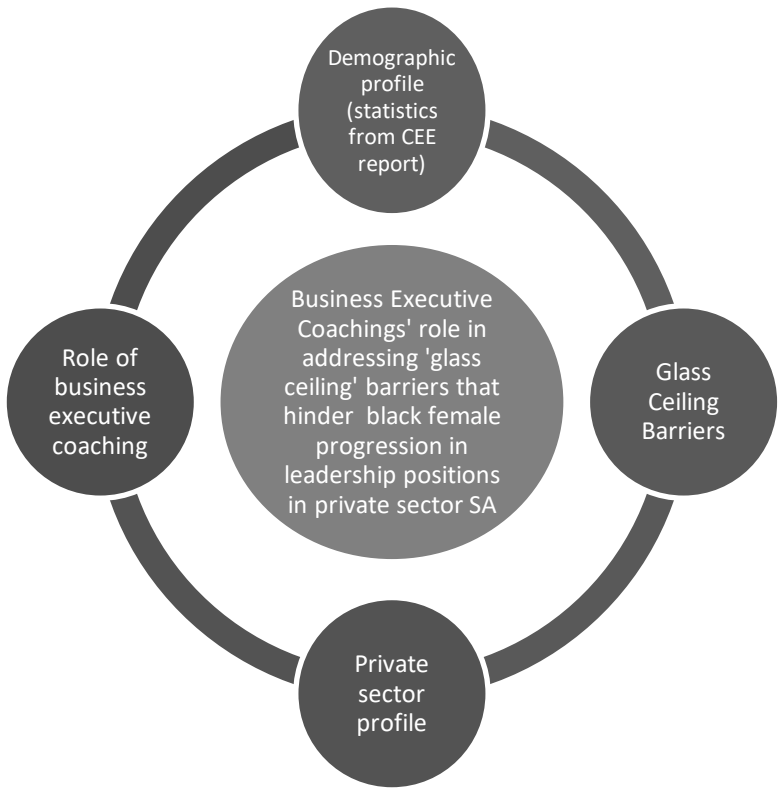

Figure 1: Conceptual Framework

1.2 Context of the study

The reason for the choice of this research topic is that there has been historic disadvantage and marginalisation of women in the workplace over and above the issue of racial segregation and as per research conducted by Chinyamurindi (2016) and Dlamini (2014) there is a suggestion that men have a more privileged position ahead of women and that men still enjoy a more preferential treatment in the workplace. Bombuwela and Alwis (2013) recognise that typically, gender based discrimination was continued and strengthened through long standing opinions that men are more competent than women in leadership roles. They also recognised that the attitude that the women's place is a homemaker has changed to that of women being career people and that of African women being corporate ladder climbers they have maintained, however, that there are barriers they are faced with slow career growth. Booysen and Nkomo (2010a) state that there solid patriarchal traditions that have not changed in respect to the role of women in many black African societies. Inconsistency between statutory and customary, also known as traditional law in some African societies can result in power struggles which keep in place unjust social structures that benefit men as well as benefit their firmly held convictions about women's roles in society (Lewis, 2017).

The context of the research is also motivated by the statistical report from the Commission of Employment Equity. This commission is a statutory body that was established in terms of Section 28 of the Employment Equity Act (EEA) Act 55 of 1998. The CEE's role is to counsel the Minister of Labour on any matters relating to the Act, including policy suggestions and matters pertaining to the carrying out of the act and towards achieving the objectives thereof. It is a prerequisite that the CEE reports annually to the Minister of Labour in terms of Section 33 of the EEA to monitor and evaluate progress towards achieving the objectives of the EEA (South Africa, 2017).

A review of the 2014, 2015, 2016 and 2017 CEE reports provide statistics that suggest that Black people, women and people with disabilities remain under represented at top, senior and middle management levels. The findings of the CEE report from 2014 through to 2017 also suggest that there are minimal changes in the top and senior management representation among the African male and female population. There has been a suggested increase of only 0, 8% in top management level positions and for African women the statistics only improved by 1.1% (South Africa, 2017).

Tables 1, and 2 on the following pages show the top management and senior management corporate South African profile in the CEE' 17th report and beneath are the tables are the findings from the statistics.

Table 1: Top management workforce profile by sectors (South Africa, 2017)

Business types	Male				Female				Foreign Nationals		Total
	African	Coloured	Indian	White	African	Coloured	Indian	White	Male	Female	
National Government	39.9%	6.6%	6.2%	10.5%	26.0%	3.0%	3.0%	4.8%	0.2%	0.5%	100%
Provincial Government	47.4%	5.6%	2.4%	6.8%	28.4%	3.4%	1.5%	4.2%	0.0%	0.2%	100%
Local Government	54.1%	6.0%	5.0%	8.2%	21.0%	1.3%	1.5%	2.6%	0.2%	0.1%	100%
Private Sector	7.5%	3.0%	6.7%	59.1%	3.3%	1.7%	2.3%	13.0%	3.0%	0.5%	100%
Non-Profit Organisation	22.5%	4.5%	3.5%	26.8%	13.0%	2.9%	3.4%	18.6%	2.6%	2.1%	100%
State-Owned Enterprises	35.0%	4.3%	7.4%	16.2%	22.0%	2.8%	3.3%	7.7%	1.2%	0.2%	100%
Educational Institutions	15.1%	4.6%	2.7%	35.8%	7.5%	1.8%	2.3%	26.2%	2.5%	1.5%	100%

In table 1 the findings show that White representation remains overpowering in the private sector, non-profit organisations and educational institutions with the African female are being underrepresented in all these sectors. The findings also suggest that African female top management are underrepresented in the private sector at 3.3%. The statistics show however, that Africans are in the majority in all areas of government and state-owned enterprises.

Table 2: Senior management workforce profile by sectors (South Africa, 2017)

Business types	Male				Female				Foreign Nationals		Total
	African	Coloured	Indian	White	African	Coloured	Indian	White	Male	Female	
National Government	35.1%	4.7%	5.2%	11.9%	26.3%	2.9%	3.7%	9.3%	0.5%	0.4%	100%
Provincial Government	43.5%	5.4%	2.9%	6.7%	30.4%	4.1%	2.2%	4.1%	0.5%	0.1%	100%
Local Government	44.1%	5.8%	4.7%	13.8%	22.5%	2.5%	1.4%	4.6%	0.3%	0.1%	100%
Private Sector	10.0%	4.6%	7.4%	44.0%	4.9%	2.9%	3.7%	19.4%	2.4%	0.7%	100%
Non-Profit Organisation	26.0%	3.9%	3.3%	17.7%	17.7%	4.5%	3.4%	19.9%	2.2%	1.5%	100%
State-Owned Enterprises	31.6%	4.8%	7.0%	18.2%	21.6%	2.7%	3.7%	7.9%	1.9%	0.7%	100%

Business types	Male				Female				Foreign Nationals		Total
	African	Coloured	Indian	White	African	Coloured	Indian	White	Male	Female	
Educational Institutions	13.7%	3.8%	3.3%	25.2%	9.1%	3.0%	2.7%	34.0%	3.6%	1.6%	100%

The findings in table 2 show that for all sector types, there is a high concentration of males in senior management. The White group, male and female combined, is mostly represented within the private sector at 63.4% and in educational institutions at 59.2%. The findings show that Africans both male and female are underrepresented within the private sector at 14.9%, African females making up only 4.9% of the total. The African group is however viewed as the mostly employed group in all areas of government and non-profit organisations.

Ebrahim and Singh (2017), Myres (2014) and Booysen and Nkomo (2010a) share a similar sentiment in that there are barriers that keep black managers and all female managers from being advanced. These are for instance gender stereotyping (Booysen & Nkomo, 2010b) absence or low trust, cultural struggles, high need for coaches and mentors (Myres, 2014), low commitment and responsibility to employment equity from top management, lack of cultural understanding, where newcomers are expected to understand the current organisational culture, and a white, male-dominated culture that keeps on barring black recruits. Some of the interviewees who participated in a study by Booysen and Nkomo (2010b) reported on black men who are very traditional and are used to being respected at home by their wives, who tend to find it difficult to work under women.

This research report looked into “glass ceiling” barriers that slow the improvement of the senior and top management profile for African females in the South African corporate and how coaching can help address these factors.

1.3 Research problem

Lewis (2006) stresses that conflict amongst the gender occurs not only between male and female, but also within the frustration of differently situated femininities in the race perspective and imbalanced authority exchange. Hills (2015) states that women have seen improvement in gaining the same access to income earning employment as men but a large inequality still exists between types of employment for men and women. Professional segregation is still prevalent in organisations and women find themselves in jobs of lower status.

Diggins (2011) argues that, but not limited to, race, social class, and sexuality differentiate both the experiences and the interpretation of systematic oppression that females go through. Hills (2015) suggest that most companies are ignorant of national and regional policies and are less committed to gender equality. These companies develop their employment equity

plans but they are slow in implementing them due to the lack of strategies that will aid them in reaching their targets and non-implementation of female empowerment and competence building programmes for example coaching.

This research's purpose was to give African females a platform where they could openly and safely share their lived experiences within the private sector in South Africa and to share their experiences of the "glass ceiling" barriers they face be it internally within business or externally within society that hinder or slow their progression into leadership roles in their chosen professions. The research aimed to also find out how coaching can help in addressing these barriers.

1.4 Research objectives

This research was aimed at reviewing the different "glass ceiling" barriers that African females face and experience in their lived experiences and how these barriers had impacted their progression in the private sector in South Africa. The research also focused on perceptions of how coaching addressed the issue of their progression in this context.

The objectives of the research were to:

1.4.1. Explore the role that "glass ceiling" barriers play in the progression of African women into senior and top management position the private sector in South Africa.

1.4.2. Identify perceptions of the ways in which business executive coaching can serve as a tool for the African female to address the "glass ceiling" barriers they face and progress into the senior and top management positions in their respective careers.

1.5 Research questions

The research questions below were aimed to meet the research objectives and there are as follows:

1.5.1. What are the "glass ceiling" barriers that exist in the social and business context?

1.5.2. How do these "glass ceiling" barriers affect the advancement of Black African women in the South African private sector?

1.5.3. What value can business executive coaching add in terms of helping Black African women address these "glass ceiling" barriers they face?

1.5.4 How can business executive coaching be used as a tool for Black African women who want to progress into leadership positions they desire in their respective careers?

1.6. Significance of the study

The choice of research was motivated by the aim of investigating the research opportunities in the existing literature on research about African women in corporate leadership in South Africa. Through Black African women having to the share their lived experiences the research can delve deeper into how business executive coaching was utilised as a tool that will help Black African females tackle the “glass ceiling” barriers and create a way into these leadership positions. It was interesting to find out which research methodologies had been used in past studies and which studies had been focused on the use of coaching to address barriers and promote the advancement of African women thus breaking the ‘glass ceiling’.

This research will contribute to the body of work related to gender equality and the theory that will drive the research will be the feminist theory. Calas and Smircich (2006) define feminist theory as an assessment of the present status of political affairs. Six feminist theories are discussed in their work, namely: liberal feminism, which is focused on inequality in regards to the socialisation of people into gender roles; far-reaching feminism, which focuses on cultural practices that value men’s experiences over women’s; black feminism, which questions which women’s experiences that are founded in gender; psychoanalytic feminism, which focuses on experiences acquired in early developmental relations with parents; and socialist feminism, which is the confluence of Marxist, radical and psychoanalytic, postmodern and postcolonial feminism (Calas & Smircich, 2006; Calás, Smircich, & Bourne, 2007).

According to Dlamini (2014) postcolonial feminists look at third-wave feminist theorising, which addresses race and class, amongst other issues. Racine (2003) also states that a postcolonial feminist theory not only focuses on patriarchy as a source of oppression, but also studies how social imbalances are engraved within a historical, political, social, cultural, and economic context that influences access to benefits.

This study focused on not only the race issues related to breaking the glass ceiling but also how certain social imbalances for example, patriarchy, add to the “glass ceiling” concept and how the findings can further contribute to the feminist theory.

The study could also assist business leaders to understand better how to deal effectively with removing barriers and enhancing potential enablers that impact on women’s career progression, especially in South Africa.

The study can provide African females with insight on how they can utilise coaching as a tool to break any barriers they are faced with that hinder their progression in their careers.

1.7 Delimitations of the study

This research topic focused only on organisations in the private sector within Gauteng that were not meeting their employment equity targets when it came to filling leadership positions with the black African female. Only Black African female candidates in junior management, middle management, and senior management roles were interviewed for the purpose of this research. Only Coaches that had coached Black African females in junior management, middle management and senior management were interviewed. The competence factor was not be included in the scope of the research. Although the research was aimed at contributing to the feminist theory, the theory itself was not discussed further in the research.

1.8 Definition of terms

Black- According to (Nevin, 2008) the "Black" racial category is broadened to incorporate the following races; African, Coloured, Indian and extended most recently to include Chinese-born South Africans. In the study black people referred only to those of African origin. It excluded coloured and Indian people. This research will focus on the African under the black racial category.

Business executive coaching– According to Beale (2001) executive coaching is a process of conveying an interconnected relationship between two individuals, namely the coach and the client, for the main reason of improving the personal and professional performance of the client. Theeboom, Beersma, and van Vianen (2014) expand the definition and view coaching as an organised practice facilitated by a coach in order to develop individuals life experiences from a personal and professional perspective. Coaching is also considered as a process that is result-orientated and goal-focused. Allen (2016) defines coaching as opening up a person's potential to make the most of their own performance. It is helping the person to self-educate rather than teaching them. Coaching is more of a facilitative approach in that the coach guides the individual being coached through an adaptive process.

Glass Ceiling- Yukl (2013) argued that the "glass ceiling" is referred to as the favour of men over women in filling high-level leadership positions. Also the glass ceiling constitutes an invisible barrier for women and minority groups, preventing them from moving up the corporate ladder. Wilson (2016) further argued that the lack of equal gender representation at the top executive level has been described as, "the glass ceiling", and invisible barrier that seems to prevent female professionals from advancing to leadership status in their given fields. The "glass ceiling", in the context of this research, can therefore be seen as any barrier that prevents the attainment of equality in the representation of women in leadership positions within organisations.

1.9 Assumptions

This research required open an honest communication by the relevant participants that took in the face-to-face semi-structured interview. There were sensitive areas such as racial barriers and patriarchy that were tackled in the research and they required good interview skills, such as effective listening skills and effective questioning strategies in order to draw out as much information as possible.

Assumptions were based on the researchers own experience as a middle manager in the private sector in South Africa and thus drew the assumptions below.

- It was assumed that some African women had to some extent experienced injustice and/or unfair discrimination within South African organisations (Booysen & Nkomo, 2010b);
- It was also assumed that some African females have family responsibilities, which could be perceived to present a challenge in pursuing career progression into leadership roles (Kiaye & Singh, 2013);
- Lastly, it was assumed that business executive coaching, was a valuable tool in leadership development and could be utilised in addressing the “glass ceiling” factors and also have a role in improving career progression prospects of the African female (Kahn, 2011).

CHAPTER 2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. Introduction

The Employment Equity legislation shows that it is more likely for a white male South African than it is for an African woman to be in top management positions in South Africa. Employment Equity legislation of 2014 makes reference to the “previously” or “historically” having access to equal opportunities yet the Employment Equity Reports of 2013 and 2014 showed very little progress.

This literature review aimed to investigate the elements of the "glass ceiling" that were defined in Chapter one and how these elements impede the desired growth of African females in the private sector. It also aimed to find out what research theories underpinning coaching are and how these theories can be used to potentially aid in addressing the ‘glass ceiling’ barriers.

2.2. The private sector status quo, the “glass ceiling” and female preferences

2.2.1. The private sector status quo

Apartheid is now in the past and the government having imposed the implementation of affirmative action and employment equity legislation to bring equality between people of different races and genders in South Africa, as suggested by Booysen and Nkomo (2010a) . Even though such changes have been implemented the most recent statistics from the CEE 2017 report on management show that whites as a group are still the largest group representing management in the private sector in South Africa. The status quo suggests that males, more so white males, are still over-represented in management, whilst black females, African females more specifically, are still under represented.

2.2.2 The “glass ceiling”

Bombuwela and Alwis (2013) measured the “glass ceiling” based on four factors namely; cultural factors, family factors, organisational factors and individual factors, acknowledging that for females, career life is dependent on a number of independent variables but that these were the centre of their study.

- **Cultural factors-** African females are faced cultural factors such as belief system, ethnicity, and stereotype (Dlamini, 2014). These factors also apply to the South African context; females are faced with society’s expectation that they should be homemakers whose main functions are to take care of their children and family whilst running the household (Diseko, 2017). According to (Mupambirei, 2013) South African women might not accept a promotion into leadership positions as the prerequisites of such roles do not fit in with societies expectations of the females’ role in taking care of family responsibilities.

- **Individual factors -** The individual factors studied were confidence levels, personal traits and the need for women to sell themselves to the organisation.
- **Organisational factors -** Organisational factors centred on organisational policies and management styles. (Dlamini, 2014). Cotter, Hermsen, Ovadia, and Vanneman (2001) propose four organisational criteria that make up the "glass-ceiling" namely inequality on remuneration, inequality in promotion, inequality based on race and gender and inequality in career advancement opportunities. Lewis (2017) suggested other organisational factors such as; explicit institutionalised discrimination which is seen in the behaviours of male superiors, behaviour of peers and subordinates alike where women are expected to be weak and incompetent. Another factor that was suggested by Lewis (2017) is that of work-life balance challenges, where women who are in leadership positions or aspiring to be in leadership positions experience a disadvantage when compared to leaders that are men. The general attitudes around domestic responsibilities belonging to women with little concern for their careers. Hakim (2006) states that there are no gender inequalities in the mental capabilities between males and females but continuing gender inequalities in the level of competitiveness, life goals and the relative emphasis on the relationship between the individual and the organisation.

Doubell and Struwig (2014) discussed the factors influencing the career success of women in South Africa. These studies were conducted in the field of management whereby they surveyed 301 professional and business women. They realised that the following factors had an influenced progression:

- ***Demographics* -** such as birth order, gender of siblings, ethnicity, education level, parent's education level and profession, marital status, and number and age of children.
- ***Career barriers* -** such as stereotyping of gender roles, inferiority, organisational culture, lack of female mentors and coaches, social exclusion from male network and family responsibility.
- ***Personality traits* -** such as self-efficacy, internal locus of control and a strong need to achieve.
- ***Cultural factors* -** such as nature or nurture, individualism/collectivism, power distance, uncertainty avoidance, and masculinity.
- ***External support* -** i.e. external to the organisation such as family support, professional associations for networking, Government initiatives, pressure from women's groups, and awards for successful women and role models.
- ***Internal support* -** i.e. internal to the organisation such as educational programmes, transformation of organisational culture, management and leadership style and coaching and mentoring.

April, Dreyer, and Blass (2007) also suggested the following reasons that influenced career progression for women:

- ***Sacrifice* -** career vs. family women have to sacrifice either working a long period without focusing on building a family.
- ***Work/life balance* -** family vs. career sacrifice building a family over a building a career.
- ***The status quo-*** patriarchy, the organisation is seen as a man's world.

- ***Education-*** the entry level minimum requirements pose a challenge for women without the required education.

Table 3: Consolidation of the factors influencing women's career progression

FACTOR	Bombuwela & Alwis 2013	Doubell and Struwig 2014	April et al 2007
Cultural e.g. patriarchy, societal expectations	X	X	X
External support e.g. family support, professional associations, role models	X	X	X
Individual e.g. personality, confidence, strong need to achieve	X	X	
Organisational support, e.g. training or educational programmes, mentoring, work/life balance	X	X	X
Demographic factors, e.g. birth order, marital status, family background		X	
Career barriers, e.g. role models, stereotyping		X	X
Education level		X	X

Table 3 above shows the consolidated list of factors influencing women's' career progression. These factors will be investigated in the two samples to be investigated in this study namely; coaches and coaching clients.

2.2.3 Female preferences

According to Rai and Srivastava (2010), business argues that no "glass ceiling" exists because corporate women were paid lower salaries because they left jobs midway, worked for lesser time and joined jobs that were not high risk. They further stressed that organisations that operate globally do provide a number of opportunities for career development for women. Their argument is that women can hold higher positions based on their competencies, through hard work and aspirations and that even though this is the case family responsibility always comes into the middle of the woman's career development.

Mainiero and Sullivan (2005) on contrary stated that the reasons why women leave organisations, reasons such as; lack of career advancement and being discriminated against.

Hakim (2006) stated that family responsibility-friendly policies do not make any major encouraging difference to gender equality in the labour market, as indicated by levels of occupational segregation, the pay gap and the glass ceiling. On the contrary, they worsen these problems. A study by Kiaye and Singh (2013) on the “glass ceiling” focused on the barriers to the progression of women, based on social roles, personal characteristics and situational barriers. These situational factors appear as clear barriers to the progression of women which included gender discrimination, lack of respect from male colleagues and insensitive handling of the multiple roles played by women, family commitment and relocation. The study claimed that unless all barriers are removed, women are unlikely to progress to higher levels in organisations.

Gino, Wilmuth, and Brooks (2015) come with a different opinion on the glass ceiling concept. They suggest that the goals women set for themselves are a strong motivator of how they will behave. Women are led by their beliefs about what will keep them content in life and some people’s goals are determined by their visions of their future for example having a certain job or forming certain relationships in the workspace. Diseko (2017) reiterated this very importance of networking and forming relationships within the workspace and how valuable this is for the tenure of their careers.

It is evident that a lot of researchers have provided different elements to the “glass ceiling” while some attempted to oppose the idea of there being a glass ceiling. It is conceded that the “glass ceiling” is still present in organisations and will aim to add new thought to the body of work that is available through researching the impact of this “glass ceiling “on African females that are climbing up the corporate ladder in the private sector.

2.2.4 Summary

It is clear that there are still barriers to the progression of women in general within corporate South Africa. It appears, however, that there is a need to build on literature that focuses on the perceived impact of the glass ceiling on African women in the private sector in South Africa.

2.3 Coaching theories, their guiding principles and how they have addressed the glass ceiling thus far

2.3.1 Coaching theories

Coaching has become a well-known and utilised tool in many businesses and professional organisations. Coaching has many key principles, models and theories that underpin it. Allen (2016) stated that the theoretical underpinning is critical to understanding the coaching process. This underpinning can be explained through coaching psychology. He further stated that coaching psychology is for the improvement of the individual's wellbeing and performance in their personal and work-life.

Coaching psychology is underpinned by modes of coaching which are rooted in learning theories and psychological approaches. Table 3 below summarises the five major approaches to executive coaching interventions. These are the theories that coaches could use to underpin their practice and the way they choose to coach their coaching clients.

Table 4: Major approaches to executive coaching interventions as derived from Feldman and Lankau (2005)

Approach to coaching	Focus	Elements of intervention	Criteria for evaluation
Psychodynamic approach.	Clients' unconscious judgements and internal mental state.	Psychoanalysis-revealing the gap between the ideal 'ego' and reality; defence mechanism; transference, counter transference and family dynamics.	Elevated self-awareness of judgements, feelings and responses.
Behaviourist approach.	Clients' visible behaviours.	Behavioural principles-intrinsic and extrinsic reinforcement, primary and secondary reinforcement, positive and negative reinforcement and punishment.	Elevated understanding of history and the cost of behaviour and behaviour change.
Cognitive therapy approach.	Clients' conscious thoughts.	Cognitive therapy-identification of distorted thoughts and irrational feelings.	New thoughts that leads to positive feelings and effective behaviour.
Systems oriented approach.	Individualised, group, and organisational influences on the clients behaviour.	Data gathering and analysis of client's interactions with other individuals, requirements of the role, group and intergroup	Improved job, group and organisational effectiveness.

Approach to coaching	Focus	Elements of intervention	Criteria for evaluation
		relations, direct interventions within the organisation.	
Person centred approach.	Client's self-understanding without direct intervention by the coach.	Creating a trusting and empathetic and therapeutic relationship.	Personal growth and change,

2.3.2. Guiding principles from coaching theories

Below are guiding principles and coaching duties and techniques that are important in business executive coaching. There is a tie in with the techniques that work hand in hand with these guiding principles:

- **Guiding principle 1**: *The nature of the coaching relationship is important*

The coach has the duty of listening to the client with the purpose of understanding what the client is communicating. The coach also promotes acceptance within the relationship and looks for positive points to connect with the client. It is the coach's responsibility to provide honest feedback in the moment and to foster a partnership with the client during the process of building the coaching relationship (Grant & Stober, 2006).

Passmore (2007); (Passmore & Fillery-Travis, 2011) adds a technique that applies to this principle. The coach is to constantly put in effort into the relationship through preserving the clients trust and respect. And during the relationship the coach holds a positive self-image in that he or she is able to work constructively with the client. This can be viewed as the "I am ok" part of the Transactional Analysis (TA) model. The coach needs to act openly and honestly during the relationship with the client without damaging the relationship or coming across as judgemental. This allows the client to be honest during the relationship and coaching process without the feeling of being judged by the coach (Seligman & Reichenberg, 2013).

- **Guiding Principle 2:** *The client is the source and change leader*

The coach serves as a facilitator for the client as the client sets his or her own plan, goals and direction to follow. The coach acknowledges the client as the subject matter expert and utilises this to facilitate the clients' way of thinking (Grant & Stober, 2006). The coach needs to have the belief in the client and hold the client in positive regard and believe the client is adult enough, through the support of the coach, to find answers to his or her own problems. This is viewed as the "you are ok" part of the TA model (Passmore, 2007).

- **Guiding Principle 3:** *The client is a complete and unique individual*

The coach assesses the situation thoroughly and checks for accuracy. There are interconnections that the coach can find in the communication from the client and the coach facilitates the clients thinking in order to align what they are saying (Grant & Stober, 2006). Seligman and Reichenberg (2013) suggest that the coach is also there to encourage congruence in the client's behaviours and feelings.

The coach needs to be able to display empathy through understanding the client's emotions and through showing a caring attitude towards the client as this allows the client to be comfortable in their uniqueness and individuality. Being comfortable allows the client to reveal more about themselves. The coach has in this sense promoted the clients self-awareness and self-esteem (Passmore, 2007).

- **Guiding Principle 4:** *The coach is the facilitator of the client's growth*

The coach's duty is to direct the process and not the content. It is on the coach's onus to maintain and attitude of exploration into how to facilitate the process allowing the client room to grow. The technique utilised by the coach is that which allows the client to gain the ability to manage his or her own life and become self-actualised (Seligman & Reichenberg, 2013).

Throughout the relationship and coaching process the coach holds the responsibility of maintaining the relationship by; paying attention to own personal behaviour and emotions, the emotions and behaviours of the client, and the management of the coach's behaviour and adjustment of own behavioural reactions in a fitting manner in order to maintain professional objectivity while offering personal intimacy (Passmore, 2007).

2.3.3 How coaching has addressed the glass ceiling thus far

Gino et al. (2015) state that even though women are still interested in achieving goals that are connected to having strong relationships, marriage, and family, they are also ever more concerned about being professionally employed and having a career and As a result women are more likely to have more life goals, reflecting a greater variety of preferences for what they hope to accomplish in the future. Passmore (2015) and Simpson (2009) affirm that coaching thus serves as a tool that can be used to support women in achieving these goals through providing the coaching participant a plan a more considered work/life balance; better career planning and better decision making.

Stout-Rostron (2016) suggests that the concept of inclusion requires an organisation to remove barriers that prevent employees from utilising their full set of skills and competencies at work. The organisation should allow individuals access to information and resources that allow them to have the ability to influence the decision making processes of an organisation.

In having said this it is important for coaches to understand their catalytic role when they are stepping to coach an individual that faced barriers previously. Coaches have a role of helping the client understand any negative feelings they may have due to exclusion through coaching the client on how to manage and contain their emotions (Kilburg, 2004).

Skinner (2014) states that in order for women to fulfil their role as a leader within an organisation to the best of their ability within the traditionally masculine view of leadership; they need to work on their identity as a leader. In working on their identity they will be able to break the barriers or norms that continue to prevent them from being a successful leader or from attaining that leadership position. Passmore (2015) emphasised that coaching interventions can add to the improvement or building of an individual's resilience which can help in facilitating learning and the well-being of the individual and supporting the overall leadership development of the individual.

According to Stout-Rostron (2016) coaches are required to understand how women work within an organisation through assessing how they view gender biases for example male dominated organisations may have gender politics, differential gender communication patterns, values and tendencies). There is a "glass ceiling" factor that coaches need to understand and coach around as it still keeps women from moving up the corporate ladder. Skinner (2014) asserts that coaching can, through engagement and regular dialogue and reflection, help women in identity formation within the organisation thus allowing women to authentically identify themselves as leaders. This is coupled with the development of deep sense of self, clarity about their personal beliefs, and ultimately finding ways to sustain their leadership roles in the long run and coaching can do this and improve self-awareness and understanding for the client (Kilburg, 2004; Simpson, 2009)

Other ways that coaching interventions have shown to be effective in assisting individuals to progress in their careers are as follows:

- Increasing leadership efficiency and performance (Kilburg, 2004; Natale & Diamante, 2005; Passmore, 2015; Stevens, 2013).
- Aiding behavioural change including improved flexibility and creativity (Feldman & Lankau, 2005; Kilburg, 2004).
- Increasing confidence; improving personal skills; enhancing self-awareness (Passmore, 2015; Simpson, 2009).
- Improving relationships (Kilburg, 2004; Natale & Diamante, 2005).

2.4 Conclusion

The literature review around the "glass ceiling" and theories of business executive coaching has provided a base that will allow for growing the theoretical framework for the research. The groundwork that has been done by other researchers provides a solid foundation to expand on the body of work that is already available based on the propositions in table 5.

Table 5: Research questions and corresponding propositions

Research Question	Proposition
1. What are the "glass ceiling" barriers that exist in the social and business context?	P1. The glass ceiling barriers in the social and business contexts are; cultural factors, career barriers , demographic factors, individual factors, external support, internal support, education level.
2. How do these "glass ceiling" barriers affect the advancement of African women in the South African private sector?	P2 The glass ceiling barriers affect black women's advancement in the following ways: • They end up having to compete with their counterparts and prove their capabilities • It is difficult to manage work/life balance • They feel excluded
3. What value can business executive coaching add in terms of assisting African women address these "glass ceiling" barriers they face?	P3 Business executive coaching can assist African women by: • Assisting them to set personal and career goals and to achieve these goals. • Helping them understand and deal with any negative feelings they have due to being excluded • Develop a sense of self and get clarity on their personal beliefs • Forming their identity within the organisation thus allowing them to identify as a leader • Formulating a work/life balance strategy
4. How can business executive coaching be used as a tool for African women who want to progress into leadership positions they desire in their respective careers?	P4 Business executive coaching can be used as a tool in the following ways: • Coaching as a tool to increase self-awareness and understanding • Coaching as a tool for behavioural change • Coaching as a tool to improve confidence • Coaching as a tool to improve work/life balance • Coaching as a tool to improve career planning • Coaching as a tool to improve relationships

CHAPTER 3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Research approach

This research follows a qualitative approach that is of an interpretive nature. Qualitative research focuses on the qualities of human behaviour and not on measurable aspects of human behaviour as seen in quantitative research. The term “interpretive” in the context of this research means that the qualitative research is not focused on explaining human behaviour in terms of universally valid law or generalisations but rather it is aimed at understanding and interpreting the meanings and intentions underlying everyday human action (Fouché & Schurink, 2005).

3.2 Research design

The research aims to find out the perceived impact of the glass ceiling on African women in the private sector in South Africa and the role of business executive coaching in addressing the perceived impact of this glass ceiling. Interviews were conducted with African women that have received coaching and those that have not received coaching to find out how they have perceived the glass ceiling in their respective industries. The interviews will further aimed to find out how coaching has played a role in them breaking the glass ceiling. Business executive coaches were interviewed to find out more about their perceived ideas on how coaching can assist the African female in breaking the glass ceiling.

The advantages of utilising this approach of research design were to established rapport and trust with the participants through engaging with them prior to the interview. There was high insider perspective because of the depth of questioning. The collaborative and participatory nature of the approach reduced suspicion and distrust of research through an increase in trust and credibility (Mouton, 2001).

The disadvantages were the time constraints experienced in the research and interview stages which ruled out the use of large numbers of participants (Duff & Bell, 2002).

3.3 Data collection methods

Face-to-face semi-structured interviews were conducted for the purpose of this research. According to (Van Teijlingen, 2014) semi-structured interviews contain predetermined questions which can be changed upon the interviewers idea of what seems most appropriate. Using this type of interviewing style allows for the question wording to be changed, explanations to be given, inappropriate questions for a particular interviewee can be omitted or additional ones can be included. According to Irvine,

Drew, and Sainsbury (2013) utilising face-to-face, semi-structured interviews allows for overcoming poor response rates that could take place in the utilisation of a survey; it will also allow for the exploration of attitudes, values and beliefs of the participants. These sort of interviews provide the opportunity to evaluate the validity of the respondent's answers by observing non-verbal indicators, which is particularly useful when discussing sensitive issues; it can also facilitate comparability by ensuring that all questions are answered by each respondent; and lastly it ensures that the respondent is unable to receive assistance from others while formulating a response.

3.4 Population and sample

The population and sample was broken into two categories namely; black African females from professional to senior management levels in the private sector and business executive coaches. For the purpose of this research the African females interviewed in the population are recognised as previously disadvantaged. The population was based Gauteng, South Africa. The unit of analysis was the black African female managers.

The focus of this research was on the private sector as this sector struggles to meet its equity targets. African females were the focus because they were underrepresented in the private sector (South Africa, 2017).

3.4.1 *Sample*

In identifying participants for the sample, this research was restricted Black African women, who held junior management, middle management and senior management roles, who work in the private sector as this is the area of the economy where the equity imbalance is most evident (Burger & Jafta, 2010). The participants identified were Black African females who have been coached, Black African females who had not been coached and business executive coaches who had coached African females in the private sector.

3.4.2 *Sampling method*

The sampling method was purposive in nature with the aim of targeting information rich subjects that aim to provide insight into the research questions in that it was focused on Black African females in the private sector and coaches who had coached Black African females (Sandelowski, 2010). The sample size was determined with saturation in mind and was not fixed at the start of the study, but anticipated that there would be approximately 12-15 participants based on the literature (Boddy, 2016).

Semi-structured interviews were conducted with each individual in the sample with the aim of extracting the required information.

Table 6. Profile of respondents

Respondent types	Sample
Black African females in private sector who have not been coached	7
Black African females in private sector who have been coached	3
Business executive coaches who have coached Black African females	2
Total number of participants	12

3.5 The research instrument

Semi-structured interviews were the research tools utilised in this research as seen in Appendix B. These types of interviews are described as more flexible with an interview guide that includes both closed-ended and open-ended questions but during the interview there is more freedom to adjust the flow of the interview and add questions based on the context of the participants' responses (Zhang & Wildemuth, 2006). Gill, Stewart, Treasure, and Chadwick (2008) state that the purpose of research interviews is to explore the views, experiences, beliefs and the motivations of individuals on certain matters. Interviews are seen to provide full of meaning to social occurrences as opposed to what quantitative methods such as questionnaires provide.

The research participant's information document and a letter of consent are provided at the interview as seen in Appendix A.

3.6 Procedure for data collection

The research instrument was pre-tested with an African female who had similar characteristics to those of the population in the study. Through pre-testing the research instrument problems that emerged were identified and addressed. The pre-test allowed for the interviewer to gain experience in using the research instruments and any weaknesses were identified and corrected (Bryman, 2016).

There were 12 Black African females and four coaches who were identified through the use of Linkedin and through connections in the coaching and business field. Eight of the individual Black African females that were approached come from organisation A through a connection and four of the individual Black African females that were approached come from organisation B. Four individual coaches were approached in their personal capacity. These participants were selected on the

basis of the different accounts of experiences they brought (Polkinghorne, 2005). The participants were approached in their private organisations directly and via telephone and they were given the background of the research and when they agreed to be interviewed they received letters of appreciation beforehand for their participation in the interviews. These letters highlighted the purpose of the research and the value of their input in the research. Two individual Black African females cancelled the arranged interviews due to personal and business commitments. One coach cancelled due to personal commitments and one coach passed away tragically before we could proceed with the interview. These participants contact information and personal data was discarded.

Once all the other individual participants agreed to participate in the interviews a schedule of interviews with the participants was created. A semi-structured interview question process was the preferred method for data collection. The semi-structured interviews were made up of multiple key questions that were aimed at defining the area's that needed to be explored .This type of interviewing style allowed the interviewer or interviewee to move towards pursuing an idea or response in more detail (Gill et al., 2008). The individual interviews with the participants were recorded with their individual consent through the use of a digital recorder and the interviews lasted from between 30 minutes to one hour each in their preferred setting. The interviews were all conducted over a one month period. A professional transcriber provided the transcription services to produce verbatim transcriptions of the voice recordings and to make sure that the recorded interviews were accurately captured. Transcriptions were checked against the digital recordings to ensure accuracy. In order to ensure trustworthiness in the data handling, the participants were sent their individual transcription for them to confirm and ensure that the transcripts were accurately captured.

3.7 Data analysis and interpretation

Thematic content analysis was the method utilised to analyse the data. This type of data analysis method is defined as a method of recognising, scrutinising and reporting themes or patterns within data (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Bryman (2016) further adds that the purpose of thematic content analysis is to search through data to detect any repetitive patterns.

According to Saldaña (2015) an analytic function of a theme is an extended phrase or sentence that identifies what a unit of data is about or what it means. Theming the data through paragraphs of sentences can capture the essence of the meanings the participants are trying to bring forth.

The following four steps in qualitative data analysis where followed in the research (Mahasha, 2016):

1. The interviews and responses from the participants were recorded and transcribed.
2. The transcription material was carefully read, and main points of the transcript were highlighted.
3. Themes were identified and coded.
4. Patterns that made sense of the most important themes were searched for and recorded.

Table 7 shows linkages between the research questions and interview questions as per the interview guide for the African female participants and the coaches. The themes were coded from the interview questions in this table.

Table 7. Research and interview questions

Section (Research questions)	Interview questions for African female participants	Interview questions for coaches
Q1. *What are the "glass ceiling" barriers that exist in the social and business context?*	Setting the scene: Please share your career journey and how you progressed into your position. Q1: Factors driving career journey a) Cultural factors b) Individual factors c) Organisational factors d) External factors	**Setting the scene:** Please describe your coaching career background. Have you coached an African female before/ or have been in close relations with a coach that has? Q1: In your experience what factors have you come across in your career that African females needed coaching on?
Q2. How do these "glass ceiling" barriers affect the advancement of African women in the South African private sector?	Q2: Challenges in career journey- themes Q3: Impact of challenges Q4: Preferred/Ideal career/home life balance Q5: Desired goals for career Q6: Support received towards attaining goals	Q2: In your view, what impact have these factors had on the path to career advancement for African females?
Q3**.** *What value can business executive coaching add in terms of assisting African women address these "glass ceiling" barriers they face?*	Q7: Have you participated in any coaching intervention in your career journey /or have you observed someone in your social circles experience coaching? Q8: If yes is answered to the previous question, what coaching areas did the coaching address?	Q3: How you would describe your way of coaching and what it focuses on? Q4: How has coaching addressed the coaching areas that are career advancement related for your African female clients?

Section (Research questions)	Interview questions for African female participants	Interview questions for coaches
Q4. How can business executive coaching be used as tool for African women who want to progress into leadership positions they desire in their respective careers?	Q9: What was your experience on how the coaching addressed your coaching areas? Q10: What was your experience of your coaching relationship with the coach? Q11: What have you taken away as learning from your coaching experience?	Q5: What was your experience of your coaching relationship with the client? Q6: In your coaching experience, what factors that hinder career progression can be addressed through coaching?
Section 3: *Statements linked to coaching approaches.*	• Psychodynamic approach • Behaviourist approach • Cognitive therapy approach • Systems oriented approach • Person Centred approach	• Psychodynamic approach • Behaviourist approach • Cognitive therapy approach • Systems oriented approach • Person Centred approach

3.8 Limitations of the study

The study covers African female professionals, senior management and top management, and thus results cannot be extrapolated across all female categories of previously disadvantaged individuals, who may encounter a different set of glass ceiling factors. The population size is restricted to the private sector in the Gauteng region and this also limits that study. There is a preconceived idea about the research subject that does not allow for the interviewer to be totally objective.

3.9 Trustworthiness

Trustworthiness is an important part of qualitative research as validity and reliability are in quantitative research. Trustworthiness' importance is based on how the quality of the qualitative research is judged or tested (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2018; Golafshani, 2003). The criteria for trustworthiness in qualitative research are transferability, credibility, dependability, and confirm-ability of the data analysis and reporting process.

3.9.1 Transferability

Transferability can be compared to external validity. It is about connections between occurrences in diverse backgrounds (Morrow, 2007). According to Tracy (2010) transferability is attained when targeted readers connect with the story that comes

from the research in its rich description and they can link it to their own context and produce action out of it. The direct testimonies of this research were recorded and put into transcripts.

3.9.2 Credibility

According to Tracy (2010) credibility refers to the trustworthiness, truth and believability of the research findings. To ensure that the credibility of the information is checked the transcripts of the interviews were sent to participants so that they can check on the correctness of their narrative and the correctness of the information (Creswell & Miller, 2000). The interviews were recorded and transcribed to ensure the accuracy and truth of the data. Triangulation, which assumes that the research is credible if two or more sources of data are utilised, was achieved through interviewing African female participants who had received coaching, African females who had not received coaching and coaches who had provided coaching to African females (Tracy, 2010).

3.9.3 Dependability

Golafshani (2003) states that dependability can be put into simplified terms as consistency in the qualitative research. To guarantee dependability in qualitative research, examination of trustworthiness is important. Trustworthiness of the information gathered will be maintained through accurate reporting of the interview data.

3.9.4 Confirmability

Confirmability refers to whether the results of the research are a genuine impression of the personal views of the research participants and not only the researcher's own inclinations and detached interpretations of the data are a true reflection of the subjective views of study participants, not merely the researcher's own biases and disconnected interpretations of the data. Confirmability can be related to objectivity in quantitative research (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2018). In order to ensure trustworthiness in the data handling, the participants were sent their individual transcription for them to confirm and ensure that the transcripts were accurately captured.

3.10 Demographic profile of respondents

The Black African female participants were sourced from companies A and B. The companies from which the sample was drawn were in the gambling and publishing sector. Table 8 provides a breakdown of respondents' profiles. There are two African female participants are hold senior management positions, six African female participants hold middle management positions and two black female participants hold junior management positions. The coaches that were sourced are from a private background and their profiles are depicted in Table 9.

Table 8. Demographic profile of Black African females

Fictitious name	Job level	Education	Sector
Nthabiseng	Middle management	Not mentioned	Gambling
Patricia	Middle management	Degree	Gambling
Dipuo	Middle management	Diploma	Publishing
Lesedi	Junior management	International diploma	Gambling
Boitumelo	Junior management	Certificate	Gambling
Lerato	Middle management	Degree (CA)	Gambling
Valencia	Middle management	Degree (honours)	Publishing
Beauty	Middle management	Diploma	Gambling
Jessica	Senior management	Diploma	Gambling
Thato	Senior management	Degree (honours)	Gambling

Table 9: Demographic profile of the coaches

Fictitious name	Job title	Education	Sector
Mary	Coach	MBA	Private
Cleo	Coach	Degree (Honours)	Private

3.11 Summary

An explanation of how the study was conducted was provided in this chapter. The research methodology that was adopted to carry out the study was described. The qualitative research approach that was used in the study was explained in detail. The participants in the study were purposefully chosen. The research instrument and the steps to undertake the research were clearly detailed in the chapter. Thematic content analysis was used in analysing the data. Lastly, the limitations of the study were described.

The next chapter which is Chapter 4 provides for and discusses the research findings from the respondents' interviews and their transcripts.

CHAPTER 4. PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION OF THE RESEARCH FINDINGS

4.1 Introduction

The findings of the research are presented and discussed in this chapter. The purpose of the research was to explore the role of business executive coaching in addressing the "glass ceiling" barriers that are contributing to the slow advancement of black females into senior management positions in the private sector in South Africa.

The data required to address the research questions was collected through qualitative data collection methods. A total of ten Black African female individual participants and two individual coaches took part in the interviews. All the participants were sourced from the private sector.

The findings are presented according to the following research questions:
Research question 1: *What are the "glass ceiling" barriers that exist in the social and business context?*
Research question 2: *How do these "glass ceiling" barriers affect the advancement of African women in the South African private sector?*
Research question 3: *What value can business executive coaching add in terms of helping African women address these "glass ceiling" barriers they face?*
Research Question 4: *How can business executive coaching be used as a tool for African women who want to progress into leadership positions they desire in their respective careers?*

The findings are presented and supported by some of the participants' responses that are found in the interviews and captured in the interview transcripts. Fictitious names were used to protect the identity of the participants and their employers.

4.2 Presentation and discussion of main research findings

A question was asked to all the participants for the purpose of setting the scene. The black female participants were asked to share their career journeys and how they progressed into their positions and the coaches were asked to describe their coaching background and whether they had coached a black female before. The findings are tabulated table 7 in chapter 3 to provide an overview of who the participants are, their level of education and the sector they come from.

4.2.1 The glass ceiling barriers that exist in the social and business contexts

The findings are reported on and discussed under the following research question; "What are the glass ceiling barriers that exist in the social and business context?" The glass ceiling barriers in the social and business contexts are linked to the propositions in chapter three. The findings and the discussions are made under the following headings; cultural factors, demographic factors, individual factors, career barriers, external support, internal support, educational level.

4.2.1.1 Cultural factors

The Black African female participants who took part in the research all had cultural factors that they mentioned that have had an impact on their career journey such as their values, cultural stereotypes, demographics and societal expectations. The coaches who have coached African females also mentioned cultural factors that they have come across as having an impact on the African female career journey. All the factors findings are reported on and discussed below.

a) Values

The majority of the Black African female participants spoke of important values in their lives that that were driving them on their career journeys. The values that emerged the most were those of having to work hard, having to providing education for their children or community and being role models to their children. One coach spoke of the importance of the value of giving back to the community.

One African female participant reported that her aim was to give her children the best education and the importance of hard work.

> *Nthabiseng: my main aim was to give my child the best education ever. My daughter is 26 and studying to be a chartered accountant, she's working and studying part time, but she's got a national diploma in accounting so she's still studying to be a CA…. My son completed a course as an electrical engineer in June, N1 up to N6. At the moment he's looking for a job……..I wanted my children to have an education…..So I'm working to achieve what I want. Hard work pays.*

Another African female participant reported that the reason she works hard is to set an example to her children that education and hard work allows one to become something better in life regardless of the background they come from.

> *Dipuo: that's why I'm working hard, I'm trying to grow and to set an example for my kids that education, you can become something regardless of your background.*

One African female reported her value for education, that even though she does not have her own children in that she wanted to educate black people through reading.

Valencia: There was also just the interest in literature, literacy, teaching people how to read, exposing people to books who ordinarily wouldn't have exposure to books, and I think just trying to build that reading culture within black society, especially in South Africa because we are a majority but still in terms of illiteracy, no education, we're the majority in those areas as well. So I think it was kind of a passion but also a social cause to better lives of predominantly black people.

Another African female participant reported that she was driven by hard work and setting the example that it doesn't matter the colour of her skin, or sex and that everyone can do anything they put their minds to.

Jessica: so I think this is one of the things that really drove me into working hard to prove to anyone that it doesn't matter whether I'm black or young or that I'm a female, everyone is capable of doing what they really put their minds to, it's all about dedication and hard work.

There is a general consensus amongst the African female participants that through working hard one can progress in their career journey. Some of the African female participants mentioned that they work hard in order to prove that even though they are black, young or female they can do anything they put their minds to through dedication. The similarities in the findings to that of what is in literature confirm that that women are led by their beliefs and values about what will keep them content in life and some people's goals are determined by their visions of their future that are indeed impacted by the socio-cultural factors like family values i.e. setting an example for their children and the ethic of hard work (Gino et al., 2015). Some of the literature also confirms this idea that the Black African females have of proving themselves through hard work, April et al. (2007) state that women are still perceived as having attained their positions because of their gender and they tend to work much more harder to establish their credibility in their organisations as opposed to their male counterparts who do not have to exert as much effort. Diseko (2017) affirms this notion, where she stated that women who want upward progress in their careers had to perform better than their average counterpart and put in the extra effort to attain more senior roles.

One of the coaches found, during her coaching sessions that the African females she coached valued having to give back at home.

Mary: *Then the people who grew up in a rural area consistently wanted to give back at home, at home being go back to Limpopo or Northwest and implement what they've learned in some way, start a business, school, farm, but they're very conscious of going back and of giving back, which I also found very interesting.*

Three of the African females mentioned the importance of the value of either providing an education to their own children or providing an education to the communities they come from and/or society at large. One coach mentioned that she had picked up the need for the African female to give back to the communities that they come from in any way possible, and the building of schools was one of the way that African females chose to give back. This showed how important the value of education is

to the African female. This links to the value of having Ubuntu, which according to (Khoza, 2006) this is a way in which an African person or leader can serve the community or the people he or she is leading without the need to control them. Through having Ubuntu the African female shows that they have respect for human dignity and they have an awareness of the importance of mutual dependence (Myres, 2014).

There is a value of wanting to give back to society or to their children through providing education and/or being role models that seems to be driving the Black African female to push their boundaries and achieve in their careers. This is and additional finding in the research that is not covered in the literature and this can be added to the body of work that need to be researched.

b) Cultural Stereotypes

Seven out of the ten African participants reported on the different type of stereotyping they go through under cultural factors and one coach also spoke to the stereotypes that she has come across in her coaching sessions. The examples that came through from the interviews ranged from feelings about the type of education one should have, to the place of a woman in the family, to traditional mannerisms for women.

An African female participant reported, as per her statement below, that her mother and grandmother encouraged her to work hard in performing her house chores and were preparing her for marriage. This motivated her to focus in her studies because she thought she would not be fit for marriage or the kitchen.

> *Dipuo: but mothers and grandmothers, they will encourage you to work hard in the kitchen, cleaning and things like that, saying ... they're sort of preparing you for marriage or for ... I was lazy, I was a lazy child, I didn't want to cook or clean and my mother, whenever she would say to me, you won't even work in the kitchen, the way you are lazy. Things like that. So I can say maybe that also encouraged me a lot to take my studying seriously, because where else can you go, you're not fit for marriage, you're not fit for kitchen….*

The findings in this interview is consistent with research that shows that women are expected to be home makers and this will remain a barrier, and they will remain disadvantaged, as long as they are viewed in this way (Al-Ahmadi, 2011; Diseko, 2017; Mainiero & Sullivan, 2005). Gino et al. (2015) found in their studies that women have preferences for what they hope to accomplish in the future and that customs and expectations will define the context within which they live. This African female chose to go with the fact that roles have changed and she chose her own path.

One African female reported on how her mother was disappointed in and looked down on her diploma qualification whereas her siblings had degrees. She had to motivate herself in that she was intelligent enough to do what a person with a degree can do. Chinyamurindi (2016) reported in his research that attaining an education creates access into careers and that African female level of education is often linked to how successful they will become in their career. The difference in this African

female's case, however, is that she chose not to allow her educational level define her intelligence or how successful she would be in her career. She chose to break through that barrier and go for her career desires none the less as per below.

> *Beauty: My parents wanted us to always go to school and study and education is a door to everything and my sister and brother have degrees and I didn't, and my mother especially was disappointed in that. For some reason she thought that I would not get anywhere because I don't have a degree and I had to prove to her that I don't need a degree to do well in life or to have a career. At some point it did affect me but I had to say to myself, you don't need a degree to progress, you can work hard, you are intelligent enough to do everything that everyone can do with a degree.*

One coach reported that some African females find it hard in the work environment because they are brought up to respect elders and not to stand up to elders.

> *Mary: On individual factors I found it interesting that the ladies I coached, three of the four came from rural areas and the more traditional homes and were brought up to know your place. They also sometimes battle in a work environment because they're been brought up to respect your elders, you don't take especially an older male head on and that makes it difficult in a work environment when you're managing a relationship with an older male.*

Another African female participant report that she struggled to look at adults in her organisation in the eye because she was brought in that way.

> *Jessica: At first it was ... because I am a Venda woman so in the Venda culture, when you speak to adults, you don't look them straight in the eye, then when you come to an organisation you find that you are working with lots of people and different diversity and cultures whereby in other cultures if you don't look someone in the eye it doesn't show trust or confidence.*

These findings are similar to what the literature, where Dlamini (2014) says in that African females are faced cultural factors such as belief system and certain stereotypes where in this case where they have to know their place as women culturally and respect elders. This thus forms the barrier because in a work environment these females have to work with their elders as colleagues and are challenged to put their belief system aside in order to perform in their function as leaders.

4.2.1.2 Demographics

Majority of the participants spoke of their childhood background and the support they receive from family. Some of the African female participants reporting on how they were driven by fathers who were pushing them to study and educate themselves others reporting on being supported in the jobs by their parents and significant others, whilst others were being influenced by their family to be in their career field of choice. One coach also reported on the impact of the background of the African female on their career.

One African female reported that she came from a disadvantaged background and that she and her sister were raised by a single mother.

> *Nthabiseng: I was disadvantaged because my mom was a domestic worker and she separated from my dad and was on her own…. she raised me and my sister.*

Another African female reported that she grew up in a big family where finance were not good and they did not get everything they wanted, that she ended up not following her preferred career. In this case it is evident that the socio-economic circumstances of a family have had an impact on the growth and development of these African female participants.

> *Lesedi: Growing up in a big family, it was a challenge. So to me, we didn't get everything we expected or let me say we wanted. So somewhere, somehow, that's why I ended up not chasing my dream career. So financially we were not good so it was hard, so I think that's the reason why I ended up here.*

Coming from a big family with or one with lower socio-economic status could mean that the African females have not received sufficient financial support and could therefore have been placed at a disadvantage in the aim of attaining their desired role or career or progressing in their career (Mhlongo & O'Neill, 2013).

One African female reported that she has support from family even though they do not understand what she is doing.

> *Lerato: My family is fine, I don't think they really understand what I'm doing but they're supportive.*

Another African female participant reported on the traditional background she comes from, where her family held education in the highest regard.

> *Valencia: I think I come from a very traditional background, in the sense that my family are big on education and reading and improving yourself as a person…. Both my parents have given me a firm head on my shoulders, I'm quite level headed, I think, so I think that the very traditional, very old school upbringing has definitely equipped me.*

One African female participant reported that her family background defined the career she chose because the field she chose was viewed as a successful field.

> *Patricia: Coming from a black family I suppose you want to become as successful as you want to be and to me accountants were.*

One coach reported that none of the African females she coached had support from home and that they were studying and working, they were single moms and providing support to everyone else.

Mary: I also found it interesting that none of them had support at home, they were studying and working, two are single moms but they were the ones providing support to everybody else, so not only work and studies, but they were also the caregivers and providing support and looking after extended family, sometimes having younger sisters living at home with them. They didn't have a break when they walked in the door.

Diseko (2017) and Dass-Brailsford (2005) found in their separate studies that women who come from families that support them are most likely to press on in climbing up their career ladder and succeed at it as opposed to those who have no form of support and this is similar to the findings in this research where it is found that that the African females who have received support from their families have progressed more easily in their careers.

4.2.1.3 Individual factors

a) Attitudes

All of the African females reported on how their different attitudes played a role in their career journeys. Attitudes that stood out where those of resilience, confidence and passion.

One African female spoke proudly of her independence.

Dipuo: I'm a very independent somebody from a very young age. I like to do things for myself.

Another participant reported that her resilience stood out for her.

Thato: I think one of the biggest things was my resilience and my ability to bounce back after a setback.

One coach reported on the attitude of her coachee, that she found it hard to be vulnerable and had some insecurities.

Cleo: There were some vulnerability issues that she was experiencing, she had a hard time being vulnerable… She probably had insecurities or this is something that she had to cope with in corporate, almost suss people out, what do you know. She would tell me how obviously people check each other out in MBA. So she was constantly living in that space where she's checking people out, are you worth my time, and so when that happened I realised that, oh, okay, it was just something we needed to move through.

One participant reported on her fighting spirit and her energetic nature.

Beauty: I had to learn to be a fighter, not a bad fighter but a good fighter who says I can do this. I'm a very bubbly person, very loud, but funnily enough, over the years as I'm growing I think I'm starting to slow down from being this noisy person, and I had to, it wasn't easy.

Another participant reported on how she used to be quite reserved but has, through the nature of her role, learned to be outspoken and confident in herself.

> *Boitumelo: I used to think I'm a humble person, I never used to argue a lot, not a loud person, but now with where I am, you deal with the most difficult men. Now I'm more outspoken, even with my family, like, you talk too much, hey… It has given me more confidence.*

All these different attitudes and personality traits make for a positive career trajectory for any individual that possesses any of them as recommended by (Moshupi, 2013) in her study. These are some individual factors or traits that are in the findings that are similar to those that were reported by Dlamini (2014) in her study that women need in order to make themselves known in the organisation and to break the glass ceiling.

b) Strong need to achieve

Some of the participants reported on being goal driven, and how that has pushed them on their career journey.

One African female participant reported on how proud she felt about the achievement of her goals and she mentioned how she would like to pursue more.

> *Nthabiseng: I think I've done well because I've achieved at least one, two, three, my children were able to go to school to get their degree and whatever, and I've managed to build myself a house. Recently I bought a stand, actually I wanted to do this venue, an entertainment place, I need to build a lapa, braai place, entertain people and I'm in the process of applying for a liquor licence and whatever. I like interior design, I love nice things but at the moment I don't have money. I'm willing to learn interior design.*

Another African female participant reported that her goals are to study even further and affiliate with a professional body.

> *Patricia: The goals, I want to study further, complete my honours, and then affiliate with other professionals in the same, I want to join SABA and then do more, because the training that I had, it was a two week course on the system on legislation, it was a quick, quick, so I also want to get a qualification in payroll.*

One African female reported on how she wants to be successful. And how she intends to get her PhD eventually.

> *Dipou: Now baby has grown, he's matured and mommy is earning a bit more than she used to and having been granted the opportunity of going back to school by the company that I work for, I will pursue my desired goal, which is to obtain that degree finally and hopefully turning into just more than a degree in masters, a PhD, eventually.*

What is found in this research is that African females are very goal oriented and have some direction as to where they are heading and what they need to have in place to reach their goals. This finding is similar to findings a study by Moshupi (2013) where she found that being goal driven is critical to women as managers and the motivation behind being goal driven requires one to have energy, persistence and direction. Women who climb up the career ladder to the top in organisations that are male-dominated need to be motivated and they need to have patience on their journey.

One African female participant mentioned that she was feeling very demotivated in her role. But there is a need to take responsibility and account for own actions as this can create a barrier in attaining career success. Koekemoer (2014) reported that together with the work environment creating barriers on the career success of female managers and that individual factors also play a vital role as in the case of this demotivated staff member who acknowledges the fact that she has to own her part in what she is adding with her attitude towards hindering her career growth. Although some studies have investigated the role of personality or personal attributes in career success, investigating specific behaviours that employees exhibit and how those influences their career success is still lacking.

4.2.1.4 Educational level

The majority of the African female participants that were interviewed have some sort of formal qualification ranging from certificate, diploma, and degrees to post graduate degrees. Most of the participants are aspiring to studying further towards improving their current career whilst others are looking to study something completely different from their current chosen field. One coach also mentioned that one of her coachee's has a CA degree and is studying towards obtaining her MBA whilst another coachee is changing her career completely through choosing a different qualification. According to Doubell and Struwig (2014) peer groups or professional associations offer women with an alternate to internal organisational networks that they can own the process management thereof because they are not standardized.

One African female reported being educated in English gave her a good foundation to deal with authors and other industry players. She also spoke about her honours degree in Publishing that helps her understand the people she deals with. She needs to be educated in her role to execute her function.

> *Valencia: Then English, it's neither here nor there, it's given me a good foundation in terms of education on really important authors and the industry, to an extent, but that's more a FYI, not to downplay an honours, but in publishing it's more of an FYI, it just helps that when you come in you know when they're like Brandon Saunderson, you know...*

Another African female participant reported that in order to pass her board exam to become a Psychologist in her career she had to go through an internship.

> *Thato: Only in 2010 did I start my internship as a psychologist. I passed my board exam in 2012.*

One African female reported that her father advise her to get educated in order to have all the wonderful things she wants in life. She further reported that she would like to further her education and get a payroll qualification.

Dipuo: and then my dad kept telling me, the only way out of this or for me to have all the nice things, I must follow books and I must say it has helped, it has changed a lot…… so I also want to get a qualification in payroll.

Another participant reported that she had a passion for the field she was in, and she had commenced with a degree and was studying towards it but had to quit because of circumstances. She, however, proceeded to get qualify with a payroll diploma and she intends to register to study towards a degree.

Beauty: The first two years after I came back from university, and for one I was pregnant when I came back, it was a long journey, you know...I remember when I was still in payroll I did a payroll diploma and I graduate… So I might be an executive, who knows, without a degree, even though I'm back in school trying to get my degree.

One coach reported that one of her coachee's had commenced her degree but could not finish it due to personal circumstances, but then realised during her coaching journey that she wanted a totally different career that would need her to do a different qualification.

Cleo: With the one lady, her biggest thing that she was not happy at the bank and she had started at the bank as a teller and then she moved her way up into head office, and she didn't have qualifications, she had started a degree and didn't finish it and she had kids and she got married, and so she basically didn't complete her qualifications… So during the coaching sessions she realised that she didn't want to be at the bank anymore and she said that a lot of her personality didn't speak to what the bank was about and she felt she needed to move into a more drama, arts type of space in order to really feel like she's fulfilled. So that is actually what she did, she signed up for casting agencies and she said she was going to register for a drama degree and that's where we landed with her.

Another coach reported on a coachee who was a CA and was also studying towards her MBA.

Cleo: So I think that didn't sit well with some of her white counterparts in the other environment, not the bank, when she was busy with her articles, because it was almost like she was different and they didn't quite understand her and that was something that she had to almost struggle through, and then when she was hired at the bank, she was at a higher level and her position was quite senior… At the beginning I sensed that there might have been a little bit of competition because we were both about the same age and I was coaching her, she was busy with her MBA and she was doing fairly well for herself.

One African female participant reported that when she joined the company she was not yet a CA, she qualified whilst in the company.

Lerato: When I joined the company I was not a CA so I had to write my exams. The first three years I was studying, the last two years, last year and this year… I qualified as a CA in 2016.

As can be seen in the findings from the interviews held with the African female, in that majority of them are driven to educate themselves in order to attain their desired career goals. The findings are similar to what Chinyamurindi (2016) stated, that educational accomplishment is seen as a contributing factor that has driven the success most individuals in their career and educational accomplishment has often resulted in the achievement of an 'expert' status. And in the case of the African female participants in this study, majority of them were qualified to be in their current roles but they would need to progress further in their studies and gaining higher qualifications in order to advance within their organisations. For those without education it posed a challenge because the organisation only needed qualified people and that poses a barrier for one who is without the required qualification. English and Hay (2015) also maintain that in order to gain equal opportunities in leadership positions, women have to get an education with qualification befitting of those leadership positions. They further adds that qualifications are a necessity for both men and women but they tend to be more beneficial to women as they tend to have more difficulty as opposed to men, to attain managerial roles. This further cements the suggestion by Chinyamurindi (2016) that obtaining the right educational levels and the right qualification can help women break through the glass ceiling.

Accomplishing the achievement of authority positions for the African female starts with training and the correct capabilities. While capabilities are essential for people, they are apparently more useful to females than to men who have less trouble expecting administrative jobs. Capability levels can eventually be a vehicle for helping females to get through the biased based ceilings (English & Hay, 2015).

4.2.1.5 Internal support

a) Lack of support

Majority of the African females reported on a lack of support from their seniors in their career journeys. With some reporting on the exclusion element from the white male group, some reporting on the lack of support from their direct managers and some a lack of support from their colleagues. These findings are similar to those in the study that Doubell and Struwig (2014) conducted which found that one the factors influencing the career progression of women in South Africa is the need for some form of internal support from the organisation.

One coach reported on the lack of support her coachee's experience from the organisation.

Mary: So I think that lack of support and old boys club makes a big difference, that's their biggest impact. So there's a big cry for support and they consistently want help, they want somebody to assist, none of them are saying I've made

it, I'm done. I also find interesting is that the more technical people seem to be quite secure, like IT and financial related people, and the people in the softer positions, sort of marketing, client facing positions, generally brilliant yet insecure.

One African female participant reported on the lack of support from her line manager.

Dipuo: I am not really satisfied with things that I'm currently doing because I know it's not what I'm supposed to be doing. I feel like it's stopping me from progressing into what I eventually want to be. I've been working for this company for two years and I feel like I have learned but not so much, and the main reason I left my previous employment was to be developed and groomed. I had no people who I led previously and I was given the opportunity to lead people and that was going to be the first time, and having not gotten enough training or coaching into becoming a manager, not being given the training on the role or responsibilities that I'm supposed to have assumed already, is really challenging.

According to Koekemoer (2014) having an appropriate educational background and holding a good performance record are seen as advantageous to employees' career realisation, but in some occurrences needing certain levels of qualification or lacking exposure or experience are factors that block their success. These barriers, taken together with the lack of specific competencies or skills, as well as lack of support from the organisation, certainly could hinder managers' career success. Dipuo has experienced this lack of support and development and is finding it very dissatisfying and challenging.

Another African female reported that the white male gets more support than the African female.

Lerato: The support you'll get is not necessarily sufficient compared to a white male because if you fail there's that thing that obviously you can't do it, but when a white male fails, there is support brought in to help. For you to step in that position you need to be ready for the expectations, that you're going to fail or you go out and do what you want to do and not worry about what's happening.

One African female participant reported that the people around her in the company did not have faith in her.

Patricia: Like I said, starting, it was easy, I was motivated, where I come from, and when I got here I sort of felt I had to move a few steps backwards because you're no longer that involved, so you somehow feel demotivated, and then you can see that even the people around you, it's like they don't have faith in you, in what you can do. So it even got to a point where I was thinking of leaving, but now it will be better, I hope, it's promising.

Another African female reported that every time she wanted to implement something as a senior manager it would be declined.

Thato: I was in a senior managerial role and there were certain things I was trying to implement and every time I would try to take it up for signature it would be declined, and I was trying to push new things and bring in some innovation. There were excuses about budget, meantime new offices are being rebuilt. People's bonuses are horrifyingly high

Mahasha (2016) reported in her study that women hold, in high regard, the support they from their superiors and that it motivates them to perform well in their roles. Women who receive support from their superiors where able to find ways of managing their work better than those who received no support at all and advancing in their careers. In the case of the African female who is trying to implement certain things in her managerial role but is being blocked she is faced with another barrier she needs to break through.

Moshupi (2013) reported that a South African study about women in middle management and senior management positions openly indicates that women in these positions need constant and dynamic support. Such support can be achieved by providing training, seminars, and mentorship programmes. Menches and Abraham (2007) are of the view that support programmes are important in order to avoid women having to leave their organisations whilst the unskilled and unsuitable employees remain behind in organisations.

b) Transformation of organisational culture

Only two of the participants reported on their company aiming to stick to policy. In their report they speak of it being in the company's best interest to promote them into senior roles.

One African female reported that the company was just ticking a box by putting her in a certain position because she is an African female.

Thato: For me, it was in the company's favour that I was in the role because then it looked like they were doing something to fill the role, meantime they weren't. So I would ask, so who is my successor? They would dodge me, not give direct answers. They were, just stay there, you know, for them, they didn't have to do the work of filling the role, tick box, black female.

Another African female reported that African females are maybe appointed as a quota to fulfil a BEE score point.

Valencia: *I think that you realise that people still have these conceptions about black people, women in general, about whether or not women can do their jobs or make tough decisions. So I think the fact that it's almost like two strikes against you, you're black and you're female, you're always finding yourself in a position where you feel ... and you actually get into a very bad cycle of doing it because it becomes at, part of your behaviour, where you apologise for things, where you shouldn't or your male counterparts would never, you're always over explaining or doing a lot more than you should just to try and simplify or make a process more convenient or efficient rather, for the next person, which*

honestly, nine times out of ten is not your job, and the constant questioning and back and forth, people question your capability in terms of your job, maybe you're a quota appointment to fulfil a BEE score point, so you're actually not qualified to do your job.

Two African females mentioned that they felt that the organisations they were employed in were just ticking the box in terms of meeting BEE quotas or to meet the employment equity policy targets. But no other African female participants touched on the BEE element as having an impact in their career journeys. Though there was not much feedback on Employment Equity and BEE in other interviews it raises a concern that some organisations do not show commitment in implementing government policies in a fair and correct manner (Mupambirei, 2013).

c) Inequality in promotion opportunities

Majority of the African female participants reported on growth and promotion opportunities. Some of the participants reporting on the availability of opportunities to grow and be promoted whilst others reported on the lack of opportunities to grow.

The African female participants' growth almost takes a similar pattern in that they have gradually worked their way up to the current positions they are in over a set number of years. All of them have entered their chosen field at an entry level and grew from there through their hard work and dedication. That however does not take away from the point that they all had different stories to share on their developmental journey.

Some of the African females mentioned that they had development opportunities with previous employers and when they either changed employers or when their management changed the opportunities from the organisations side to develop and grow would stop. Other African females mentioned that they are currently faced with the lack of opportunities to grow. Two African females mentioned that if you are not white or male in their organisation the opportunities to grow into other more senior positions are either frozen when it's time to hire an African female or limited for the African female. One African female reported that there are people within the organisation who hold on to certain skills and will not develop or impart their knowledge but that seems to be changing because the very same people have to exit the organisation. This is similar to what Lewis (2017) suggested in a study which found that there is visible institutional discrimination in the behaviours of male superiors where women are not taken serious enough to hold senior positions within organisations.

Two other African females mentioned that they have received so much opportunity to develop and grow themselves within the organisation through attending courses on her own accord and being offered different roles that have added to their development. Self-development though one African female mentioned that her promotion into a senior role happened in a time where it was favourable to have females in a certain role and that came with working with a bigger client thus growing her skill.

This is similar to findings that most of the African females have gone the route of up skilling themselves through studying further as they deem that it will open more opportunities to develop their individual careers through constantly improving themselves as asserted by (Chinyamurindi, 2016).

One African female participant spoke of her growth journey and how she commenced in one role and how she had to develop herself through that growth.

> *Beauty: I was promoted from a payroll person to a remuneration specialist and with that I had no knowledge of remuneration and benefits whatsoever. So I attended courses on remuneration and built a network, people that I could phone and ask, what is this? How do I do that? And people were responding. So I literally taught myself remuneration and benefits, and I was all alone…. When company X offered me this job I was not a HR manager, this is my first HR manager job and I literally just came in and I did it.*

Most of the African females have gone the route of up skilling themselves through studying further as they deem that it will open more opportunities to develop their individual careers through constantly improving themselves (Chinyamurindi, 2016).

d) Inequality in remuneration and recognition

Most of the African female participants mentioned that they have worked hard in their chosen organisations in order to be recognised. With some of the participants mentioning that not being recognised is connected to them being African, young, and female. One coach mentioned that her coachee was overlooked due to her lack of qualifications applicable to the changing rules in the bank. Another coach mentioned that African females need to get themselves out there more in terms of gaining recognition by singing their own praises about their achievements and brilliance in order to get noticed. Feldman and Lankau (2005) affirms that women have the tendency to not have the confidence and ambition to chase positions of leadership, but that they would rather wait for the positions avail themselves to them. There is a need to have self-worth amongst women which can be seen in the findings of this research.

Three African females touched on the reward element in their career journeys and a description of their experiences is provide below. One African female mentioning that she feels underpaid for the amount of work she does, whilst another mentioned that she had taken promotion opportunities without taking huge increases because she was more after the experience but in hindsight that may not have been the right move. The other African female raised a concern that most African women do not get paid what they are worth because they do not go prepared when heading into remuneration discussions.

Another African female participant reported that one has to come prepared when coming to discuss remuneration with the company. She reported that most women of colour don't get paid what they are worth because they do not go in prepared into the remuneration negotiation.

Valencia*: I think it's always been a battle in the sense that you have to go in prepared and I think any time remuneration is on the table for discussion I always feel there's a level of research I have to have come with because I do feel or at least I'm not a hundred percent confident in my manager that I won't be short changed and I think that it's something that unfortunately a lot of women, mostly women of colour, fall into the trap of is that you get your change because you don't go to your remuneration negotiation having fully prepared. But again there's a level of preparation you should do, absolutely, but at the same time you trust that people are ethical and will be fair and look at your qualifications, experience and what you bring to the company rather than trying to get away with paying this person as little as possible.*

One coach reported that African females need to learn to boast about their achievements because the more senior you get the more you will need to get recognised to be promoted.

Mary: Basically learning how to sell yourself and that's a big one for career because the more senior you get, the more people need to notice you, bring you on board. You can be absolutely brilliant, technically, but if you haven't been noticed you're less likely to get that promotion.

One African female participant reported that she moved jobs and took on promotions without taking big increases because she was after the skills and experience. She also reported on not being recognised for her input in a certain roe because of her lack of qualification but the business soon realised that she was the one putting in all the effort.

This African females experience relates to findings in Smith (2017) that females tend to have an upward progress albeit at a slower pace and with small remuneration increases are smaller. Though she stated that job changes are not always career motivated in the case of this Africa female participant was motivated to advance in her career with little increase in remuneration.

e) Lack of mentorship

Majority of the African female participants reported on receiving mentorship but not necessarily coaching, those who spoke of coaching reported on coaching that was related to their role and how to get the work done. Some of the participants spoke of external mentors as a form of support. One coach reported on the lack of mentorship and coaching for the African female. Mentoring relationships are vital because their purpose is to assist the individuals being mentored in advancing their careers and attaining positions that they are qualified for (Chiloane-Tsoka, 2010; Moshupi, 2013; Williams-Nickelson, 2009). In the process, mentees need knowledge, skills and ability to establish what is important for the benefit of their career advancement in the rapidly changing and complex profession (Williams-Nickelson, 2009). The absence of mentors can be seen as a barrier to the career advancement of many women in leadership (Chiloane-Tsoka, 2010).

One African female participant reported that she got into a mentorship programme at the start of her career but as she progressed it became harder to receive mentorship from 'older people' who held on to work.

> *Dipuo: After that I did well in the training so back then when you pass well you are guaranteed a mentorship programme, so I did well and then mentorship programme with VIP for a year, I didn't finish the programme, I think five months into the programme I was offered a permanent position by one of their clients…….It's been difficult because you get to a place where you're surrounded by old people, they don't seem to want change, they hold on to work. So it's been challenging. Now it's promising in a way because some of them have retired, they have to leave, to make way.*

One coach reported that most of the African females she coached started their careers at lower levels and worked their way up without anyone mentoring them.

> *Mary: I think the biggest factor for them has been not having the old boys club. So they've made it on their own and obviously family supported them but they got the jobs, a lot of them started off lower level and worked their way up, but without having somebody mentoring them through it or having somebody they went to school with who's doing really well, or their dad got them the job. So the feeling I get there is they're very much on their own when they're developing their own careers. The one or two who did find mentor really, really appreciated it, it made a big difference to them.*

Mahasha (2016) asserts that in some occurrences, mentoring women in their roles has not been given much attention; this may be due to some people not being keen to mentor women due to the stereotypes of women not having personalities that are suitable for leadership roles.

One African female participant reports that she attempted to get a mentor but found that they had differences in opinions, she has rather opens up and consults with people in the industry and her family.

> *Valencia: I tried. My first manager I meet up with when I'm in Cape Town but my issue with her is difference of opinion, I find her approach very backward and linear. A lot has changed in five years, management styles differ from person to person and I haven't found someone who I can speak to who's neutral. Everyone I consult other than my family is somehow involved in the industry.*

Doubell and Struwig (2014) stated the importance mentoring and coaching in promoting competency development, building confidence and providing access to breaking down organisational and social barriers that women face. Having a mentor would or coach can assist mentees by giving them in-depth feedback (Myres, 2014).

Another African female reported that she has received mentorship and that her current manager is her mentor too.

> *Beauty: Yes, I've received mentorship and then my boss currently is my mentor, so he does mentor me weekly and he'll ask me what are my learnings for this week, what difference did you make, what initiative did you bring?*

Mahasha (2016) also maintains in her study that women hold, in high regard, the support they from their superiors and that it motivates them to perform well in their roles. Women who receive support from their superiors where able to find ways of managing their work-life balance better than those who received no support at all.

4.2.1.6 External support

a) Professional associations

During the interviews some African female participants reported that they do not have associations or peer groups that they are part of but that they are intending to join associations, others reported on being influenced by women in business and others are part of associations and keep close circles with peers they studied with.

One participant reported that she is looking to join an association and that she keeps in contact with her peers that she studied with or has met in the workplace.

> *Patricia: I'm looking now at joining the South African Payroll Association. I have been to two or three of their programmes, so I'm looking at affiliating with them….. My friends are people I studied with, university level, we were doing the same course and then I've also met in the workplace, in the same department, so that's the people I hang around. So we sort of speak the same language, we're in HR, they are studying to better themselves, so they are also encouraging me, in a way, and they're growing.*

Another African female participant reported that she does not have any associations yet but during an unrecorded session she mentioned that she has applied for her CIMA qualification and will be part of that association as soon as she qualifies.

> *Dipuo: I don't have any professional associations as yet but seeing others succeed is something that motivates me. (Has applied for CIMA qualification).*

One coach reported that one of her coachee started a peer group but non she can recall are part of any associations.

> *Mary: The one lady started her own peer group at lunchtime, but nobody mentioned, that I can recall, any professional associations.*

One African female participant reported to have been a trainee and she is now a CA and she remains in an environment of people who are working towards the same thing.

> *Lerato: As a trainee accountant you're in an environment with a lot of people working towards the same thing, everybody wants to be a CA that automatically pushes you to focus. So being in that environment it pushed me, everybody around*

you, most of my friends are CAs, so life becomes ... the way you relate to life and everything, it's all about you want to do this, so I think the outside support is there, I don't have any issues with it.

Another African female participant is part of the SABP.

Beauty: I've got SABP and we were working with a lady.

According to Doubell and Struwig (2014) peer groups or professional associations offer women with an alternate to internal organisational networks that they can own the process management thereof because they are not standardized.

4.2.1.7 Career barriers

a) Internal organisational challenges

Some of the African female participants reported on internal organisational challenges that they were faced with, one of the African female participants reported on a case of sexual harassment, two African female participants reported on not progressing in their careers, and three African females reported on having to continually prove themselves in their career and one coach reported on the same need for African females to prove themselves. One African female feels the challenge of dealing with "rude clients" who judge her based on her skin colour, age and sex, and managers who always think they are right.

One African female reported that she was feeling pressure from colleagues and her manager's peers to succumb to his sexual advances and she was treated with hostility because of her choice to decline his advance.

Thato: I was like, no, this is who I am, I don't do these things, and so in a space where you are in a subordinate role and this person's in a higher role, they tend to make life very difficult for you when you don't give them what they want, and I felt the heat half the time and it was coming from everywhere, not just the top, it was on all sides where I had my own colleagues and his peers and it felt like I was in a bowl of heat because I was not willing to give him what he wanted, and it felt like everybody knew that this guy was interested in me, and it got to a point where I broke down in a boardroom, and I'm like, shew, my life has become so uncomfortable because of the decision that I've taken, and for me, it was a no brainer, that's not who I am or who I've been created to be. You can break my arm, my leg, I'm not going to change my mind about where I stand. So life got extremely uncomfortable…… So it was small things like that where I realised there was hostility and as a black female I had to contend with it and my choice, in fact as just a female, and this is your story, this is your life now and you need to be okay with it.

It is evident that women in management positions know what they want to achieve but there are elements in the glass ceiling that hinder them from accomplishing their goals. There is a perception that women gain opportunities to grow or to get promotes in exchange for sexual favours with their senior males (Mahasha, 2016).

Another African female reported on feeling stuck in her career and felt she could be far in terms of career progression.

> *Lerato: I feel like I'm stuck. When I look at my career path for the past six years, if I had not come to company X I would have probably been much further than where I am. Do I regret coming here? No, I've learned certain things, I would probably have branched out into something different to what I wanted, to what I'm currently doing, but in terms of career progression I would have been very far, whether I would be enjoying it, that's another thing.*

Another African female reported on her dissatisfaction with what she is currently doing and feels it stops her from progressing into what she wants to be.

> *Dipuo: I am not really satisfied with things that I'm currently doing because I know it's not what I'm supposed to be doing. I feel like it's stopping me from progressing into what I eventually want to be. I've been working for this company for two years and I feel like I have learned but not so much, and the main reason I left my previous employment was to be developed and groomed. I had no people who I led previously and I was given the opportunity to lead people and that was going to be the first time, and having not gotten enough training or coaching into becoming a manager, not being given the training on the role or responsibilities that I'm supposed to have assumed already, is really challenging.*

One African female reported that she has to deal with clients that judge her based on her age and skin colour and also having to deal with senior management that feels that they are always right.

> *Lesedi: Every day it's the rude, rich guys who think they're always right and have to get everything, who think the world owes them. They always say they're greedy anyway. That's the biggest challenge. When you're just 32 and you find yourself answering back to a 50 something year old, like in my culture we can't do that but now you end up finding yourself in that situation whereby now we have to be answering back an adult. I try to show them that whatever you're doing is wrong, stop it, but now you find it's going to be a challenge of your age, your skin colour, even if you try and run away from it, it still exists, it's the skin colour, and the most difficult, it's just the customers. Then we also have staff issues with that, I think that we can deal with because once you're the senior, you're the senior, but it doesn't mean that you're always right.*

Two of the three African females reported that they have to always prove that they are capable and competent to do their jobs with one reporting that people always want to see her fail because of her skin colour.

Valencia: I think it's always having to prove that you're capable and competent enough to do your job. The mere appointment isn't enough. For some people it is and some it's not. It's constantly having to prove to people that you can do your job. Constantly having to deal with people questioning your decisions or your logic application, etc. where for other people it's not the case. I think there are people who can fly under the radar comfortably, underperform, under deliver and you've got very little room for error, so it's almost like you're being watched under this microscope and everyone else is free reign. I think that's the biggest challenge.

Jessica: I think some of the challenges that I've faced in my career or am still facing are people who won't believe in you or want to see you fail, people who will be surprised, but why is she being appointed, she's so young, what does she know? Some people will still judge you because of the colour of your skin and say she's black, why are we putting her, do we really trust her and all those kind of things. You will always find that because not everyone will believe in you or like to see you succeed.

One coach reported that African females go through a lot and are fighting to get to the same position their white counterparts are in.

Cleo: African females are always fighting more, it's always like these battles that we're constantly fighting and the conditions are not the same. So for my white counterparts, they're not the same. I have to climb through hoops and go under, you know, just do a lot just to get to the same position as my white counterpart who feels like they're gliding away at that role.

The findings from the interviews confirm that women who go through the challenge of needing to prove themselves more capable than their counterparts to perform their roles may need to constantly be self-conscious and self-monitor and this can affect the way they perform in their roles in a negative way (Moshupi, 2013).

b) Team challenges

Five African females reported on having some team challenges with some reporting on how they handle the challenges. One coach also reported on coaching an African female on managing a team.

One African female reported that she deals with difficult team members who do not work as a team. She reported that the team are split into two groups, with one group being negative.

Nthabiseng: Working as a regional operation manager I think it's a stressful job to handle because you deal with different issues, like staff issues, you have to discipline staff, you monitor the branch expenses, you have to ensure that you attend to the customers' queries, some of them are difficult, even the staff are very difficult, some of them don't have

team work, things like that…The challenge that I experience is the staff who are not committed, if you're not committed or interested it's a problem. The staff who don't have teamwork ... at work we've got two groups, the manager goes with that group, there's another group, there will always be someone who's negative or an influencer.

Another African female reported on the inability of her team to do their functions and how managing that takes away her work time.

Dipuo: A team that has the ability to do their functions, that would be wonderful because it would mean that I will be able to focus on what I'm supposed to be doing, meaning I'll be able to work on time.

One African female reported on how, as a team leader she showed her team what they were lacking and even sent them on training. She reported on her close working relations with her team.

Jessica: We worked as a team. I was a leader to them, I showed them things that were lacking, even take them to training if I see that you're lacking skill in leadership, etc. I worked closely with my branch staff, I will talk to them and understand their day to day life as a mother and manager in my branch.

Another African female participant reported that when one leads a team they have to know them individually and treat them as individuals.

Beauty: If you've got someone in the department, if you've got a team you need to know your people individually, you cannot treat them the same, they're like your children, and let's say one of your guys performs throughout and suddenly they don't, don't be in a hurry to reprimand or say you're not performing and therefore I'm going to penalize you, whatever, go back and be a human, humanise leading,… Yes, be firm, yes, be strict somewhere, but put humanity in leading, that will make you a great leader.

One coach reported on coaching and African female on managing her team.

Cleo: Then the other lady was in finance and she was a high flyer, doing very well, and some of the issues I coached her around were managing her team.

Half of the African female participants mentioned that they were experiencing challenges with the team and some mentioning how they handle the challenges they face with team members. One African female found herself having to manage a team that was split into two groups with one group being the negative and not willing to work as a team. Another African female mentioned that her team cannot perform well in their functions and this takes a lot of time away from her having to complete the tasks she handles in her own role. One African female shared the same sentiments that she had a team that showed performance elements they were lacking in and she sent them on training. She reported on how close her relations where with

her team. And one coach worked with an African female on ways of managing her team because that was an element she was challenged in. This links closely with the findings Myres (2014) reported on, that the perception of performance is related to one's management style he mentions in his report that Africans tend to place emphasis on team work over that of an individual because they tend to have a more humane orientation.

4.2.1.8 Summary

The findings and discussions of what are the glass ceiling barriers that exist in the social and business context for the Black African female covered factors such as; cultural factors, demographic factors, individual factors, career barriers, external support, internal support, educational level. The research findings show that the Black African females have all had experience with these barriers in some way or another. Some of the African females have mentioned the positives of the factors on their career progression journey, whilst for some the factors have proven to be barriers that are still there preventing them to break the glass ceiling.

4.2.2 How glass ceiling barriers affect advancement

The findings and discussion in this section are linked to research question 2 which aims to find out the following; *how do these "glass ceiling" barriers affect the advancement of African women in the South African private sector?* Every participant came with a different answer to the question because of their different experiences and the impact and how it affects them.

One African female participant reported that her role has taken a backseat and she finds herself having to perform other peoples' functions as opposed to her own function. This is a career barrier for this African woman.

> *Dipuo: Currently balancing between being a manager and focusing on my work, because apart from being a manager I also have my responsibility, coming across people who are, I don't want to say incompetent, but that's what it is, I have to step in, forget about my role as a senior accountant for a while, so that things get done on time, because regardless of their level, I mean my subordinates, whatever it is that is expected from them is really, really important to the company, so if I just let it go then things will fall apart. So I find myself having to forget about my senior accountant's role for a while, take over where I can so things get done.*

Another African female participant reported on being frustrated by the fact that she has to go in 10 times more prepared than another colleague. This is an emotional impact for this African female.

> *Valencia: It's frustrating, because I'm human, but it's unhealthy but I accept this is what it is, accept things you can't change and change the things you can. I think going into any situation you know this is the level of preparation I have*

to do, even if it's ten times more than your colleague might have to do, but just to not have to deal with that, you kind of overdo it, going in inartistically, where I don't think people feel the stress as much.

Another African female participant reported that the challenges make her more passionate and she uses the challenges to build herself up. This is a positive attitude that the African female is portraying even in a situation that is seemingly disadvantageous.

Lesedi: They've actually fuelled my passion. It's one of those things whereby they can build you and at times they can break you.

Jessica: I don't think they've really affected me as such because I'm a goal driven person so it doesn't matter what challenges I'm facing, I just look at the bigger prize and keep on doing what I'm supposed to be doing.

Another African female participant reported that she changed roles because of the challenges she faced.

Thato: I actually would have liked to stay in that role and learned the ropes and understood it so that should I want to move into a space like that, into learning or talent management I could. I was keen to do the bare minimum and get out of there and didn't enjoy the role as much as I could have. There was opportunity for growth. I could have gone to chief executive level because that position entailed knowing so much. I just wanted to get out. Who knows, if I had stayed...

a) Impact on Work life balance

Due to the barriers that the participants face they mention that they have different outlooks on how they envision their lives and careers. Most of the African females mentioned that their ideal career/home life balance is one that includes time with family as most of them are working roles that demand a lot of time away from their loved ones. Other African females mentioned that they would like to be involved in running their own businesses, one mentioned they would utilise the business as a platform to provide a comfortable home for herself and her sister and the other mentioned that she is in her ideal business and should the time arrive for her to have family she would be able to work from home. One African female mentioned that her ideal career is one that involves a team that knows what they are doings and that would reduce the hours spent at work and would allow more time for her son and having to focus on important things like getting a home for them both. Moshupi (2013) and Geertsema (2007) stressed that women have a barrier in their careers that results from having to work long hours in their management roles at male dominated organisations and this is evident in the findings of this research.

One African female mentioned that if she was ever able to get out of the company she feels trapped in she would have time for her partner and family and she would have a normal 8 hour day job that allows her to focus on her studies. According to

Jang and Zippay (2011) females tend to occupy multiple roles, such as being an employee or manager, a wife, a family member, a mother and so on. Some of these roles females take on willingly and others are deemed forced by social standards. It is important that females are aware of the role conflict and/or overload they might experience due to the amount of responsibilities they have and they limited time in which they have to perform all these roles.

Another African female mentioned that her ideal job would be one that gives her freedom to do what she wants and in that job means she has to put in extra working hours and therefore requires a partner who is in the same field or someone extraordinary. One African female also had an ideal career where she could be a CEO and that should she have a family and partner they would have to be an understanding and supportive family because she will be spending a lot of time at work. What these women share connects to the challenges that are found in the literature review that most women often sacrifice family over their career whereby they either work for a long period building a career than being with loved ones or building a family (April et al., 2007).

4.2.2.1 Summary

The findings and discussion on how these “glass ceiling” barriers affect the advancement of African women in the South African private sector covered the different experiences of the Black African female participants. One Black African female participant had to delay her career progression due to having to focus on team challenges that were proving to be a barrier. Another Black African female had feelings of frustration due to having to work ten times harder than her counterparts. One Black African female shared that they have used the barriers they experience as motivation that keeps her strong instead of letting them get her down. Another Black African female had to leave the company she worked for and find another role due to the barriers she experienced and that posed a barrier because she felt that she could have even made it to being CEO in that role with the right support. Work/life balance for majority of the Black African females has been disturbed. Most of the participants spend most of their time at work than focussing on their personal life and their homes. Proving to have to sacrifice their personal time in order to work towards progressing in their careers.

4.2.3 Value of business executive coaching in helping to address glass ceiling barriers

The results and discussions from the population in section 2 are linked to question 3 which aims to answer the following question; *what value can business executive coaching add in terms of helping African women address these “glass ceiling” barriers they face?* The interviews were separated into those African females who have received coaching, those African females who have not received coaching and coaches who have coached African females, for triangulation purposes. In

general, there was little difference in opinion between the two groups, so results are not separately reported, unless there was an obvious difference.

The findings from question address the question of the value can business executive coaching add in terms of assisting African women address these “glass ceiling” barriers they face.

Table 10 below is a summary of the desired goals of all the African female participants and the type of support they have receive towards attaining their goal and whether they have been coached or not. Only three Black African female participants have been coached out of the whole group.

Table 10. Value of business executive coaching for the Black African female

Value of business executive coaching			
Name	**Desired goals**	**Support received towards attaining goals**	**Coached (Yes/No)**
Nthabiseng	- Build a business e.g. entertainment venue - study interior designing	- Old managers support - Family support	No
Patricia	- Study honours degree	- Mentorship	No
Lesedi	- Study to be a Dr or motivational speaker	- Colleagues and managers support	No
Boitumelo	- Continue studies	- Mentorship - Family support	No
Lerato	- Study further if she finds the time	- No support	No
Valencia	- Own publishing house	- Family support - Network support	No
Jessica	-Previously IT -Wants to be CEO	- Mentorship	No
Thato	-grow business	- Clients support	Yes

Value of business executive coaching			
Name	**Desired goals**	**Support received towards attaining goals**	**Coached (Yes/No)**
Dipuo	- Study for degree and eventually get a PhD	- No form of support	Yes
Beauty	- HR executive - Study further and obtain degree	- Mentorship from previous and current manager	Yes

The main question to answer when trying to find out what value can business executive coaching add in terms of helping African women address these “glass ceiling” barriers they face is whether business executive coaching is effective.

Boyce and Hernez-Broome (2011) assert that measuring outcomes is essential in determining the value and success of coaching that has taken place between a coach and the client. Stout-Rostron (2014) states three main areas that business executive coaching for an individual that has been coached as follows:

a) Visible behavioural change
b) Improved performance
c) Personal and professional development

The value that business executive coaching adds to the individual being coached and the effectiveness of business executive coaching overlap into each other and are discussed further in the next section.

4.2.4 Business executive coaching as a tool

This section provides the findings and discussions linked to research question 4 which aims to answer the following; *How can business executive coaching be used as a tool for African women who want to progress into leadership positions they desire in their respective careers?.* Tables 11 and 12 report on the overall experience of the three Black African participants and two coaches. Their different experiences in addressing coaching issues, their different experiences of the coaching relationship and their learnings from the coaching.

Table 11: Overall coaching experience of African female participants

Overall experience on coaching			
Name	**in addressing coaching issues**	**relationship**	**coaching learnings**
Dipuo (AFP1)	Coaching addressed personal growth issues, dealing with past hurts and confidence issues.	The relationship became a casual friendship, coach advised where she could on how to approach certain matters. It was a helpful relationship.	Learned to not doubt herself, that she is a strong person who has some confidence.
Thato (AFP2)	Coaching addressed time management issues, and which battles to fight and which to let go. Coaching also addressed racial issues she had.	Good coaching relationship. Had some commonalities with the coach. Asked me questions which made me think a lot.	She learned to distinguish what was important in her life. Learned how to better run her business. Learned to value diversity. Feels empowered to change her life and create opportunities.
Beauty (AFP3)	Went through work performance related coaching. Coaching was leadership development focused.	Honest relationship where coach could be firm with her and motherly at other times. Coach told her she has potential.	Coaching taught her how to lead people as individuals.

Table 12: Overall coaching experience of coaches who have coached African females

Overall experience on coaching			
Name	**in addressing coaching issues**	**relationship**	**coaching learnings for the Black African female**
Mary (Coach 1)	Coached women with issues of being taken seriously in relationships, who did not receive support from stakeholders. Coached women who had a gap in receiving mentorship and coaching and had insecurities.	Coached the African females from a person centred approach and gave them unconditional positive regard. The coaching relationship was a formal one. Some of the coachees' were warm whereas others were professional.	The African women needs to learn how to market themselves and boast about their achievements. Coaching provided a personal reflective space for them. And allows them to think things through. Coaching helps the coachees' set goals for themselves.
Cleo (Coach 2)	Coached an African female who was not happy with where she was career wise. Another African female was coached on managing a team.	The relationship with one African female was easy, they connected. The second relationship had a wall that she had to break through, but once that was done it became easier.	During the sessions she learned that she did not want to be in the bank anymore but wanted to be in a different field. Coaching unleashed the potential in her. Coaching opened up the way of thinking for the other African female Coaching allowed her to learn that different people can be managed in different ways.

The findings drawn from the interviews in tables 10, 11 and 12 will be utilised in discussing how business executive coaching be used as a tool for African women who want to progress into leadership positions they desire in their respective careers.

Majority of the Black African female participant have not taken part in a coaching programme but shared some valuable information regarding the goals they have and these are linked with a statement on how coaching as a tool can help them progress. The desired goals that came through are:

- *Studying further or studying towards a new career field* - Wasylyshyn (2003) asserted that coaching can assist an individual enhance self-belief and increase personal development and learning. These are valuable tools to be equipped with use in furthering studies and obtaining the required qualification.
- *Starting a business and growing it* - In order to start a business and grow it the individual needs to have a strategy in place and in order to have the strategy they are required to have strategic thinking capabilities. Coaching can be used as a valuable tool in unlocking an individual's strategic ability (Feggetter, 2007). The individual will also need to have a business that runs on improved productivity, quality and excellent customer service (Joo, 2005). Coaching thus can serve as a tool that will help an individual visualise how this can be done in their business. Fielden (2005) asserts that coaching can also help the individual recognise and grow their creativity.
- *Attaining leadership positions in their organisations* - Braun and Clarke (2006) mentions that coaching can serve as a tool by improving self-awareness, self-confidence and assertiveness. These traits will help the individual be confident enough to go after their desired roles. Coaching also serves a tool to hold the individual accountable for their personal development and advancement.

The African females who have been coached mentioned that they needed coaching on the following coaching areas:

- *Personal growth issues* – Passmore and Gibbes (2007) affirm that coaching as a tool will help the individual improve self-awareness, self-reflection and self- efficacy. The African female participant mentioned that through the coaching she went through she learned to not doubt herself, that she is a strong person who has some confidence.
- *Dealing with past hurts and addressing racial issues* – Wasylyshyn (2003) asserts that utilising coaching as a tool aids the individual to build on enhanced emotional competence and have sustained behavioural changes. Sherman and Freas (2004) further add that coaching can help reduce negative and destabilising behaviours. The African female participant who went through coaching mentions that she learned to value diversity.
- Confidence issues – Turner (2006) suggests that using coaching as a tool can give the individual an improved self-awareness and understanding of their strengths and weaknesses.
- Time management issues – Through coaching the individual can be assisted with tools on how to manage their time and enhance their leadership capacity and efficiency (Levenson, 2009). Through coaching the African female learned how to better run her business and she feels more empowered to change her life and create opportunities.
- Choosing battles – Using coaching as a tool can help the individual improve their conflict management behaviour (Stern, 2004). The African female participant who went through coaching mentions that she learned to distinguish between what was important and what was not important in her life.
- Performance issues – Through utilising coaching as a tool the individual can improve their performance as a leader through improved goal achievement and productivity (Levenson, 2009). Turner (2006) further states that

through coaching the individual is held accountable for their personal development and advancement. The African female participant mentions that coaching helped her lead people as individuals.

The coaches mentioned that they have coached African females on the following coaching areas:

- Relationship issues – Through using coaching as a tool the individual unlock the capability of the individual to build stronger relationships and improve their interpersonal skills (Wasylyshyn, 2003).
- Stakeholder mentorship or support issues – Where there is a lack of mentorship opportunities coaching can help as the individual gains a coach who will provide constant and personal attention to them (Turner, 2006). The coach mentions that through coaching the Black African female can gain the confidence to market themselves and boast about their achievements
- Dealing with insecurities – Coaching as a tool can help the individual have and improved self-understanding and an improved self-confidence (Wasylyshyn, 2003). The coach mentions that coaching provides a personal reflective space for the individual and allows them to think things through and thus set goals for themselves
- Unhappy with current career – Joo (2005) asserts that when an individual goes through coaching they can gain enhanced capabilities to embrace and manage change, achieve a work life balance, job satisfaction and reduce workplace stress. The coach mentions that during their short coaching relationship her Black African female client came to the realisation that she did not want to work in the bank anymore but wants to follow her passion of acting.
- Team management issues – Coaching as a tool can aid the individual in improving their leadership and management effectiveness. Through improving those capabilities the individual can improve productivity, team work and organisational goal achievement (Stober, 2005). The coach mentions that another African female learned that different people can be managed in different ways.

4.2.4.1 Coaching approaches

The final section of the interviews is linked to the coaching approaches that were followed either when the Black African female was coached or when the coach provided coaching.

Table 13 and 14 are linked to Table 4 in chapter 2. Each of the statements link back to one of the approaches to coaching, e.g. statements 1 to 3 connect to the Psychodynamic approach, statements 4 to 6 link back to the behaviourist approach, statements 7 to 9 link to the Cognitive therapy approach, and statements 10 to12 link to the Systems oriented approach and statements 13 to15 link to the Person centred approach. A similar Likert scale questionnaire was performed with the coaches to compare the feedback from the two groups (African female and coaches) in the findings. The findings are discussed in

relation to how each coaching approach can be be used as a tool for African women who want to progress into leadership positions they desire in their respective careers.

The statements are in Appendix B in section 3 of both the interview guides given the following labels; strongly agree (SA), agree (A), neither agree nor disagree (NAoD), disagree (D), strongly disagree (SD).

Table 13: Statements linked to coaching approaches for Black African female participants.

Statements linked to coaching approaches														
	Psychodynamic approach			**Behaviourist approach**			**Cognitive therapy approach**			**Systems oriented approach**			**Person centred approach**		
	S1	***S2***	***S3***	***S4***	***S5***	***S6***	***S7***	***S8***	***S9***	***S10***	***S11***	***S12***	***S13***	***S14***	***S15***
AFP1	SA	SA	SA	SA	NAoD	SA	NAoD	SA	SA	SA	NAoD	SA	SA	A	SA
AFP2	SA	SA	SA	SD	SA	SA	SD	A	D	SA	SA	SA	D	SA	SA
AFP3	SA	A	D	SD	NAoD	A	A	D	D	A	NAoD	SA	SA	A	A

Table 14: Statements linked to coaching approaches for African female participants

Statements linked to coaching approaches														
	Psychodynamic approach			**Behaviourist approach**			**Cognitive therapy approach**			**Systems oriented approach**			**Person centred approach**		
	S1	***S2***	***S3***	***S4***	***S5***	***S6***	***S7***	***S8***	***S9***	***S10***	***S11***	***S12***	***S13***	***S14***	***S15***
Coach1	A	SA	NAoD	SA	NAoD	SA	D	A	A	A	NAoD	A	D	NAoD	SA
Coach2	SA	SA	SA	SA	A	A	SA	D	A	A	A	A	A	SA	A

a) Report on the Psychodynamic approach

Three of the African females that received coaching strongly agreed on 7 statements linked to the Psychodynamic approach to coaching, with one of them agreeing to one statement and disagreeing to another statement. The two coaches that provided coaching strongly agreed to four statements, with one coach agreeing to all the statements and the other coach agreeing to one statement and neither agreeing or disagreeing to another. The psychodynamic approach seems to be the more acknowledged approach for the Black African female participants and for the two coaches in that it received more strongly agreed affirmations from than the other approaches for the Black African females. One coach also navigated strongly to this approach as she strongly agreed on all three statements covered in it section.

In the literature review it was stated that the psychodynamic approach focuses mainly on the coaching clients unconscious judgements and internal mental state and that this approach utilises psychoanalysis to reveal the gap between the ideal, and reality and to reveal defence mechanisms. The value of the approach can be evaluated through the elevation of self-awareness of the judgements, feelings and responses the coaching client shows (Feldman & Lankau, 2005). This links well with the coaching area that one Black Africa female had who had issues with race and battles that she had to fight. This African female responded with strongly agree on all the statements linked to the Psychodynamic approach to coaching which yielded the right outcomes with her. Another African female also responded with strongly agree on all the statements linked to this approach and this approach worked well in addressing her issues of dealing with past hurts and self-confidence. One coach strongly agreed on all the statements linked to this approach this approach worked well in making the coaching client that was coached by this coach be more self-aware of her feelings towards her career, and for the other coaching client it was to better manage the team by dropping her defences. This model has proved to be of value in both these cases in adding value towards addressing glass ceiling barriers for these participants.

b) Report on the Behaviourist approach

Two of the African females that received coaching strongly agreed to four statements linked to the Behaviourist approach to coaching, with one of them neither agreeing or disagreeing to one statement and the other strongly disagreeing to another statement. One African female strongly disagreed to one statement, neither agreed or disagreed to another statement and agreed to another statement. Two coaches strongly agreed to four statements. One coach neither agreed nor disagreed to one statement and the other coach agreed to two statements.

In the literature review it was stated that the Behaviourist approach focuses mainly on the clients visible behaviours through the use of behavioural principles such as intrinsic and extrinsic reinforcement, primary and secondary reinforcement, positive and negative reinforcement and punishment. The value of the approach can be seen when the client reveals an elevated

understanding of history and the cost of their behaviour and behavioural change (Feldman & Lankau, 2005). In the case of the two Black African female participants who both strongly agreed to two statements in this approach, one female was focusing on personal growth issues and the other female had time management issues that she needed to address. These issues can be handled through the Behaviourist approach to change any behaviour that doesn't serve their purpose. One coach worked with coaching clients who had issues with not being taken seriously and also coached women with insecurities and this approach could serve both cases in revealing any behavioural principles that are impacting them and allowing them to understand the background of their behaviours and change that.

c) Report on the Cognitive therapy approach

One African female that received coaching strongly agreed to two statements linked to the Cognitive therapy approach. Two African females agreed to two statements and disagreed to three statements. One African female strongly disagreed to a statement and one African female neither agreed nor disagreed to one statement. Two coaches agreed on three statements, one coach strongly agreed to one statement and both coaches disagreed on two statements.

In the literature review it was stated that the cognitive therapy approach focuses mainly on the clients conscious thoughts through the use of cognitive therapy to identify distorted thoughts and irrational thoughts. The value of the approach can be evaluated through seeing the change in the thought processes of the coaching client that leads to positive feelings and effective behaviour (Feldman & Lankau, 2005). The Black African female who strongly agreed to two statements in this approach yielded positive feelings that she is a strong person with some confidence in her.

d) Report on the System oriented approach

Three African females strongly agreed to seven statements linked to the System oriented approach. Two African females agreed to two statements, and three African females neither agreed nor disagreed to 3 statements. Two coaches agreed on five statements and one coach neither agreed nor disagreed on one statement.

In the literature review it was stated that the System oriented approach focuses mainly on the individualised, group, and organisational influences on the client's behaviour through gather data from the client and analysing the client's interaction with other individuals, requirements of their role, group and intergroup relations and direct interventions within the organisation. The value of the approach can be evaluated through the improved job, group and organisational effectiveness (Feldman & Lankau, 2005). The focus of this approach can be used by the Black African female who required coaching on leadership development and on one of the coach's client who needed coaching on how to manage a team.

e) Report on the Person centred approach

Three African female participants strongly agreed to five statement linked to the Person centres approach to coaching. Two African females agreed to three statements and one African female disagreed to one statement. Two coaches strongly agreed to two statements, one coach agreed to two statements and one coach disagreed to one statement and neither agreed nor disagreed to another statement.

In the literature review it was stated that the Person centred approach focuses mainly on the client's self-understanding without direct intervention by the coach through creating a trusting and empathetic and therapeutic relationship. The value of the approach can be seen in the clients visible personal growth and change (Feldman & Lankau, 2005). This approach can apply to all the Black African female participants in that responded to the statements in that it focuses on personal growth which is the inevitable outcome of being coached not matter which approach is used.

4.2.4.2 Summary

The findings and discussions of this section are focused on the value that business executive coaching can add in terms of addressing glass ceiling barriers for the Black African female and how it can also be used as a tool to progress in their careers. The African female participants and the coach participants all provided coaching areas of concerns and the tools and value drawn from utilising the tool were therefore provided. In closing off on the value and tools of business executive coaching focus was given to the different models of coaching and how each of these can be used as tools and the value of using them as tools.

4.3 Conclusion

This chapter is made up of the presentation and discussions of findings for a qualitative study into the role of business executive coaching in addressing the "glass ceiling" for black female South Africans. The findings reported on come from the interviews conducted with African females who were coached and African females who were not coached and coaches and the findings are linked to literature review. The three categories of participants were included for triangulation. The presentation and discussion of the findings were all linked to the following research questions that were answered;

Research question 1: *What are the "glass ceiling" barriers that exist in the social and business context?*

Research question 2: *How do these "glass ceiling" barriers affect the advancement of African women in the South African private sector?*

Research question 3: *What value can business executive coaching add in terms of helping African women address these "glass ceiling" barriers they face?*

Research Question 4: *How can business executive coaching be used as a tool for African women who want to progress into leadership positions they desire in their respective careers?*

Chapter 5 provides the conclusions of the research and the recommendations for future research.

CHAPTER 5. CONCLUSIONS & RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Introduction

The research topic for this qualitative research was to explore the role of business executive coaching in addressing the “”glass ceiling” for black females in South Africa.
This chapter is made up of the conclusions of the study in relation to the research questions that were asked in the first chapter. The conclusions are then followed by the recommendations and suggestions for future research.

Research question 1: *What are the “glass ceiling” barriers that exist in the social and business context?*
Research question 2: *How do these “glass ceiling” barriers affect the advancement of African women in the South African private sector?*
Research question 3: *What value can business executive coaching add in terms of helping African women address these “glass ceiling” barriers they face?*
Research Question 4: *How can business executive coaching be used as a tool for African women who want to progress into leadership positions they desire in their respective careers?*

5.2 Conclusions of the study

The conclusions of the study are made under the following research questions:

a) **Research question 1**: *What are the “glass ceiling” barriers that exist in the social and business context?*
b) **Research question 2**: *How do these “glass ceiling” barriers affect the advancement of African women in the South African private sector?*
c) **Research question 3**: *What value can business executive coaching add in terms of helping African women address these “glass ceiling” barriers they face?*
d) **Research Question 4**: *How can business executive coaching be used as a tool for African women who want to progress into leadership positions they desire in their respective careers?*

5.2.1 Conclusions regarding Research Question 1

The glass ceiling barriers that exist in the social and business context have been identified under the following; cultural factors, individual factors, educational level, internal support, external support and cultural barriers.

5.2.1.1 Cultural factors

The cultural factors that were found in the research were values, cultural stereotypes and demographics.

The majority of the participants that took part in this study had important values that were driving them on their career journeys. The values that emerged the most were those of having to work hard, having to providing education for their children or the community and being role models to their children. The Black African females who came from either a poor background where education could not be afforded, or a background where no one in the family was educated or even a background where their parents were pro education, are passionate about providing education for their children or for the communities they come from because the know and understand the value of being educated. A conclusion that can be drawn from this finding is that Black African women put in extra effort and they invest their time and money in educating the society and this sort of passion for this value can motivate them to work harder in order to break the glass ceiling.

The female participants and a coach reported on the different type of stereotyping African females are faced with that are barriers to career progression. Stereotypes such as the society's attitudes in regarding other qualifications as better than others thus pressuring the African female to choose a career based on societies expectations. Another stereotype that came through in relation to the literature was that of a women having to know her place in the family, where women are groomed from a young age to be home makers. This type of pressure drove one participant to rather pursue educating herself but she ended up having to feel as if she was not worthy of being a homemaker. One cultural stereotype that is a barrier for African women is one where tradition comes into play, where women are either not allowed to look men in the eye or they are not allowed to talk back to their elders.

It is concluded that these cultural stereotypes are barriers as they either stop a woman from pursuing their desired career path out of worry of what society might say, out of worry that they either will not be good at taking care of a home and family that they end up sacrificing either having a career or building a family. Lastly, the tradition of respect and not looking the elder in the eye is a barrier in the business context because it might show the woman as not being a strong enough candidate to be in leader ship roles in the organisation.

The demographic profile of the African female participants has played an important role in their career journey. Some of the African females were raised by single parents who had to provide for two or more children which made it a challenge for them to progress as they have to put in the extra effort of carrying their education and career progression into their own hands. One participant found herself in a career that was not first choice because her parent could not afford to take her to school to study for the career they wanted. Other participants are influenced by their family to gain an education and their families support them in this because they understand the value of being educated. It can thus be concluded that firstly if one comes from a family with lower socio-economic status it could mean that the children cannot be financially supported to pursue quality

education thus putting them in a disadvantage when attempting to get the roles they desire. It can be concluded secondly that children who grew up supported by their family are more likely to succeed in their chosen careers than those who are not.

5.2.1.2 Individual factors

The individual factors that were found in the research were attitudes and a strong need to achieve.

The attitudes that the participants exuded where, independence, resilience, confidence, vulnerability, insecurity, fighting spirit, outspokenness etc. It is concluded that only one attitude out of all these attitudes was one that can hold back that African female from breaking the glass ceiling and that was the attitude of being insecure.

Majority of the participants have one important quality which is a strong need to achieve. It is conclude that this is not necessarily a barrier when trying to break the glass ceiling, the challenge comes when the female has to work much harder than her counterparts in order to achieve career goals and they are blocked by the system that will not allow them to progress.

5.2.1.3 Educational level

Majority of the participants have a qualification linked to the role in which they are performing. One female whom the coach respondent had coach did not have the necessary qualification required in her place of employment and thus had to leave the organisation. But she left on the account of having to pursue her desired career and to go and study to qualify to be in that career. Most of the participants are studying to intend to study even further. It is concluded that if a woman does not possess the necessary qualification it forms a barrier in her career progression. Secondly, it is concluded that in order for the women to grow in their career it is important to continue with furthering her education.

The examples that came through from the interviews ranged from feelings about the type of education one should have, to the place of a woman in the family, to traditional mannerisms for women.

5.2.1.4 Internal support

In the findings the majority of the African females all experienced lack of support from either their direct line manager or leadership within the business. The lack of support and/ or mentorship became even harder to receive as they climbed up their career ladders and started obtaining some roles that have elements of leadership. The African female participants all mentioned how important support from their leaders is to them as it can help them grow within their respective organisations and also within their careers. It is concluded that the lack of support is still a career barrier

In the findings only two participants spoke of seeing their organisations hiring African females just to tick the Employment equity or BBBEE box and not necessarily as being employed because of the confidence that they can do the job. It is concluded that this can also form a barrier for women as their skills in the organisation will not be utilised because they are just viewed as a target that has been achieved.

The findings show that some of the participants have not been given equal and fair promotion opportunities, it is found that the jobs at the top are either frozen when it's time to hire an African female or they are given to the white male. Other participants found that they got promoted fairly quickly but remuneration was not up to par when compared to the roles they were fulfilling as opposed to their counterparts who are fulfilling the same or similar roles. It can be concluded that inequality in promotion opportunities and inequality in remuneration are still barriers for many African women and that there is still a lot of work to be done by organisation in addressing these barriers.

5.2.1.5 External support

Most of the participants are either part of professional associations or are intending to join these associations as they can serve a greater purpose in supporting them on their career journey. It is concluded that even though not being part of a professional association might not be a barrier in some careers it is an important form of external support that they can be a part of that can help in accelerating the career progression.

5.2.1.6 Career barriers

The participants in this study were faced with different internal organisational challenges and team challenges. The individual internal organisational challenges faced by the participants were; sexual harassment, lack of progress in career, job dissatisfaction, being judged by colour of skin, sex and age and constant struggle to get into positions that their counterparts get into easily. It is concluded that all these cases of internal organisational challenges can create glass ceiling barriers for women unless organisations addresses them.

Some participants and one participant that was coached by the coach participant were faced with team challenges ranging from; the team not wanting to work together, to having a less than competent team that needs micromanaging. One African female that was coached by the coach participant needed coaching on how to better manage her team, whilst an African female participant mentioned that she was coached on how to handle her team as individuals. It is concluded that team challenges can pose as a barrier it not addressed in a meaningful way such as through undergoing coaching to equip the leader with tools on how to manage the team better and deal with under performers.

5.2.2 Conclusions regarding Research Question 2

Impact of challenges on reaching their position

The findings concluded in this section related to how the career barriers affect the advancement of women. The following impact on the African female participants was found:

- One African female participant felt that growing in her role has taken a backseat because of team management issues- It is concluded that this slows down career progression and may be a barrier to progression
- Another African participant is frustrated at the amount of effort she has to put in as opposed to counterparts, and this can be seen as having affected her negatively emotionally. It is concluded that if these feelings and emotions are not addressed they can create a barrier for progression as the female can give up on their career journey.
- One African female mentioned that these career barriers only fuel her passion even more uses the barriers to build her. It is concluded that if the individual is passionate in their job or role they can view these challenges as stepping stone
- There has been a big impact on work life balance for the African female participants as they mentioned that they spend most of their time at work and working after hours that they barely have time for their personal lives. It is concluded that if this persists the African female can find themselves growing in their career but at the sacrifice of their personal lives.

5.2.3 Conclusions regarding Research Question 3 and Research Question 4

In this section both research question 3 and research question 4 are concluded.
They are paired up because each finding under the value business executive coaching can add was connected to how coaching could be used as a tool. The participants raised coaching areas they needed coaching on and these areas were linked to how coaching adds value in addressing the glass ceiling barriers and the outcome and value of that coaching experience. The main coaching outcomes were as follows:

- Assisting them to set personal and career goals and to achieve these goals.
- Helping them understand and deal with any negative feelings they have due to being excluded
- Helping them to develop a sense of self and get clarity on their personal beliefs
- Forming their identity within the organisation thus allowing them to identify as a leader
- Formulating a work/life balance strategy

It is concluded that business executive coaching can serve as a tool in addressing glass ceiling barriers that hinder the African female from progressing.

The value of the coaching approaches namely; Psychodynamic approach, Behaviourist approach, Cognitive therapy approach, System oriented approach and person centred were also used to provide findings on how they can be utilised as tools to address the glass ceiling barriers experienced by the African female. It I concluded that for the purpose of the study all the approaches each serve as a valuable tool in addressing these barriers. It is also concluded that by highlighting the different approaches it does not suggest that one approach is better than then other or more correct than the other but that each approach can be well suited to specific cases. In the end all these approaches are focused on one thing and that is achieving the goal that is the main focus.

5.3 Recommendations

This section provides a discussion of recommendations and implications for the organisation, for the African female and for the coaching field.

5.3.1 Implications for the organisation

Black African females are bound to feel isolated and rejected by the organisation due to the glass ceiling barriers they continuously face. They find it difficult to progress into senior and leadership roles because the organisation has set different barriers that block them and challenge them at every turn. Many organisations are aware of the barriers that are faced by women and especially African women but it is recommended that the leadership of these organisations need to sit down with their African female employees and listen to the real underlying challenges they face in relation to the current glass ceiling barriers they face and how it is impacting them.

The organisation can choose to partner with a qualified external party to perform a culture and diversity audit for them which can dig out areas of concern. Once this is done the organisation can formulate a plan aligned to the findings to address these glass ceiling barriers. They are recommended to invest in coaching by partnering with qualified and experienced business executive coaches not only for the current leaders but for the future leaders of the business as coaching will provide a safe and supportive space for the organisations leaders and future leaders to share their concerns, hopes, and goals they want to achieve.

5.3.2 Implications for the African female

What the individual African female needs to take away from their career journey as a lesson is that they need to take the full responsibility of their career progressions. Yes, they might be faced with barriers but it is totally up to them as to how they will choose to view or react to these barriers. It is recommended that when the African female sees that there is no form of support they are receiving from an organisational perspective in addressing their perceived views of the barriers they are faced with they need to seek external advice and guidance. These form of guidance platforms can be finding a mentor outside of the organisation they work for, finding a coach that will be a sounding board for them and networking with the business community at large.

5.3.3 Implications for the coaching field

There is still a great need in organisations and from the individual side for business executive coaching. The findings in the research suggest that not a lot of African females have had the opportunity to be coached. It is recommended that coaches invest in marketing the value of coaching to businesses and to individuals as there is a great need for it. It is also recommended that coaches continue to invest in their own training and development as the coaching needs of individuals are ever changing and they need a coach with new coaching tools that can help these individuals achieve their goals.

5.4 Suggestions for further research

The objective of this study was to explore the role that “glass ceiling” barriers play in the progression of African women into senior and top management position the private sector in South Africa and to identify perceptions of the ways in which business executive coaching can serve as a tool for the African female to address the “glass ceiling” barriers they face and progress into the senior and top management positions in their respective careers. The sample was however limited to African females based in Gauteng.

It might be useful to extend a similar study to other African females in junior management, middle management and senior management in other provinces. This would be to find out how Gauteng females experiences are similar or different to other females in South Africa.

It would be useful to also extend this research to the Public sectors that are not achieving targets to gauge if the experiences of the females there are similar to those in the private sector.

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APPENDIX A: RESEARCH INSTRUMENT

Letter to participants explaining the research:

Dear Participant,

Thank you very much for your time and for agreeing to take part in this research exercise.

The research is being completed in order to complete a Masters in Management for Business and Executive Coaching degree at Wits Business School.

This research is aimed at reviewing the different “glass ceiling” barriers that African females face and experience in their lived experiences and how these barriers impact their progression in the private sector in South Africa.

In the interview I will be drawing on your personal experience to answer a number of questions that have been developed based on literature research. Your input will be of great value in discovering areas where executive coaching can facilitate the career progression of African females by breaking the glass ceiling.

Your name as an individual participant and the organisation you come from will be kept confidential in the research report, but the overall findings will be published and shared with you, the participant.

Many thanks,

Mapheello Khunou

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Appendix B: Interview guide

Semi-structured interview: African female participant

Section 1

What are the "glass ceiling" barriers that exist in the social and business context and how do they affect the advancement of African women in the South African private sector? (this is not a question asked)

Setting the scene: Please share your career journey and how you progressed into your position.

Question 1: What factors have driven/ or are driving you on your career journey?

Probes:

a. How have any *cultural factors* contributed to your career progression? E.g. beliefs, ethnicity, stereotypes, patriarchy, societal expectations . . .
b. How have *individual factors* played a role in your career progression? E.g. self-identity, self-confidence, personality traits, education, social position, attitude of significant others towards your career, marital status . . .
c. How have *organisational factors* affected your career progression? E.g. remuneration fairness, development opportunities, promotion opportunities, institutional discrimination, work-life balance issues, network inclusion/exclusion, availability of coaching/mentoring . . .
d. How have *external factors* influenced your career progression? E.g. policy, professional associations, peer groups . . .

Question 2: What challenges did you come across or are you still facing in your career journey?

Question 3: How have these challenges affected you in reaching your current position or desired position?

Question 4: What would an ideal career / home life balance look like to you? (What are your preferences?)

Section 2

What value can business executive coaching add in terms of helping African women address these "glass ceiling" barriers they face and help them progress into leadership positions they desire in their respective careers?

Question 5: What are/were your desired goals for your career? How have things changed over time? E.g. your priorities and values?

Question 6: What form of support have you received towards attaining your goals?

Question 7: Have you participated in any coaching intervention in your career journey /or have you observed someone in your social circles experience coaching?

Question 8: If yes is answered to the previous question, what coaching areas did the coaching address?

Question 9: What was your experience on how the coaching addressed your coaching areas?

Question 10: What was your experience of your coaching relationship with the coach?

Question 11: What have you taken away as learning from your coaching experience?

Section three

For each of the following statements pertaining to the way you were coached, please indicate the extent of your agreement by placing a X is one of the relevant boxes

Each statement is preceded by the words, “my coach . . .”

#	**Statement** **My coach . . .**	**Strongly disagree**	**Disagree**	**Neither disagree nor agree**	**Agree**	**Strongly agree**
1	Probed about my self-awareness					
2	Wanted to know about my feelings					
3	Asked about my family dynamics					
4	Asked how I behaved when feeling I was being discriminated against					
5	Asked how I behaved when opportunities were offered to me					
6	Asked about other factors that influenced my behaviour					
7	Asked how my thoughts affected my feelings					

#	Statement My coach . . .	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither disagree nor agree	Agree	Strongly agree
8	Asked what thoughts gave me positive feelings					
9	Asked what thoughts gave me negative feelings					
10	Asked about my individual effectiveness at work					
11	Asked about my team effectiveness at work					
12	Asked about the effectiveness of my relationship with my manager					
13	Asked about how self-directed I am					
14	Asked about the levels of trust and trustworthiness between me and my colleagues					
15	Asked about my personal growth and change					

Final question: Are there any other issues which we have not covered about this coaching experience on which you would like to make a comment on?

Semi-structured interview: Business executive coach participant

Section 1

What are the "glass ceiling" barriers that exist in the social and business context and how do they affect the advancement of African women in the South African private sector not a question asked)

Setting the scene: Please describe your coaching career background. Have you coached an African female before/ or have been in close relations with a coach that has?

Question 1: In your experience what factors have you come across in your career that African females needed coaching on?

Question 2: In your view, what impact have these factors had on the path to career advancement for African females?

Section 2

What value can business executive coaching add in terms of helping African women address these "glass ceiling" barriers they face and help them progress into leadership positions they desire in their respective careers?

Question 3: How you would describe your way of coaching and what it focuses on?

Question 4: How has coaching addressed the coaching areas that are career advancement related for your African female clients?

Question 5: What was your experience of your coaching relationship with the client?

Question 6: In your coaching experience, what factors that hinder career progression can be addressed through coaching?

Section 3

For each of the following statements pertaining to the way you coached the woman, please indicate the extent of your agreement by placing an X is one of the relevant boxes

#	Statement	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither disagree nor agree	Agree	Strongly agree
1	I probed about her self-awareness					
2	I wanted to know about her feelings					
3	I asked about her family dynamics					
4	I asked how she behaved when feeling she was being discriminated against					
5	I asked how she behaved when opportunities were offered to her					
6	I asked about other factors that influenced her behaviour					
7	I asked how her thoughts affected her feelings					
8	I asked what thoughts gave her positive feelings					
9	I asked what thoughts gave her negative feelings					
10	I asked about her individual effectiveness at work					

#	Statement	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither disagree nor agree	Agree	Strongly agree
11	I asked about her team effectiveness at work					
12	I asked about the effectiveness of her relationship with my manager					
13	I asked about how self-directed she is					
14	I asked about the levels of trust and trustworthiness between herself and her colleagues					
15	I asked about her personal growth and change					

Final question: Are there any other issues which we have not covered about coaching in the context of this study on which you would like to make a comment?