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Leadership Dilemmas of Women in Senior Management Positions (Support) in Higher Education: Strategy, Struggles and Survival

A Case Study at the University of Witwatersrand (Wits)



UNIVERSITY OF THE
WITWATERSRAND,
JOHANNESBURG

A Research Report Submitted to the Faculty of Humanities in partial fulfilment of the Degree of Master of Education

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Supervised By: Professor Felix Maringe

DECLARATION

*I, **Lamese Abrahams** declare that:*

1. *This is my own, unaided work unless where I have explicitly indicated otherwise;*
2. *I have followed the referencing conventions of the University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg;*
3. *I have not submitted this work for degree purposes at any other University.*

……...

Lamese Abrahams

3 August 2017

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I would like to thank the Almighty whose love, grace, and blessings made this pursuit possible.

Indeed, I am blessed not only with a group of strong, supportive colleagues but also with a loving family and friends who accompanied me through this unforgettable journey.

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Last but not least, I want to thank my husband, Adnaan and son Ziyaad, for their unfailing love, companionship, sacrifice and support all these years. Thank you for your patience and understanding.

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to obtain a deeper understanding of what it takes for women to succeed in senior management positions (support) in higher education institutions. The findings not only offer a wealth of strategies for career success and for overcoming professional and personal challenges, but also sheds new light on critical factors that affect women's experiences at work.

This qualitative study was based primarily on confidential interviews with four senior female participants and two senior male participants. Before assuming their current posts, they worked in a variety of leadership capacities ranging from department head to executive positions at Wits. All interviews were transcribed verbatim, analysed and compared for salient themes.

Six major themes emerged from this research: effective leadership strategies; tests and trials; maintaining focus and political savvy; numbers matter; gender as a two-edged sword; and competing as a woman. The results revealed that to succeed as an executive in a higher education institution, women must constantly overachieve, maintain good relationships with others, hold onto personal and institutional values to do the right things, expand themselves constantly, and utilize strong mentors' assistance. When faced with implicit and explicit challenges such as unequal treatment, gender bias, resistance, political joggling, or personal struggles, they rely on private confrontation, emotional intelligence, and tenacity, as well as all possible support and resources to survive and thrive.

The literature reviewed demonstrated that these factors are not exclusively experienced in the higher education sector and thus the results could be of interest to both the private and public sector. Given the importance of gender diversity in our modern society, the researcher believes that this study is critical in assisting Wits to understand why there are still so few females in senior management positions. It is hoped that the research will assist Wits to make changes to support the development and progression of more women into senior leadership roles in the future.

Finally, although it is beyond the scope of this study to do more than speculate about the implications of the literature for leadership and gender issues, the relative lack of progress made during the last 40 years in terms of women occupying senior management positions, suggest that the discourse around these findings particularly at Wits needs to be more robust, redefined and more rigorous on the view to attracting, developing, retaining and promoting women into senior management positions.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1. Background

Being overlooked for promotion, racial discrimination and intimidating institutional environments are daunting challenges for women employed in higher education institutions. These themes emerged at the Higher Education Resource's Services South Africa (Hers-SA) academy held in Cape Town in September 2014. Minister Naledi Pandor who delivered the keynote address, titled "Women Battle Ivory-Tower Bias" concluded that "A great deal of work remains to be done in the higher education sector. The traditional social stereotypes that influence women's progress in higher education remain in place and require dedicated and strategic attention".

In South Africa within ten years after the advent of democracy, higher education showed a gender profile which was at a level that many countries took decades to achieve (De La Rey, 2005). Although the total number of women graduating from universities has increased since then, closer examination of the findings reveals that 'there is still a pattern of decreasing percentages as the level of study moves upward from undergraduate to doctorate levels' (ibid). When enrolments are examined by field of study, men continue to dominate in science, engineering and technology.

With respect to staff, according to the Mckinsey report (Barsch and Yee, 2014, p. 48), internationally the percentage of women academics has grown at a slower rate than for women students and the same pattern is evident in South Africa. While equity has been achieved in overall numbers, there are continuing differences within categories. Men hold the majority of management, academic, technical, trade and service posts, while women are in the majority in the specialized support professional and non-professional administration posts (ibid). The areas where the greatest inequality persists are trade and service positions, and senior management. At the most senior level within the South African higher education sector, namely Vice-Chancellor positions, four of the 23 public universities have women vice-chancellors, two of these are universities of technology, one is a comprehensive university and one is research-intensive.

There is no doubt that women have made inroads into higher education management. However, it has not been a straightforward matter of a linear, continued progression toward true equality. Instead, it seems that many patterns are quite persistent and at different times and in different contexts, women's participation has declined as well as advanced (Leathwood and Read, 2009, pp. 77-79). There is much debate about the reasons behind the stagnation in the number of women at senior management level. Choice is often put forward as a factor. In simplistic terms it is argued that women are choosing to not put themselves forward for such jobs or are opting out. In contexts where all formal obstacles have ostensibly been removed and in some cases there are also equity policies to advance women, choice can seem to be a seductive, convincing factor. But choices are made within contexts that either facilitate or constrain decisions.

What we learn from South Africa where there is a constitutional provision for both equality and redress, but from many other countries too is that policies are necessary but insufficient to bring about gender equality. There are a growing number of studies that attempt to explain the deeper factors that impede the entry and progress of women in higher education (de la Rey, C, 2005). By studying the biographies of women experiences as well as the attitudes of people, researchers have pointed to a multiplicity of factors that interact in our daily lives in ways that make it far more challenging for women to succeed in higher education. Moreover, the underutilization of women's strengths and talents impedes not only women's contributions to their institutions but also to South Africa's higher education's vitality and development.

1.2. Purpose Statement

The purpose of the research is twofold. Firstly, to understand the factors that affect women's participation and career progression in senior and executive management positions (support) in South African higher education institutions. Secondly, to further understand the strategies employed by selected women leaders to overcome various challenges or obstacles in their paths to success. The focus will be on female insiders' views on women in leadership positions and the subjective meanings attached to these lived experiences. The study is aimed at uncovering the story behind the stories contributing to women leader's success, particularly highlighting their ways of handling difficult situations encountered in

their professional and personal life, so that valuable lessons and advice can be learned from their success stories for the benefit of other current or aspiring female leaders.
The scope of this research straddles various organizational functions, organisational development, design and strategy. The global literature can be classified into at least four analytical frameworks: gendered divisions of labour (Lynch, 2010); gender bias and misrecognition (Bardoel et al. 2011); management and masculinity (Billing, 2011); and work/life balance challenges (Currie et al, 2002; Guillaume and Pochic, 2009). The research also includes examples of structured interventions that have been developed to encourage more women to enter leadership positions in universities.

This research is therefore not meant to be replicable of previous research on this topic, but rather to be more directed to measure the culture of the higher education environment and to assess how supportive it is to equal opportunities for women. An attempt will be made to identify the resonant factors that contribute to the struggle and survival of women in terms of their career advancement in higher education institutions and to gain comparative insights around their strategies for advancement within the higher education sector. This research has the intention to reinvigorate the debate around moving the female employee demographic in higher education to one that mirrors the current student body.

For the purposes of this final research report, barriers are defined as obstacles which impede the progress of change; culture is defined as the cumulative deposit of systems of knowledge, beliefs, experiences and attitudes shared by a relatively large group of people; and the term glass ceiling carries the meaning of organizational and individual practices that block the upward mobility of women.

1.3. Problem Statement

To understand the underlying drivers of the low representation of women in senior and executive management (support) positions at the University of Witwatersrand (Wits).

In addressing the research problem, as I am in a middle management position at Wits, I will use the Wits context as a case study for this research project. An attempt will be made to explore the factors which affect the promotion of women at Wits and to gain a better understanding of how women overcome those challenges in order to achieve senior

management positions. The research will provide insight into the personal experiences of these women by increasing the volume of their voices and to allow them to create their own meanings outside of the dominant male paradigm of the executive culture.

1.4. Research Questions

The guiding question of this research study was as follows: "What does it take for women leaders at Wits to succeed in senior management positions and what is required to overcome various challenges or barriers in their careers?" The underlying assumption was that due to the extremely demanding and political nature of the higher education environment, for women to secure and remain successful in powerful positions, they must first be able to triumph over various personal, family-related, interpersonal, institutional and societal challenges. Under this overriding question were the following six key research questions:

- What factors have contributed to their success today?
- What are the personality characteristics that enable some women, and not others, to conquer barriers and progress to the upper echelons?
- What environmental factors (external and internal) contribute to women's ability or inability to achieve professional success?
- What strategies or skills have they employed to overcome various barriers to success?
- To what extent do they believe a glass ceiling exists for females at the University of Witwatersrand? Or do they believe that the concept of a glass ceiling does not exist?
- What insights or advice do they have for other current or aspiring women leaders to help them succeed as top executives in higher education?

1.5. Socio-Cultural Context of This Research within the Higher Education Sector

This research study located within a theoretical framework of gender and leadership will attempt to deconstruct the dominant discourse around barriers to success for women employed in the higher education sector. The research will focus specifically on the context of Wits.

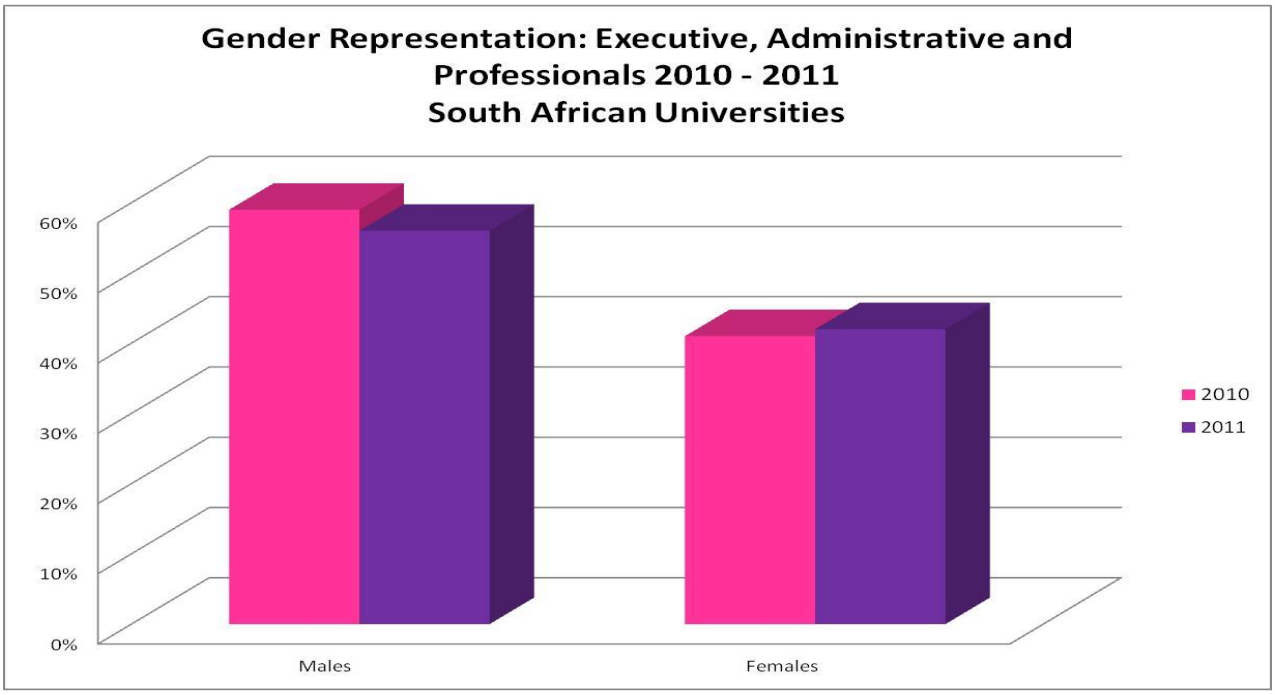
1.6. Research Scope of the South African Higher Education Context

Higher Education is a dichotomous environment. On the one hand universities are the incubators of new ideas and the nurseries of future savants. On the other, they are among

the most conservative and patriarchal of organisations, changing little over centuries, replicating their epistemologies and cultures through an international code of embedded practice (Morley and Walsh, 1996).

In South Africa, political and social change emanating from the new democracy demands transformation of the established higher education system. Increasing the numbers of black people and women participating in higher education institutions, both as students and staff is a key component of this transformation. Despite these requirements an analysis of national policy documentation shows that the need to redress gender equity imbalances is frequently limited to an indication of intent. What is less clear is evidence of effective policy implementation. In 2010, women made up 48% of the people employed in the higher education sector (Department of Higher Education and Training: 2010 Hemis Database). However the majority of these women are located in lower academic and administrative ranks.

Although these numbers may have increased slightly, questions are still being asked as to why there are still proportionally fewer women at the highest levels within the higher education sector, whereas there seems to be a balance in the recruitment at a junior level (Dambrin and Lambert, 2008).



University of Pretoria: Professor Stella Nkomo HERS 2014 Presentation



University of Pretoria: Professor Stella Nkomo HERS 2014 Presentation

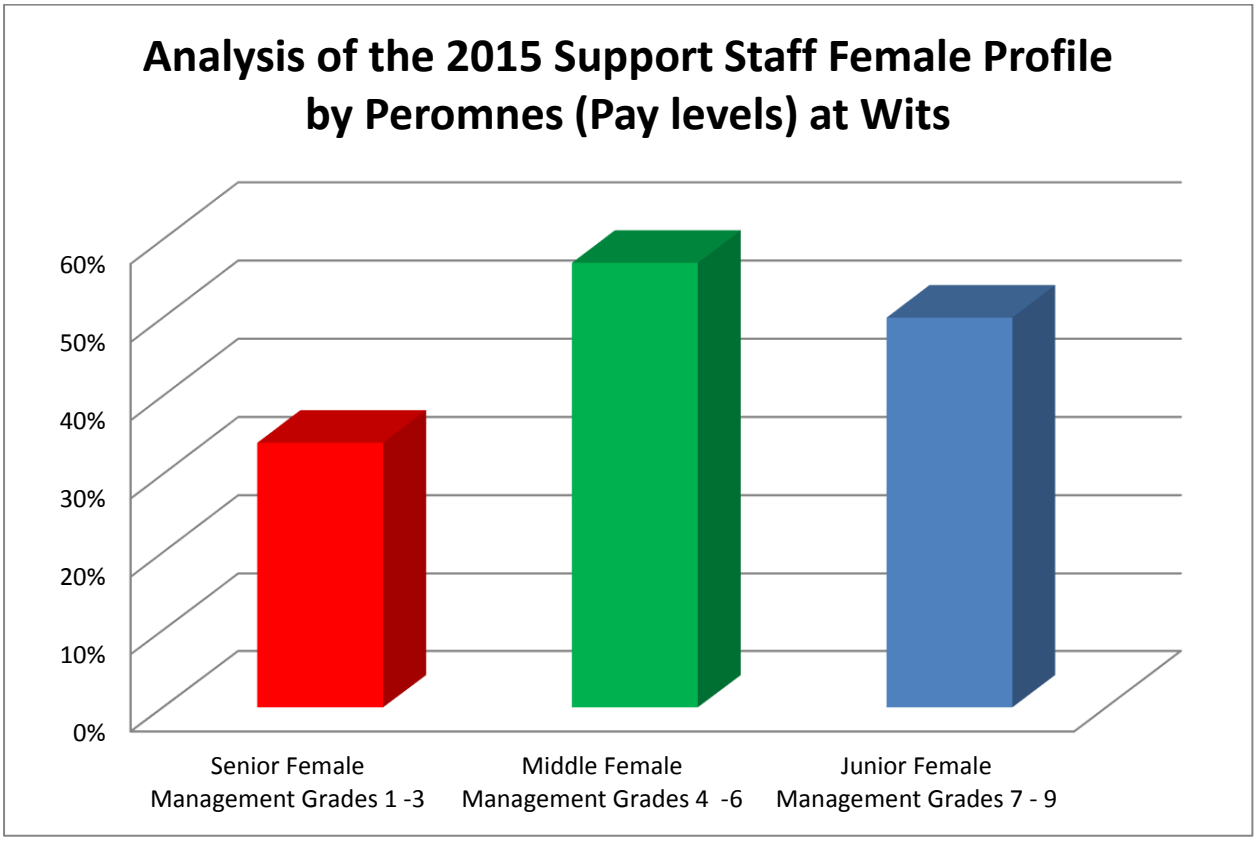
1.7. Sketching the context of the University of Witwatersrand

In the Wits Employment Equity Plan 2015-2019 (p. 9), the University emphasizes the important role that higher education institutions play in redressing the imbalances created by the injustices of the past. The plan emphasizes the need to construct a society and in particular a skilled professional work force that is conscious of the challenges of building a non-racial and non-sexist democracy and which seeks to address the huge development problems confronting our country.

In the Sunday Times (Money and Careers, April 28 2013), Professor Jonathan Jansen, the ex Vice-Chancellor of the University of Free State echoed the above sentiment: "That higher education is central to human development. Universities are not on the periphery of society pondering on humanity, they are central".

The Wits Employment Equity Plan (p.12) highlights the fact that administrative and support staff should represent the demographics of South Africa, however the University has

struggled to achieve the same objective with academic staff and senior management. The challenges over the past few years have been enormous. The university recognizes in the plan that the task of ensuring equality and dignity for all staff has only just begun and that the plan is required to take on these challenges of "nurturing and developing" the talent and potential of staff who fall within the designated group categories. The plan further emphasizes the University's commitment to valuing diversity and the acknowledgement of the tension that emerges with growing a more diverse workforce.



Wits Employment Equity Plan 2015-2019 (p.13)

The graph above illustrates that senior management (Peromnes Grades 1-3) at Wits is constituted of 34% females. At middle management female employees constitute 57% and 50% of junior managers are female.

The gender profile at Wits portrays a distinct pyramid shape with females constituting the base and males forming the upper parts of the pyramid structure. The paucity of women at higher levels of management at Wits is clearly evident.

1.8. Limitations of the Study

- The study is limited to exploring the resonant factors which serve as barriers and factors which contribute positively to the career mobility of women who achieved senior management positions at Wits.
- The focus was on these successful women's lived experiences and their views on reasons behind their success as well as issues facing women in higher education administration.
- The case study only looked at this issue in the context of the higher education industry and therefore, cannot be generalized to other industries.
- The study only considered women in senior management roles in the support sector and not stereotypes of general career progression of junior staff.
- The study did not take into account race or economic background data at all, therefore it did not look at the differences between, for example, white and black women**.**
- The research findings will not be statistically generalisable given the size of the sample. No attempts will be made to understand the psychological forces behind the experiences of the individual.
- Moreover, the richness of the results relied on the researcher's interview skills as well as the participants' openness and willingness to disclose, reflect, and analyze different aspects of both their positive and negative experiences in the profession.

1.9. Assumptions

This study assumes that:

- There are factors affecting the upward mobility of women in the workplace.
- There are factors which critically affect the mobility of women managers in higher education.
- Gender role stereotypes do exist in the higher education industry. This is assumed, as the literature review deals with studies conducted in multiple industries, and countries.
- The participants in the case study have had some experience with role stereotypes in the workplace, either positive or negative.

- The participants in the sample were willing to share information with regard to their experiences, and responded honestly and truthfully knowing that their responses were anonymous.

1.10. Significance of the Study

This study was needed and is important for the following reasons. First, studies on leaders or leadership theories in higher education have traditionally been focused on male subjects (Bolman and Deal, 1992; Mark, 1981; Stokes, 1984). When compared with their male counterparts, women leaders in higher education have received much less attention in the literature. As outstanding as they can be, successful women leaders' stories are less documented, and their voices are less heard. Due to the continuous lack of knowledge about pioneering women leaders in higher education, scholars have called for more studies focusing on senior women leaders' practices and experiences so that not only new knowledge about women leaders can be gained but also aspiring leaders can benefit from their success stories (Allen, 1986; Bond, 2000; Etaugh, 1986; Mark, 1981; Moore, 1984; Munford and Rumball, 2000; Walton and McDade, 2001).

Second, after conducting a comprehensive literature review on women leaders in higher education, it was found that most previous works focused on demographic data or career paths of executive women leaders. ACE (2002); Gerdes (2003); Milley (1991); Moore (1984); and Walton and McDade (2001), for instance, provided a wide range of background information about women serving in senior leadership positions. Their findings, nonetheless, cannot solve the puzzle of how and why these women managed to break through the "glass ceiling" in the higher education sector. Although some works addressed the issues of barriers to and strategies for success for women in higher education leadership, most of them were opinion- or sharing-pieces that were not based on scholarly research (Cook, 2001; Dickson, 2000; Growe and Montgomery, 1999; Guteck, 2001; Marshall, 2002). As to qualitative inquiries (Cline, 1996; Dietz, 1997; Flanagan, 2002; Rosynsky, 2002; Sturnick, 1999; Tedrow and Rhoads, 1999; Thompson-Stacy, 1995; Zakery, 1991), while the findings focused on relevant issues with more depth and meaning, they were generally limited to certain geographical areas or to specific types of institutions. Thus, additional studies need to be conducted so that a more complete picture about what it takes

for women to achieve and remain in senior leadership posts in higher education can be constructed.

Third, according to the literature, mentors and role models for women in higher education are scarce. Reasons for the shortage of mentors included lack of women in top leadership positions, hesitation of male leaders to mentor women, the unwillingness of the "queen bee" to assist other women, and lack of time and energy for mentoring (Anderson and Ramey, 1990; Bower, 1993; Braun, 1990; Scanlong, 1997). Therefore, the task of preserving detailed success stories of current senior women leaders becomes not only necessary but also important so that current and aspiring women leaders can, at least, learn from these examples when they have no place to turn.

Fourth, the gendered socialization process has encouraged females to play the supportive and nurturing roles instead of the competitive and aggressive roles, not to mention being trained to master skills needed to play political games in the workplace (Acker, 1992; Babcock and Laschever, 2003; Brown and Gilligan, 1992; Gilligan, 1982; Jablonski, 1996; Kimmel, 2004). Albino (1992) and Thompson-Stacy (1995), for instance, found that women tend to perceive politics negatively and, thus, feel uncomfortable talking about politics or strategies. However, together with Cantor and Bernay (1992), they contended that for women to succeed as senior leaders in the political environment of higher education, being politically astute was an inevitable and indispensable requirement. Therefore, the current study was needed so that more aspiring women leaders especially in South Africa would have an opportunity to understand the political nature of higher education as well as to learn practical lessons from those who have already mastered the art of politics.

Fifth, women cannot passively rely on affirmative action or institutional intervention programs to improve their status in the profession. The best way to eliminate irrelevant gender-based challenges is to acquaint current and aspiring women leaders with strategies learned from women who have already achieved success in top leadership positions within the academy (Bond, 2000; Chamberlain, 2001; Flanagan, 2002; Mark, 1981; Ronning, 2000). By examining both the problems and the solutions in depth, this research intends to identify both positive and negative factors that affect women leaders' experiences in higher education. The findings of this study will not only add to the knowledge base about women

in senior positions but will also provide aspiring leaders with various practical alternatives for overcoming different obstacles in their career paths.

1.11. Organisation of the Study

This research study will be organized into six chapters. The first chapter includes the introduction and background of the study, statement of the problem, context of this research within the higher education sector, purpose of the study, limitations of the study, assumptions, significance of the study and the organization of this research study. Chapter Two focuses on a review of relevant literature on historical and socio-cultural contexts for women in higher education; barriers affecting the upward career mobility of women into senior management positions in higher education; strategies used by women leaders to overcome barriers to success; and concluding remarks. The research propositions, methodology, research design, participant selection and research procedures are discussed in Chapter Three. Research data and findings are presented in Chapter Four and Chapter Five. Chapter Five focuses on salient themes that emerged from the in-depth personal interviews. Chapter Six begins with reflections and a summary of the study together with conclusions as well as a discussion of major findings and contributions of the study to the literature and concludes with recommendations for action and further study.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

2.1. Introduction

For at least a quarter of a century, women have been entering the professional and managerial ranks of major companies at about the same rate as men, yet they still remain dramatically under-represented at senior levels (Elyand Kolb, 2011). In South Africa, despite remarkable increases of women in positions of power in the post-apartheid era, this trend is still evident. Women account for 51 percent of the population and 46.5 per cent of the labour force but their representation at more senior levels is negligible by comparison (Mckinsey report, 2008). While the recipe to achieving corporate success may be a well kept secret, a key ingredient must surely be leadership.

This chapter contains a thorough review of relevant literature of the central themes relating to the study. The first section will focus on the conceptual framework for women in higher education. The second section will provide a theoretical framework around gender and leadership theories, attitudinal drivers and gender role stereotypes, organizational culture and the ingredients of leadership success for women in higher education and will engage with 'third wave' notions of feminism, which takes into consideration racial and socio-economic diversity among women. The next two parts will touch briefly on the characteristics of successful women, both intrinsic and extrinsic, as defined by Keown and Keown (2002). The literature review will then explore the attitudes that successful female executives display in their careers, together with the career strategies that they employ. Barriers to success are also considered, and where relevant, strategies to overcome these barriers are mentioned. A brief summation of the literature review on women leaders in higher education will then conclude this chapter.

2.2. Conceptual Framework

2.2.1. Leadership and Leadership Style

Leadership is subjectively constructed. A comprehensive definition of leadership is that "of a process in which an individual influences a group of individuals to achieve a common goal" (Northouse, 2004). The definition of leadership looks simple, but the concept itself involves much more. According to Gardner (1995, p. 292) "The greatest challenge the leaders face is to bring about significant and lasting changes in a large and heterogeneous

group". Leadership style is by definition leadership behaviour with two clearly independent dimensions: the task dimension that includes goal setting, organization, direction and control; and the relationship dimension involving support, communication, interaction and active listening (Hershey and Blanchard, 1988). A precise definition of the perfect or ideal leadership style would be difficult to formulate considering the numerous factors that might shape such a style.

2.2.2. Gender And Gender Role Defined

Gender refers to the distinctive culturally created qualities of men and women apart from their biological differences (Lorde, 2000). The construct of gender implies the way meaning associates with sex in members of a culture in terms of expected learned behaviours, traits and attitudes (DeMatteo, 1994; Northouse, 2004). The concept of gender role is situationally constructed in organizations, and based on: masculinity involving aggression, independence, objectivity, logic, analysis, decision and; femininity involving emotions, sensitivity, expressiveness and intuition (Fernandes and Cabral-Cardosso, 2003).

2.2.3. Relationship Between Leadership And Gender

The relationship between gender role and leadership style is the association of masculinity with task-oriented leadership styles and femininity with relationship –orientated ones (Oshagbeni and Gill, 2003; Rigg and Sparrow, 1994). This relationship is not so clear cut for women. Two opposite currents are constantly encountering women swimming in the middle when they have to decide what leadership styles need to be adopted in the workplace. Jamieson (1995) developed the concept of the femininity/competency bind where behaving feminine is associated with incompetence and behaving masculine is associated with competency. If the masculine model represents the universal and dominant model of leadership (Fernandes and Cabral-Cardoso, 2003), women understand that in order to escalate the ranks they have to conform to it (Rigg and Sparrow, 1994). In other words, the same few influence strategies that proved to be successful for men are repeatedly used by women (Rizzo and Mendez, 1998). What should women do then in order to keep afloat between these two currents related to gender and leadership styles? The strategy is to develop behaviours feminine enough not to deviate from the gender role expectation, but masculine enough to gain credibility as professionals; in simple terms, women have to

create their own leadership styles. As Gardner (1995, p. 88) reiterates "Leadership is never guaranteed; it must always be renewed".

2.3. The Landscape of Theory

How individuals develop a "gendered" self and gender-typed differentiation has intrigued researchers of human behaviour for as long as social development has been a field of empirical study. In 1966, several important theories of gender development, including Kohlberg's cognitive– developmental approach and Mischel's social learning approach, were outlined in Maccoby's research on the development of sex differences (Martin, 2002). In the mid-1970s, groundbreaking research by Maccoby and Jacklin (1974) broadened the discussion about the etiology of sex differences and gender typing and questioned the significance of socialization processes, thereby invigorating the field and generating considerable controversy. In the early 2000's, Seidmann (2000) called for researchers to develop a more integrative, comprehensive approach to the study of gender development.

This integration was to include consideration of the many facets of gender that needed investigation, such as concepts, identity, preferences, and behavior, as well as a wide variety of factors that influence the development of these facets, including biology, cognitions, and social influences. This idea resonated with gender researchers and has been a driving force in the field ever since, leading to an expansion of theoretical approaches and the inclusion of multiple measures in empirical studies (Mattis, M.C, 2001).

Bussey and Bandura (1999) presented a social– cognitive theory (SCT) of gender development and differentiation. This theory represents a particular view of how gender-related behavior is acquired and maintained, based on contemporary social learning theory (Bandura, 1986). Because the theory has now integrated cognitive constructs and makes reference to biological underpinnings and socio-structural factors, Bussey and Bandura described their theory as comprehensive and integrative, consistent with Huston's (1983) proposal, and implied that other theories are invalid and/or no longer necessary. In particular, they were highly critical of previous cognitive approaches to early gender development and proposed that cognitive structures, namely gender identity and stereotype knowledge, play a ***minor role*** relative to social forces. One aim of this research paper is to critically analyse this claim.

2.4. A Theoretical Debate Begins

2.4.1. Gender Theories

In their two influential theoretical works about gender development, Mischel and Kohlberg each suggested very different origins of gendered behavior and self-knowledge (Kohlberg and Mischel, 1966). Mischel (1966) emphasized the importance of environmental determinants of gender development (rewards and models) and suggested that behaviors precede cognitions (e.g., "I have been rewarded for doing boy things, I must be a boy"). Mischel's ideas were a direct outgrowth of learning-based approaches quite popular at the time. In contrast, Kohlberg (1966) emphasized the importance of children's growing understanding of gender categories and their permanent placement into one of them. He proposed that such cognitions precede behaviors (e.g., "I am a boy and thus like to do boy things"). Kohlberg's heavy reliance on Piaget's work at a time when developmental psychologists were showing great interest in this work increased the likelihood that Kohlberg's theory would become a major influence on the direction of the field of gender development.

The cognitive approach to gender development gained even more momentum with the advent of gender schema theories, including the versions that focused on individual differences and those that focused on developmental issues (Koyama, 2002). Although the versions of gender schema theory differed from one another and from Kohlberg's ideas, each of these cognitive approaches recognized the active and constructive processes involved in gender development.

Over time, both approaches have moved toward the middle ground, with cognitive theorists showing more interest in the environmental factors that influence the construction and content of gender cognitions and learning theorists considering more seriously how cognitive and internal factors influence gender development. In short, the movement to be integrative and comprehensive has eliminated the strong form of the debate. It is now widely acknowledged that regardless of one's preferred theoretical orientation- cognitive, environmental, and biological factors are all important (Martin and Ruble, 2002).

"Alternate" theorists, Bussey and Bandura (1999) appeared to believe that by integrating other perspectives into their social cognitive theory (SCT), they were providing a

comprehensive account of gender development. Martin and Ruble (2002) disagreed on three primary grounds: that there was considerable direct empirical support for cognitive accounts of gender development; that SCT was far from comprehensive and joint considerations of multiple perspectives raises interesting and important questions about gender development that would not be considered by the SCT view alone.

Thus, despite Bussey and Bandura's contention, based on the literature review cognitive–developmental elements are necessary components of any comprehensive account of gender development, and their proposals suggesting that they have replaced these mechanisms with more comprehensive mechanisms are unproven. To sum up, there is widespread agreement in the field that a complete understanding of gender development requires an **integration of many different perspectives.**

2.4.2. *Leadership Theories*

Research has produced various leadership theories: whether or not the approach to leadership differs between men and women as distinctive biological groups; whether this difference is one of style or substance; whether it is real or perceived; whether one leadership approach is more or less effective than the other and which is more likely to lead to success. In the literature review five themes are clearly presented in relation to gender and leadership, with specific reference to women's ability or inability to achieve professional success. These are biology and sex; socialisation; attitudinal drivers, organizational culture and feminine leadership styles.

2.4.2.1. Biology and Sex

The first theory seems to be based on the 'premise that leadership is biologically determined, innate for men and therefore unattainable for women' (Meyer, L, 2002). As such, an effective leadership stance can only be assumed by the male species. The premise for biological sex= male=leader does seem somewhat biased. Perhaps not surprisingly, research results do not substantiate this approach and pursuit of this direction is limited (Hennig and Jardim, 1997). While a few studies have found gender differences in leadership styles, most research points to their absence (Martin and Ruble, 2002). Despite the fact that many researchers have found that there are few differences in the innate abilities of male and female managers, stereotypes persist that portray women as less capable leaders than

men (Meyer, 2002). Therefore, in this research study, gender stereotypes as a barrier for career advancement will be further explored.

2.4.2.2. Socialisation

A second theory acknowledges that a major component of any leadership development process involves socialization whereby attention is drawn to the leader and the context simultaneously. The term "socialization" refers to the processes by which an individual selectively acquires the knowledge, skills and dispositions needed to perform a social role effectively (Heywood, 2006). Brim (2003 as cited in Feldman, 2009, p.3) defines socialization as the "manner in which an individual learns that behaviour appropriate to his position in a group through interaction with others who hold normative beliefs about what his role should be and who reward or punish him for correct or incorrect actions". Wolfe (2006) asserts that socialization involves a complex set of human relationships interacting in many ways. They state that within an organization, the socialization includes all the people in it and their relationship to each other and to the outside world. Hence, the behaviour of one member can have an impact, either directly or indirectly, on the behaviour of others.

Because of the socialization process, women have developed values and beliefs that translate into specific behaviours arising in their leadership styles. Certain expected behaviours in organizations are explained as a result of the socialization process that occurs outside the organization borders (Branser, 1996). For example, women are socialized to show their emotions, feelings, compassion, patience and intuition, to help and care for others (Bass and Avolio, 1994; DeMatteo, 1994), to be listeners (Brunner, 1996), to judge outcomes based on their impact on relationships (Oakley, 2000) and to lead complex settings in continuous change (Caprioli and Boyer, 2001). This list of values might sound ideal but they become definite barriers difficult to overcome for women aspiring to leadership positions. The main disadvantage is that the nurturing and caring image of women takes them to occupy supportive roles whereas men occupy the leading ones (Pounder and Coleman, 2002). The responsibility of women for complying with social norms, values and roles is burdensome when it comes to the world of organizations. Related research expands upon the idea that an individual's gender is linked solely to the person and moves on to the more general concept of gender role with the purpose of linking leadership emergence to characteristics or behaviours thought to be typically male or female (ibid). This study will therefore explore the notion of gender role as a further barrier to career

advancement as well as the multiplicity of possible factors beyond gender role that may contribute to perceptions of leadership.

Contrary to Marshall (2004), Eagly and Johnson (2000), as cited in Gardiner and Tiggermann (2006) reported that, in organizations employing more men than women, women behaved more like men and that masculine traits were considered to be more successful management traits than feminine ones. This supports the results of the study by Mackenzie, Davey and Arnold (2000) wherein female participants claimed that, despite having to change in order to adapt to the environment and thus survive within the organization, their core values and personalities remained fundamentally unchanged. They also reported a need to develop strategies to ensure they could adapt and cope with challenges without becoming emotional and giving outward expression to these emotions. They thus had to learn to suppress their emotions to a great extent than they had prior to entering the workforce.

Therefore, although both men and women experience change when entering the workforce, it appears that women do have different values to men and are not likely to change their values, despite having to adapt to male norms to be able to survive in male dominated workplaces (Marshall, 2004). This is a barrier to the success of women in the workplace, one which is often compounded by discrimination.

2.4.2.3. Attitudinal Drivers

A third perspective involves the identification and consideration of a variety of other contributing factors – prevailing attitudes, management and masculinity, family related barriers, women's self-confidence, their prior experience, organizational management systems, power and culture, and the old boy's network – that could predict or influence leader emergence. Given the scope of the research, a sampling of selected causal factors will be explored in order to understand the complexity of the issues which could potentially undermine a women's leadership effectiveness. Emergent thinking emanating from the literature review accepts that there may well be a difference in the way men and women approach leadership.

2.4.2.4. Organisational Culture

Organisational culture refers to the set of assumptions, beliefs, values and norms that are shared by members of an organization and is influenced by its past, environment, and industry (Rutherford, 2001; Stoll, 1999). Organisational culture also applies to communication, codes of behaviour, processes and policies (Jervis and Zeisler, 2000). Lorde (2000) and Normore (2004c) offer compelling arguments that each new leader needs to understand and analyse the particular organizational culture into which she or he is placed, emphasizing that leadership is intertwined with each particular organizational culture.

Research (Gibson, 1995; Normore, 2004; Lorde, 2000) indicates that there are mediating influences on leaders' socialization such as work setting, culture and relationships with peers, superiors, organization policies and procedures and outcomes. This last influence incorporates the image of the role of the leader, skills, norms and values and communication networks (Normore, 2004c). As a consequence, it influences the leadership styles predominant and accepted in a particular organization. Women continue "paving the way" through the different organizational cultures in search of leadership styles that are more authentic and less accommodative.

2.4.2.5. Feminine Leadership Styles

Earlier thinking emphasized that women who had achieved leadership positions were imitators of male characteristics, but contemporary theories recognize feminine leadership styles (Helgesen, 1990; Stanford et al, 1995). Like any new trend in traditional settings, it takes years to develop styles until these styles are understood and accepted. Meanwhile, women face several barriers that prevent them from being considered leaders or leadership candidates (Koyama, 2003). Obstacles with this origin have been described as the "glass ceiling" as a metaphor of an invisible top that halts women in moving up the career ladder at a certain point (Oakley, 2000).

Women leaders need to find the leadership styles that, without denying its feminine origins, result in effectiveness. The redefinition of skills and characteristics of an effective school leader, following the current trends of organizational leadership, will help erase gender stereotypes and focus on desirable characteristics that candidates (men and women) bring to

the position (Logan, 2006). This research will therefore attempt to explore the notion of whether leadership style is more of a choice based on an analysis of the situation rather than an inherent gender predisposition and whether attitudinal drivers in terms of male versus female leadership style are indeed viewed as a barrier for career advancement.

2.4.2.6. The Rise of The Third Wave

Third wave feminism is a new discourse for understanding and framing gender relations that arose out of a critique of the second wave (Mann & Huffman, 2005). Beginning in the 1990s, after the end of second-wave feminism, third-wave feminism began with a mixture of disgruntled and unsure feminists and feminists born into a world where feminism had always existed. Third-wave feminism may be the most diverse and individualistic feminist wave to date (ibid).

The movement of third-wave feminism focused less on laws and the political process and more on individual identity. The movement of third-wave feminism is said to have arisen out of the realization that women are of many colors, ethnicities, nationalities, religions and cultural backgrounds. With this wave of feminism what can be seen is a desire to challenge or avoid the assumption that there is a universal female identity and over-emphasizing of the experience of the upper-middle class white woman. Cherrie Morago and Gloria E. Anzaldua in books such as ***This Bridge Called My Back*** and ***All the Women Are White, All the Blacks are Men, But Some of Us Are Brave: Black Women's Studies*** critiqued second-wave feminism for its focus primarily on the problems and political positions of white women.

Proponents of third-wave feminism claim that it allows women to define feminism for themselves by incorporating their own identities into their belief system of what feminism is and what it can become. Having the successes of the first two waves of feminism – the right to vote, the right to work, a greater right to one's own body, a greater right to education – third-wave feminists felt a need for further changes in the stereotypes against women and in the media portrayals of women as well as in the language that is used to define women (Koyama, 2002). In this advocacy, feminists have argued that language has been used to create binaries (such as the male/female or heterosexual/homosexual binaries). Post-structuralist feminists see these binaries as artificial constructs created to maintain the power of dominant groups.

While third-wave feminists do not have an entirely different set of issues or solutions to long-standing dilemmas, the movement does constitute, I would argue, more than simply a rebellion against second-wave mothers. What really differentiates the third wave from the second is the tactical approach it offers to some of the impasses that developed within feminist theory in the 1980s. That is to say, third-wave feminism makes three important tactical moves that respond to a series of theoretical problems within the second wave. First, in response to the collapse of the category of "women," the third wave foregrounds personal narratives that illustrate an intersectional and multi-perspective version of feminism (Mann, 2002). Second, as postulated by Mann as a consequence of the rise of postmodernism, third-wavers embrace multivocality over synthesis and action over theoretical justification. Finally, in response to the divisiveness of the sex wars, third-wave feminism emphasizes an inclusive and nonjudgmental approach that refuses to police the boundaries of the feminist political (ibid). In other words, third-wave feminism rejects grand narratives for a feminism that operates as a hermeneutics of critique within a wide array of discursive locations, and replaces attempts at unity with a dynamic and welcoming politics of coalition.

The roots of Intersectional Feminism can be said to be found in the roots of third-wave feminism, which usually incorporates elements of queer theory, anti-racism and women of color, as well as people of color, consciousness, womanism, girl power, post-colonial (anti-Imperialism) theory, postmodernism, transnationalism, cyber feminism, ecofeminism, individualist feminism, new feminist theory, Transgender politics and a rejection of the gender binary (Seidman, 2000). Further, third-wave feminists want to transform the traditional notions of sexuality and embrace 'an exploration of women's feelings about sexuality that includes vagina-centered topics as diverse as orgasm, birth and rape.' Baumgardner and Richards, authors of ***Manifesta*** wrote, "It is not feminism's goal to control any woman's fertility, only to free each woman to control her own." Third wave feminists are not finished fighting political battles, they face continuing pay inequality, a glass ceiling, sexual harassment, unfair maternity leave policies, a lack of support for single mothers by means such as welfare and child care and a lack of respect for working mothers and mothers who decide to leave their careers to raise their children full-time .

2.5. Barriers Affecting the Upward Career Mobility of Women Into Senior Management Positions

2.5.1. Environmental Factors

2.5.1.1. Discrimination

Discrimination in various forms still exist in organizations and serves as a barrier to women attaining senior management positions. Over and above the discrimination evident in masculine cultures, values and associated organizational practices towards women, there are a number of other practices which are particularly discriminatory. This includes gender stereotyping, patriarchy (Gardnerand Tiggermann (2006), the existence of glass ceilings and exclusion from networks and clubs (DeMatteo, 2004).

2.5.1.2. Gender Role Stereotypes

Stereotyping refers to the "attribution of specific characteristics to all or most members of a social category" (Foster, 2002, pg. 738). Negative characteristics are attributed to female managers because the in-group, consisting of males, cannot identify with the female outgroup (ibid). According to DeMatteo (2004) this gender stereotyping distinguishes between socially learned behaviours, traits and attitudes which are expected from males and females by society.

"Moreover, males and females are assigned gender roles based on their sex role stereotypes and sex role stereotypes based on their gender" (ibid, p.32). Men are expected to be masculine and "their search for status and self-image has led to a pre-occupation with proving their masculinity as something in opposition to femininity" (Rigg and Sparrow, 2004, p. 12). These efforts are directed at preserving power and coupled with masculine culture, serves to define femininity as inferior to masculinity (ibid). As a result of this, words used to describe feminine behaviours, attitudes and traits take on negative connotations, for example, collaboration (Tanton, 2007). Women are perceived as not being competitive enough as they tend to exhibit collaborative behaviours. Tanton (2007) argues that when women as minority groups in organizations focus on their 'otherness", they may be emphasizing how they differ from men. They might run the risk of being perceived to lack certain qualities or characteristics by men. Tanton (2007) proposes that one way of

bringing about change in perceptions and attitudes towards women is to refer to how women **really** are rather than how **different** they are.

2.5.1.3. Patriarchy

In a patriarchal society there is an "organized cluster of beliefs, attitudes, habits and practices which, worldwide, sustain the domination of men over women (Seidmann, 20008, p. 773). Women are still in the minority in politics, government, business and other areas of society and do not hold equal power and status to men. Women are still responsible for raising their families while they are also expected to work the same hours and to put in as much effort as men to be considered for senior management positions (ibid). Despite family responsibilities and having to work as hard as their male counterparts, women have successfully achieved junior and middle management positions in organizations. The transition from middle to senior management has proven to be the major challenge. Two main organisation specific challenges have been identified in this regard i.e. the covert existence of the glass ceiling and lack of access to networks.

2.5.1.4. The Glass Ceiling Effect

The phrase 'glass ceiling' sums up all the frustrations of working women at every level who can see where they want to go but who find themselves blocked by an invisible barrier. The attitudes of society generally group or individual prejudice, restrictive male-based working practices, lack of the support available to men though their 'old boy network' – these and many more factors conspire to build and strengthen the barriers around and above us" (Flanders, 2004, p. 12). There are a myriad of books written on the concept of the 'glass ceiling' and much of the research around the lack of women in leadership has motivated further research, aiming to identify what the organizational and/or personal factors are that contribute to the perceived 'glass ceiling' (Marshall, S, 2002). The term has become a colloquialism of business. Agars (2004) identified issues including sexual harassment, work-family conflict and social strategies (e.g. networking and negotiation). These issues have been extensively explored, resulting in organisations and, by implication, women, making great strides in many of these areas.

Yet the 'glass ceiling' is still perceived as a barrier to women's entry into leadership and still remains a focus for research and literature review.

2.5.1.5. Networks and Clubs

Male networks and clubs are still found to be a major barrier. Over 50% of top managerial positions are obtained through personal contacts and older men are able to move between senior roles more easily (Simpson and Altman, 2000). Networks and clubs facilitate the sharing of information, establishment of relationships and an understanding of the politics or unspoken rules of an organization. According to Ibarra (2003) as cited in Simpson and Altman (2007), women struggle to forge networks as they have less access to the few top female managers. Instead they interact with female managers in middle management which is not as advantageous to their career mobility. "At the upper levels of senior management and beyond, the glass ceiling intensifies as networks and the 'men's club' become increasingly important in facilitating further progress" (Simpson Altman, 2007, p. 195).

Together, the glass ceiling, lack of access to networks, patriarchy and the masculine culture present barriers to the upward mobility of women in management through covert gender discrimination. The negatively perceived meanings attached to descriptions of the female gender seem to conflict with the male concept of management. Women also experience intrinsic challenges to their success in organizations. These will be explored in the following section.

2.6. Critical Success Factors Promoting Career Mobility

As Keown and Keown (2002) suggest, characteristics can be categorized into intrinsic or ascribed factors and extrinsic or achieved factors. Intrinsic factors are therefore those characteristics over which an individual has no control, such as parents, race or position in the family, whereas extrinsic factors are those characteristics over which the individual presumably has some control, such as education, marital status and having children

2.6.1. Intrinsic Success Factors

2.6.1.1. Work/Family Coping Strategies

Ivarsson and Ekehammar (2001) found that women managers create coping strategies. They enable themselves to cope with family/work pressures by being able to afford domestic help as well as childcare. Women who achieved top management positions were found to be less likely to have heavy domestic burdens and to have more support from their husbands or

partners. Managerial women were found to have a greater internal locus of control and problem focused coping styles. An external locus of control was found to be linked to avoidance coping styles which are demonstrated by non-managerial women who had greater work/family pressures. These non-managerial women often avoided competing for management positions (ibid). McKenna (2008) suggests that women who choose not to compete for more senior positions may be doing so to live by their own values which may require sacrifices and a great deal of courage to move away from what is perceived to be the definition of success i.e. movement up the corporate hierarchy.

One of the available studies by Villadsen and Tack (2001) focused on how women executives in public institutions juggled multiple family and career demands. Together they interviewed 20 female executives who had at least one child under 18. These women decision-makers identified seven balancing strategies including 'compartmentalisation' (p.172), which required clear boundaries between home and work time. These women leaders made careful arrangements for their family duties and tried not to allow their work to spill over to their family life. 'Delegation' and 'lowered housekeeping standards' (p.173) reduced women's burdens at home; these women used all the support structures they could get, including hiring of full time helpers to help them meet their families' needs. 'Physical and intellectual or artistic escape,' 'friendships and social contacts,' 'vacations,' and 'continuing education' (pp. 173-174) either helped women cope with the stress or helped them set priorities to make the balancing act possible.

Senior administrative and academic women leaders who participated in Gerdes' (2003) study offered a wide range of advice that can help women overcome individual barriers. Some of their suggestions were 'stand up for yourself…… develop confidence…. Do what's good for you…. follow your values…. Be yourself… do what you love…… have high aspirations" (pp. 272-274). These women also suggested that women choose their partners carefully, negotiate and establish support networks, and have few or no children.

Individual scholars and practitioners also offered general recommendations such as choosing family-friendly environments (Dietz, 1997; Marshall, 2002); securing quality caregivers (Hensel, 1991); obtaining social support from mentors and networks O'Laughlin and Bischoff, 2001); fostering positive attitudes to increase confidence (Ausejo, 2003); being assertive and speaking up (Dickson, 2000); using time effectively, including time for

stress relief (Jones, 2003). All in all, findings available from both empirical studies and women's experiences verified the existence of personal obstacles that can impede women's progress in higher education administration.

2.6.1.2. Learning by Observation

According to Martin (2004), an intrinsic success factor for women is to develop an understanding of the unwritten rules in the organization by observing and evaluating management and organizational practices with which they do not identify. Despite being part of male organizational cultures, women in Martin's study (2004) were able to use their understanding of the male culture, behaviours and attitudes to their advantage by making conscious decisions on how to react and respond to male behaviours, thus effecting change in their work environments.

2.6.1.3. Managing Power Relations

In male organizational cultures, men exercise power through positional power, in group membership and by assuming the "right to define and decide…. rather than creating opportunities to negotiate shared meanings; behaving as if in various ways women were in need of male solutions and consequently representing women as in deficit" (Martin, 2004, p. 123). Successful women learned to work around these issues by developing greater understanding of the dynamics of power being exercised in their environments and then engaging the power relations on a procedural or managerial level rather than on an individual level, thus enabling women to choose how they respond or intervene in the environment (ibid).

2.6.1.4. Political Competence

Employees who have a high power motive, have an internal locus of control and who are strict self monitors, are likely to use political behaviour to further themselves. According to research conducted by Wilson (2008), certain behaviours were found to be valued in successful people, one of which was the ability to play organizational politics to be one of the success factors for women learning to deal with hostile environments. However, according to Wilson (2008), certain expected behaviours in organizations, including playing

organizational politics and controlling one's emotions, sometimes caused women to leave senior management positions.

2.6.1.5. Development of Alliances

In the Marthur-Helm (2002) study it was found that women experienced difficulty with networking at senior levels because of the 'men's club' and the increased use of informal channels by decision-makers as organizational structures become flatter. Decision-makers rely on who they know in order to allocate critical tasks or promotions. Younger women in management positions could participate in social events during work and after hours alongside their male colleagues. This was often enabled by their lack of family commitments and values. These are becoming less distinguishable as specifically male or female values. As women reach the age of 35 and achieve more senior management positions, the men's club barrier intensifies and the glass ceiling is increasingly encountered (Simpson and Altman, 2000).

While it may be argued that women must take the initiative in joining social activities, it may present a moral dilemma for women as to whether they should assimilate the male norm. Luhabe (2002) recommends that a balance between personal and corporate cultural values should be maintained and a peer group used for support and to discuss specific issues where differences occur. Some women beat the 'men's clubs' and the 'glass-ceiling' by creating alliances with sponsors or role models who are not the same race or gender. Role models should be chosen based on the successful management qualities they display rather than their colour or gender. Luhabe (2002) encourages female employees to form peer alliances which enable women to support each other as they move up the hierarchy. Luhabe suggests that these peer alliances will contribute to change in organizations while breaking down discrimination.

2.6.1.6. Sharing Of Success Stories

Culture is reinforced through a number of mechanisms, including the telling of stories which "anchor the present in the past and provide explanations and legitimacy for current practices" (Robbins, 2001, p. 524). Storytelling has been used to create heroes and to provide role models while supporting the achievement of organizational goals and male culture. However, by telling their own stories of strife and success, women managers can

depict new role models with different behaviours who legitimately achieved success, and could act as a means for women to break down stereotypical beliefs about female management styles (Olsson, 2000). Olsson argues that women telling their own stories is a critical success factor which helps to change the culture of an organization and thus assisting other women too. Storytelling will also add to building the visibility of women through the sharing of successes and asserting the abilities of women.

The success factors which are intrinsic to women have been discussed in depth. Some of the intrinsic success factors are controllable whereas others are inherent to an individual's personality.

2.7. Extrinsic Success Factors

2.7.1. Changing Organisational Policies and Practices

It is argued that this will provide greater support, which in turn will allow women to manage their careers and family lives more successfully. Furthermore, it is argued that this also has benefits for the organization. The benefits are lower turnover, lower employment and development costs, lower absenteeism and greater psychological health of female employees (Bennett, 2003). Belle (2002) argues that organizations which do not only accommodate the structuring of work hours and provide advantageous career prospects, but also manage to establish values and opportunities for employees which are not based on traditional, conservative values, have more women in senior positions. Belle concludes that organizations play an integral role in the shaping of the professional lives of women through the development of corporate cultures which integrate women into the workplace. These inclusive corporate cultures establish values which are inclusive and accommodate the diversity of all employees.

2.7.2. Performance Management and Succession Planning

Performance management enables organizations to provide feedback to employees on their performance, to reward good performance and to manage poor performance. It informs decisions relating to promotions and transfers (Robbins, 2009).
In April 2010 a new performance management and development system for Wits staff was introduced. The system addresses performance evaluation, managerial competence

assessment, training and development planning but is not linked to succession planning. University human resource regulations stipulate that promotions are only awarded when one has successfully applied for a vacant post. As a result, succession planning at Wits University has not been a strategic focus area for departments in the past.

2.7.3. Diversity Management in Organisations

Diversity is defined as the "vast array of physical and cultural differences that constitute the spectrum of human differences" (Ivancevich and Matteson, 1996, p. 98). The workforce is becoming increasingly diverse due to political change, existing employment equity legislation and labour market trends. Diversity issues have become common in organizations and are having to be managed (Muchinsky, Kriek and Schreuder, 1999). According to Meyer (2002), diversity management is "a comprehensive and holistic process for creating and sustaining an environment in which all employees feel comfortable, recognized, valued and appreciated based on differences such as race, gender, culture, religion, disability and sexual orientation," Meyer further states that diversity management creates an environment conducive to the success of affirmative action and employment equity initiatives.

The approach towards diversity employed by organizations is a key factor in creating an environment conducive to the success of women. Organisations operating from the emergent approach to diversity will provide an extrinsic success factor for women providing an environment which integrates women fully into the organization and develops norms and values which have internalized the differences which minority groups bring to the organisation as a competitive advantage (Heywood, 2006).

2.7.4. Summary

In brief, given the small number of empirical studies on women leaders in higher education, a review of the literature resulted in a very incomplete picture of the status and experiences of senior women leaders in higher education institutions with regards to what it takes for women to achieve and remain in highly visible, powerful leadership positions. De la Rey (2013, p. 45) affirmed that 'An enormous amount of work still needs to be done in South Africa…. to expand this incomplete knowledge by exploring obstacles to success.' Other researchers both nationally and internationally (Anglis, 2009; Cline, 2006; Dietz, 2007;

Flanagan, 2002; Rosynsky, 2002; Thompson-Stacy, 2005; Zakery, 2011) also agreed that many questions about what it takes for women to become effective and successful leaders in higher education remain unanswered. They all recommended additional inquiries into how women have successfully addressed issues such as gender stereotypes, exclusion from the old boys' networks, and women's strategies for success to expand the knowledge base on successful women leaders in higher education.

Without doubt, collecting strategies for women to use in overcoming different obstacles experienced in higher education administration is necessary and important. Nevertheless, some scholars argued about the unfairness of women leaders being forced to 'react' to the male-dominated cultural and political environment (Carli and Eagly,2001; Dietz, 2007; Tedrow and Rhoads, 2009; Yoder,2001). Having to build such a complex repertoire of skills and strategies in order to be accepted and included fully not only consumes women leaders' time, energy and morale, but also delays the success of both individual women leaders and their institutions.

To make matters worse, some women leaders have displayed exasperation while playing the political game and resent the tremendous amount of responsibilities, demands, and stress placed on them. As a result, they leave the executive positions or even the education profession (Die, 2009; Dietz, 2007; Harris, Lowery, and Arnold, 2002; Jones, 2003; Sturnick, 2001). However, the continual development and transformation of South African higher education in the 21st century requires the participation, leadership and contributions of the majority of the community- women (de la Rey, 2011). Therefore, all possible means should be used to stop the loss of women's talents as well as to support, inspire, and encourage more women to choose higher education leadership as a profession, including expanding the knowledge base on success strategies and tactics for women in the academy, which is why this research endeavor was initiated.

2.7.5. Conclusion of Literature Review

The literature reviewed in this chapter has spanned the last forty years, covering the challenges women have encountered in the workplace which have served as barriers to the upward career mobility of women into senior management positions. The most recent literature reviewed, written between 2003 and 2014 which focuses on the 'third wave' notion of feminism, particularly demonstrates that the challenges women face have not

changed and that they are still barriers to the upward mobility of women, despite the passage of two decades and two waves of feminism, which have raised the awareness regarding these challenges in organizations and the implementation of equal opportunities legislation.

The literature suggests that the barriers to upward mobility faced by women in organizations include environmental factors such as organizational culture and values, socialization, personal values and discrimination. Personal barriers which have been identified include feminine traits and management style, adaption to organizational culture, negative self perceptions and the dual roles of women. Intrinsic success factors which have been identified are motivation; management and functional competence; work/family coping strategies; learning by observation; managing of power relations; political competence; professional exposure; the development of alliances and the sharing of success factors.

The literature demonstrates that organizations and women themselves have partly contributed to the creation of these barriers. Furthermore, the literature highlights the role organizations need to play in removing the barriers to encourage the upward mobility for females and the strategies women can employ to overcome these barriers and help them create enabling organizational structures.

Finally, the literature suggests that internationally, women are still under-represented in positions of power, responsibility and leadership, despite the dramatic increase in their formal employment over the last four decades. In South Africa, even though there have been remarkable increases of women in positions of power in the post-apartheid era, this trend is still evident.

The themes from the literature review give rise to the research questions which will be discussed in the findings of the research study.

CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Why and how have some women, despite the many implicit and explicit personal as well as professional barriers reported in the literature by researchers, practitioners, and scholars, managed to secure and remain in powerful leadership positions in the higher education sector? What are their survival secrets of career success? What has been their struggles, and what has been their strategy to overcome these obstacles in their careers? What are their insights about women in leadership, and what advice can they offer to future leaders? Given the open-ended, exploratory, inductive nature of the inquiry, the researcher decided to employ a qualitative analysis for the current study. In this chapter the researcher will provide further details and explanations of the research methodology through the use of the following four sections: research design and strategy, participant selection, research questions and research procedures.

3.1. Propositions

The following propositions were drawn from the literature reviewed and formed the basis of the study conducted.

Proposition 1

Women managers experience both environmental and personal challenges in achieving upward mobility.

Proposition 2

There are both intrinsic and extrinsic critical success factors which have been experienced and leveraged by women managers who achieve senior management positions within the support sector at Wits.

The research study tested these propositions.

3.2. Research Methodology

The methodology used in this study will include three distinct approaches.

- Documentary analysis of both national and institutional policies and statistics to provide a contextual framework for an increased understanding of individual women's experiences.

- A review of the relevant literature around the barriers contributing to the career advancement of women in the higher education sector.

- The main research method used will be a qualitative analysis of in-depth interviews with staff.

3.3. Research Design and Strategy

This research design will be based on a case study. Individual, in-depth interviews will be conducted to allow the author to elicit views, perceptions and personal experiences of the participants. To maximize the value of the time spent on the interview, the interview schedule will be structured such that it broadly covers the key factors that have been identified from the literature review, but also leaves room for additional factors which the participants may bring to light. Qualitative analysis will be deemed to be the appropriate methodology. All interviews will be transcribed to maximize confidentiality and anonymity of participants (if permission to audio-record is granted). Stratified samples of six staff members (four females and two males) will be interviewed from which thematic interpretations of their experiences will be obtained.

The research questions would be both open and close-ended. The open-ended questions will allow for comprehensive, rich responses to be pulled from the participants. The interview schedule was split into ten questions. Each question addressed a particular theme. In question 1-3, the questions sought to trace the career path of the participant, the reasons which attracted them to come and work for Wits and touched on the leadership dilemmas that they had encountered at Wits. Question 4- 6, sought to establish the factors that the participants considered as barriers (intrinsic, extrinsic and environmental) to their upward mobility and sought to establish both the individual and organizational cultural dynamics that affected the glass ceiling phenomenon. Questions 7-10, sought to establish specifically the strategy, struggles and survival tactics encountered and implemented by the participants and highlighted the networking and mentoring activities that the participants engaged in.

The last question, was presented only to the male participants in order to ascertain if their experience around their career development at Wits was significantly different to their female colleagues.

A copy of the interview schedule is presented in the appendices. The interview schedule was used as a guide to the interview, while the interviewer had the liberty to probe further beyond what was in the interview schedule.

3.4. Qualitative Research Paradigm

The intention of this study was to explore possible intrinsic and extrinsic factors contributing to the success of women in senior management positions at Wits. The researcher worked in the qualitative research paradigm as this study was an exploration which sought to gain greater understanding of the complex nature of a social phenomena as it is experienced by the participants in the study (Leedy and Omrod, 2007). A qualitative approach will allow the women participating in this study to "speak in their own terms" while incorporating issues surfaced by the literature review (Rana et al, 2008, p. 223).

This research study was conducted in the qualitative paradigm for the following reasons:

- the researcher interacted with the participants with the advantage of sharing a common characteristic of female
- as a young woman in the workforce with personal experience and understanding of the challenges faced by woman in organizations; the researcher had her own personal understandings, convictions and values
- themes and variables emerged from the interviews and stories of participants, using their own words which maintained the richness of the data
- semi-structured, depth interviews were conducted with the intention of probing the personal views of the participants
- the population of this study was small (6 participants)

3.5. Descriptive Research Design

Depth interviews are conversations conducted with the specific purpose of uncovering the perspective of the participant in the social phenomenon being studied (Marshall and Rossman, 1999). The depth interview is one way of asking individuals about their experiences "in such a way that they can tell us in their terms… the substance of their meanings" (Jones, 1995, p. 46). The degree of structure of the interview in this research study had to be considered carefully in order to ensure that what is meaningful to the participant is explored rather than what is preconceived or meaningful to the interviewer. Maintaining the premise throughout the interview situations presented a challenge to the interviewer as themes or trends began to emerge during the interviews.

The participants responded to the questions or probes based on what they assumed the meaning of the question to be within the context of their understanding of the research topic and broad themes which were detailed in the interview schedule sent through to them prior to the interview and explained again at the beginning of each interview.

The interview was opened with a brief standard introduction. While ten main open-ended questions were used to lend some structure and direction to the interviews, the nature of the depth interviews allowed flexibility in the interviewing process by enabling the interviewer to probe relevant points in an interview.

3.6. Sampling

3.6.1. Population

The population framework from which the sample was drawn comprised middle to senior management level individuals. This population was split to represent four women and two men. These individuals are all employed at Wits. The chosen participants can be summarized as follows:

Table of Sampling Population

	Gender	Age	Marital Status	Years at Wits	Qualification	Spouse Support	Children
Participant A	F	47	Married	15	PhD in Social Sciences	Yes	4
Participant B	F	53	Married	22	PhD in Social Sciences	Yes	2
Participant C	F	42	Single	8	Masters in Social Sciences	No	1
Participant D	F	38	Divorced	11	Masters in Social Sciences	No	1
Participant E	M	46	Married	12	Master's in Business Administration	Yes	2
Participant F	M	36	Single	7	Bachelors in Education	No	0

This sample was selected because:

- the participants had substantial experience at Wits during which they experienced some form of career barrier;
- the participants came from diverse areas within the Wits environment;
- the participants were diverse in relation to gender, age and race;
- the participants were still in the 1-4 years phase of their careers and therefore were likely to experience various leadership dilemmas within the Wits environment and;
- the male participants were included in order to share their experiences in terms of Proposition 1 and 2 which forms the basis of this study.

3.6.2. Sample Size

The researcher interviewed four women and two males employed in senior management positions at Wits.

3.6.3. Data Collection

All members of the sample were contacted by telephone with the intent to explain the purpose of the study, the commitment which would be required of them and to extend an invitation to participate in the study. The interview schedule was sent to the participant prior to the interview. The purpose of sending the interview schedule to the participants before the interview was to provide sufficient time for the participant to reflect on their experiences to the interview. This also allowed for better recollection, greater depth and accuracy. This encouraged the participant to feel at ease and also assisted in managing the interview length accordingly. To further assist the participant to feel at ease, it was emphasized that findings of the study would be reported in themes so that no one individual's comments may be singled out and that their anonymity and confidentiality was guaranteed. The interviews were recorded. Extensive hand written notes were made during the interview capturing the words and phrases used by the participant including any observations made by the researcher during the course of the interview.

3.6.4. Data Analysis

The results were analysed qualitatively. Field notes taken during the interviews were typed up immediately after the interview was completed so as to not lose the essence of the interviews. Each statement in the data was then coded according to the four broad questions. Each interview was analysed and mapped on a thematic conceptual matrix by clustering the data, using the coding according to the four broad questions. Patterns and themes were then identified. These themes were then used to address the propositions mentioned in Chapter 3. These themes were further complemented by the stories told by the participants. The findings were then integrated and described narratively.

3.6.5 Ethical considerations and issues

Full participant information forms and consent forms were given to the participants and only those who signed consent were included in this research. The participants' responses on the interview schedules were kept confidential and will not be reported in any other way aside from those associated with this research. At each interview, the participant was again reassured of confidentiality and the anonymity of their interview responses. They were asked if they were prepared to have the interview voice recorded and informed that they may decline if they wish.

Al use of participants' data was anonymous: interview schedule responses were not associated with participant names, and interview transcriptions were coded by number. The information was held securely and confidentially while the research was being collated. All notes were kept securely. Following the completion of the research all material collected will be shredded and destroyed.

There are no costs to the participant associated with this research. No negative consequences are expected for the participants' as a result of taking part in this research. Participants were offered summaries of the findings on request.

All participants were informed that they retain the right to have their contributions withdrawn at any time prior to the submission of the research. In addition, the participant had the right to refuse to answer any question asked on the interview schedule or during the interview, or to ask to end the interview at any time.

CHAPTER 4: ANALYSIS OF THE RESULTS

The findings and analysis of the data collected during the interview process is detailed in this chapter.

Four senior women and two male managers at Wits participated in interviews. The interview schedule consisted of questions probing four broad themes: Biographical Background and Career History; Environmental and Personal Challenges Experienced, Personal and Environmental Success factors and the Glass ceiling phenomenon. Data was analysed and presented in the form of a thematic conceptual matrix in Fig 4.2.1.

4.1. Demographic and Career History Findings

The intention of asking background questions relating to career history was to gain an understanding of where the participants came from, how they entered the University of Witwatersrand, how long they have been employed at Wits, what attracted them to Wits and what processes, if any, supported their career development.

4.2. Thematic Conceptual Matrix: Barriers and Success Factors

The thematic conceptual matrix in Table 4.2.1 depicts the categories of barriers and success factors identified from the interview transcripts. It also depicts instances where specific factors are leveraged to counteract the barriers being experienced. However, while some success factors or strategies may be used reactively as responses to some barriers, many are proactive actions taken by women managers to enable their success.

From the thematic conceptual matrix it is clear that the number of environmental barriers outweigh the number of personal barriers experienced. In contrast, the number of intrinsic success factors outweigh the number of extrinsic success factors.

4.2.1. (Table) Thematic Conceptual Matrix

BARRIERS	***SUCCESS FACTORS***	
ENVIRONMENTAL	***INTRINSIC***	***EXTRINSIC***
CULTURAL		
Traditional male environment		
Discrimination	To deal with discrimination issues directly	
Lack of managing diversity		
Bias in recruitment processes		
STRUCTURAL BARRIERS		
Promotions bureaucracy		
Glass ceiling		
Lack of organizational support		Support from colleagues
Lack of organizational processes		
PERSONAL BARRIERS		
Competency ceiling	Competence and Education	
Expression	Personal Qualities	
Work/Life Balance	Support Structures at Home	
	Motivation	

	Management Style	
	Networking	
		Professional Exposure

4.3. FINDINGS RELEVANT TO PROPOSITION 1

PROPOSITION 1:

Women managers experience both environmental and personal challenges in achieving upward career mobility

4.3.1. Environmental Barriers

The environmental barriers expressed in the interviews are categorized into cultural and structural barriers. Cultural barriers include the traditional male environment; female discrimination; the lack of managing diversity and bias in recruitment processes. The structural barriers include bureaucratic promotion processes; the glass ceiling; the lack of organizational support and the lack of organizational processes.

4.3.2. Traditional Male Environment

All four female participants referred to the challenges presented by what they perceived to be a traditional male environment in which men occupy executive management positions, continue to employ people like themselves, dominate meetings, operate in groups and networks which do not allow women to penetrate. All participants found it difficult to build relationships with men who network in this way. One participant indicated that an added difficulty in networking and building relationships with male colleagues is managing the perceptions of others of the male-female working relationship.

One participant indicated that her current environment was very enabling and supportive. Three participants referred to the challenges experienced as a result of the dominant leadership style in the organization which reflects the attitudes of the male executive leadership towards women managers. Challenges include feeling that their decisions are not trusted because they are women; having to work harder to get decisions made; making their

voice heard and having their integrity questioned when they challenge or offer professional advice which is not asked for.

Both male participants indicated that their career growth and development was nurtured in the Wits environment and found the current 'space' to be extremely enabling and supportive. One participant indicated that his current line manager is a female who has granted him numerous growth and development opportunities which he 'valued and appreciated'. The other male participant indicated that he received similar career opportunities from his male line manager.

4.3.3. Female Discrimination

All four female participants, interestingly, referred to challenges relating to discrimination which act as barriers to growth and development. Subtle discrimination which undermines women both from the top and the bottom still exists coupled with an underestimation of women's competence and abilities. Two participants felt that male senior managers do not afford women senior managers the same level of professional regard, accountability and responsibility.

The result of these actions was that the participants involved felt that their male colleagues did not trust their competence and abilities which resulted in women feeling either resentful, demoralized or even determined to prove them wrong. Coupled with the challenges experienced as a result of the dominant leadership style, the impact was that three participants indicated that they do not feel valued and one participant questioned their own skills and competence,

Not all participants felt that they experienced gender related discrimination though. Two participants felt that they had not experienced gender related discrimination themselves although the other two acknowledged having experienced exceptional occurrences which they attributed to their being undermined by men due to their being female.

One male participant, who has a female line manager indicated that he did not experience any form of female discrimination, however the second male participant indicated that in his previous position in middle management, he had experienced some form of discrimination.

This participant felt that this was related to a perceived ‘power struggle’ and that his female line manager wanted to assert her role.

4.3.4. Lack of Managing Diversity

Three participants felt that they were pressurized to act like men to fit into the organization. They are expected to work the same long hours despite family commitments at home, to be able to network with male colleagues and to be assertive in their communication and not be too emotional in the workplace. All four participants felt that they would not compromise their values. Despite this, all four participants still put in the long hours required of them while trying to balance their personal lives. One participant indicated that she had to put in the long hours so that men would not perceive her not to be contributing to the organisation. To manage this, the participant juggled her responsibilities to her family and sacrificed her personal time to accommodate the long hours.

One male participant who has a female line manager, highlighted the fact that his manager does not ‘act like a man’ and asserts a specific value proposition that is nurturing to all staff, irrespective of whether you male or female. The other male participant stated that his previous female line manager ‘did indeed act like a man who was very rough and tough’ and many staff ‘did not like her’. ‘It was as if she constantly had something to prove……’.

4.3.5. Promotions, Bureaucracy and Lack Of Succession Planning

Three participants felt that Wits lack of succession planning was a definite barrier. All four participants described their experience of their promotion process as being extremely lengthy. All three had been promoted from within. One of the participants was appointed in a senior management position from another University and experienced extreme hostility from male colleagues as they felt that she did not “earn her stripes” and should not have been appointed in such a senior position.

Both male participants indicated that they had been promoted from within, however to different departments. They both agreed that Wits lacked a definite succession planning process and that they had to compete with other internal female colleagues. Both participants indicated interestingly, that when they commenced their new positions they had

encountered varied levels of hostility from their female colleagues and also ‘had to earn their stripes’. One participant felt very strongly that he had to deal with the hostility because of ‘the fact that he was a male’ and that because the position was in finance, therefore he was more skilled than the others who had applied for the position.

4.3.6. The Glass Ceiling

All four participants felt that the glass ceiling definitely exists at Wits and that there is a huge gap between women at the bottom and women at the top of the hierarchy. All four felt that women are not moving up quickly enough and that if they move it is difficult to move beyond middle management. Two participants suggested that although women are applying for senior management positions, it seemed men had been pre-selected for posts. Others felt that also not enough women were applying for senior management positions and that this may be due to lack of skills and confidence.

Two of the participants felt that they would not be applying for more senior management positions as there were more disadvantages than advantages to occupying a more senior post. One of these participants indicated that the hours that she would be required to put into a mores senior post is no longer an option for her and that work/life balance had become more important to her. All four participants indicated that if women were not deliberately shifted into senior positions, then the glass ceiling will continue to serve as a barrier. One female participant, interestingly, also mentioned that the phenomena that she is also encountering is around race and qualification. Due to the transformation agenda and the employment equity targets at Wits, senior management positions in the first instance are being filled by female, black women and depending on the position, at times doctoral degrees required. The same participant went as far as saying that in a forum hosted at Wits, senior staff members in the Transformation office and the Human Resources confirmed this strategic imperative.

Both male participants, interestingly, indicated that ‘they did not feel that there was a glass ceiling at Wits’ for them specifically as males, however were of the opinion that they have seen more senior positions being occupied by black female applicants, often being external appointments. Both male participants indicated that they have been part of discussions at

Wits with female colleagues where the notion of the glass ceiling phenomena was expressed.

4.3.7. Lack of Organisational Support And Processes

The lack of organizational support structures was identified as a barrier by all participants. Few opportunities for advancement was available and those which are available are not necessarily attractive to the participants. All four participants were not aware of specific equity plans or women's advancement programmes being in place to support and encourage the advancement of women managers. All four suggested that the provision of basic facilities such as in-house crèches, facilities to assist women manage their dual roles, support services pertaining to sexual harassment and stress relief would assist them in managing work/life tensions. It was perceived that this would address the root cause for women's inability to contribute as much as they would like to the organization. Both male participants indicated that they did not perceive the lack of organizational support and processes as an issue.

The lack of organizational processes such as performance management, succession planning and career planning to manage employees through the organization was also viewed by participants, including the male participants, as a failure by Wits to support them. Feedback and the identification of competency development needs were considered essential to enable women to manage their own development and to ensure that they are positioned appropriately for promotion opportunities. All of the participants, including the male participants felt that many organizational barriers remain in place despite progress being made by individual departments within the University. The lack of processes or structures is not conducive to creating an enabling environment which, in turn, is disempowering for women in senior management positions.

4.4. Personal Barriers

4.4.1. Competency Ceiling

It was suggested in section 4.3.5 on the glass ceiling that female mangers may not be progressing beyond middle management due to a lack of skills and competencies. Two participants specifically felt that some women lacked the skills required for senior

management positions and that this served as a barrier to promotion. One participant suggested that this is due to a lack of personal positioning and career planning and that some women do not have the required skills and competencies.

One of the male participants felt as indicated in 4.3.4, that when they moved into their new senior position, the female staff in that department expressed the sentiment that the reason they were not offered the position was because there was an indication in a feedback session that the male applicant was more qualified and experienced than her.

4.4.2. Expression

Three participants felt that the way in which female managers express themselves may serve as a barrier to their advancement. It was suggested that women express themselves differently to men and that when women speak in meetings, which are most often dominated by men, they are not heard because they do not speak up often enough, they are not assertive and visible enough. One participant articulated this view very well by saying that "often when I am in meetings, I feel like the organizational wife! We are good enough to follow up on matters, implement decisions etc, however our suggestions are often not heard or endorsed. I find this extremely difficult."

One of the male participants who reports to a female line manager indicated that he often finds that due to his line manager having a 'nurturing, motherly and soft nature' that often her male line managers don't take her seriously and that often he feels that 'her voice is not heard'. The other male participant who reported to a female line manager before indicated that his previous 'boss acted like a man, spoke like a man, at times was very assertive even aggressive in meetings' and felt that because of her personality males took her more seriously.

4.4.3. WORK / LIFE BALANCE

It was found that work/life balance presented the greatest personal challenge to all six participants (including the male participants) regardless of whether they have children or not. It was felt that the choice between work and family is always a difficult one and that family is almost always compromised due to working long hours. All participants identified that they needed to develop strategic leadership competence and interpersonal maturity.

They described themselves as motivated by achievement and their own continuous development. The participants expressed a willingness to continuously learn and grow to be an essential personal quality required for entering into senior management and that it is through this continuous development that competency ceilings, which served as barriers to promotion for some women managers, can be overcome.

4.5. The findings relevant to Proposition 2

The findings relevant to proposition 2 are discussed below:

PROPOSITION 2

There are both intrinsic and extrinsic critical success factors which have been experienced and leveraged by women managers who achieve senior management positions within the support sector at the University of Witwatersrand.

4.5.1. *Intrinsic Success Factors*

4.5.1.1. Competence and Education

While technical competence was considered important, management competence was considered essential. Specifically strategic leadership, interpersonal maturity and people management competence were highlighted by the majority of participants as most essential. All four of the participants, including the two male participants had a number of senior management competencies already developed but still required the development of strategic leadership and interpersonal maturity.

Education was also considered by the majority of participants to have played a strong role in their promotion but not in the absence of experience. Developed analytical and critical thinking skills through higher education, development of general management competencies, continuous learning and development and openness to feedback were considered key success factors.

4.5.1.2. Personal Qualities

In the findings it was found that the personal qualities required in order to succeed are resilience, perseverance, the determination to succeed, the drive to learn and develop constantly, belief in oneself, ambition, courage, initiative and proactively. One participant

indicated that “this is probably one of the main areas which women who want to progress into senior management positions, have the power to control”.

4.5.1.3. Motivation

All four of the participants, including the two male participants, indicated that they are motivated by a challenge, learning new things, managing their own development and enjoyment of their work. It was found that salary did have a role to play but was not as strong a motivator as achievement and pride in their work.

4.5.1.4. Management Style

Three of the participants believed that they had to develop a valuable team around them in order to succeed. They accomplished this through continuous development of the people around them, employing participative management, nurturing informal and trusting relationships and treating staff as individuals. They also found that management skills were built up progressively over time and that they had to feel comfortable assuming authority when needed.

Both male participants indicated the need to develop valuable teams and one indicated (with a smile and a giggle) that working with women he had to be continuously aware of his management style and interaction with ‘the ladies’.

4.5.1.5. Dealing with Female Discrimination

All four participants felt that if they dealt with issues immediately as they experienced them and used the opportunity to create insight for others, that they did not experience gender or discrimination issues. Some participants tapped into their inner strength, self-confidence and experience to deal with their emotions resulting from feeling undermined or undervalued.

One of the male participants indicated that at times with his previous female line manager he experienced some form of discrimination.

4.5.1.6. Support Structures at Home

All participants including the male participants, highlighted the importance of support structures in the home environment. All participants, regardless of whether they had

children or not, indicated that they would not have survived or achieved success without the support in the home environment.

Some participants tried to balance work/family needs by taking work home in the evenings or by keeping work and family life completely separate. They also employed time and priority management and nurtured and maintained their relationships with husbands/wives, family members and domestics.

4.6. Extrinsic Success Factors

4.6.1. Professional Exposure

Exposure to high level projects, which are visible or have major implications for senior executive management was found to be a critical success factor. All participants, including the male participants, felt that their exposure on projects provided new challenges and opportunities for their potential to be recognized. They also felt that exposure to projects was a way of acknowledging hard work and a demonstration of confidence by leadership. Three female participants felt privileged to have received the level of exposure that they had experienced and considered it to be very valuable. One female participant indicated "that women managers must create opportunities for themselves to gain exposure and not to fear becoming more visible and presenting themselves publicly".

4.6.2. Support From Colleagues

All four participants felt that female managers are less tolerant, operate in cliques and are generally not supportive of women outside of their cliques. Female managers who have positive relationships with other female managers found them to be supportive and therapeutic to connect with. Three of the participants indicated that some male colleagues are supportive and that some female managers have positive experiences of working with men in the same management team. All four of the participants found it useful to draw on the experience and knowledge of people around them including mentors, superiors, colleagues and technical experts, some of which become friends over time and others who remain professional acquaintances. One participant indicated that "working in isolation cannot be beneficial to your career or your general wellness, especially at Wits. It is essential that every effort is made to seek out support from your colleagues, whether they are male or female".

One male participant felt that his female line manager was very supportive and the other male participant expressed the view ‘that his previous female line manager was not very tolerant’ and that ‘anyday he would prefer reporting to a male line manager given his previous experience’. Both male participants interestingly, expressed the view that they ‘could not understand why females, even those in senior positions needed to work in cliques and relied on each other so much….’.

CHAPTER 5: INTERPRETATION OF THE RESULTS

In this chapter, the findings which were presented and analysed in Chapter 4 are interpreted in the context of the literature review presented in Chapter 2 and the propositions which were drawn from the literature.

5.1. PROPOSITION 1:

Women managers experience both environmental and personal challenges in achieving upward career mobility

The literature reviewed suggested that female managers experienced environmental barriers as well as personal barriers which are intrinsic to the individual.

5.1.1. Environmental Barriers

Masculine culture and values were identified as an environmental factor which serves to alienate women by expecting women to fit into the masculine culture and to exhibit male type behaviours. This was found to be true of the experiences of the participants from Wits. Men seemed to be favoured and often reselected in the recruitment process. The behaviours described by the participants reinforce the masculine culture and values of the organization which is maintained in the interests of the men who dominate the environment. It was found that men are still occupying the majority of senior leadership positions (confirmed in Wits Employment Equity Plan 2010-2014) and that women are still not moving quickly enough beyond middle management.

The findings show that men tend to dominate meetings and women have to raise their voices to have their opinions and ideas heard. Women found themselves as having their decisions questioned, having to work harder to accomplish tasks and not being asked for their inputs as they perceive that some males do not value their inputs. Women found themselves having to be more assertive and competitive to be taken seriously in an environment which expects the same masculine behaviours from all employees.

Male networking activities exclude women and are actively planned in a manner which excludes women. Some of the participants engage in social activities with male colleagues

to build relationships while others felt that they would not compromise their own values to fit in with the male group. As a result some participants found it difficult to build relationships with male colleagues.

The participants were expected to work the same long hours as men, to employ male management norms, to adopt male characteristics such as expressing themselves differently to be heard and not to show emotions as they were found to be unacceptable to males in the Wits environment. The literature suggested that this encourages women to take on a male gender identity and that this may result in high stress levels and is unlikely to result in individual commitment to the organization.

Discrimination against females remains a significant environmental barrier. These included the glass ceiling, exclusion from male networks and the undermining of women's abilities by men in more senior positions, in equivalent positions and in subordinate positions. This reconfirms Gardiner and Tiggemann's (1999) findings presented in the literature. Women were not considered as competent as men were not afforded the same level of regard, accountability and responsibility as their male colleagues. As a result, some of the participants felt undermined and not valued by the organization which, in turn, led the participants to question their own competence and whether they were adding value to the organization.

The glass ceiling was definitely found to exist at Wits. Participants perceived women at Wits to reach middle management positions relatively quickly however were not moving quickly into senior management positions. This is maintained by bias in the recruitment process which, in turn, is enabled by male networks. Some participants did indicate that they had no intention to apply for more senior posts as they were choosing to focus on their families. This may suggest that glass ceilings may also be partly self-imposed at times. Another interesting notion expressed was the glass ceiling was also felt to be imposed by the race dynamic, as especially at Wits, senior management positions, given the Transformation agenda and the employment equity targets, black females were earmarked for these positions.

The lack of organizational support was identified as a barrier. The participants reported that few opportunities for advancement were available and no employment equity plans or

women's advancement programmes were in place that they were aware of. The literature suggests that when employees feel valued and that they belong to an organization, individual commitment is more likely to occur.

The lack of organizational processes such as performance management, succession planning and career planning was also viewed by participants as a failure of Wits to adequately support them. Feedback and the identification of competency development needs were considered essential to enable women to manage their own development and to ensure that they are positioned appropriately for promotion opportunities.

Many organizational barriers remain in place despite progress being made by individual departments within Wits. The lack of processes or structures is not conducive to creating an enabling environment which, in turn, is disempowering for female managers.

5.1.2. Personal Barriers

A number of participants identified that they needed to develop strategic leadership competence and interpersonal maturity. They described themselves as motivated by achievement and their own continuous development. Bennis (2001) refers to changes taking place in leadership which requires that senior managers remain open to learning and growth. The participants expressed a willingness to continuously learn and grow to be an essential personal quality required for entering into senior management and that it is through this continuous development that competency ceilings, which served as barriers to promotion for some female managers, can be overcome.

A further personal barrier expressed by the participants was identified as the way in which women express themselves. Some participants perceived that female managers are not assertive enough in their expression and, as a result, their opinions and ideas are not heard. It was suggested by the participants, that women need to make themselves more visible and should assertively volunteer their opinions and ideas. Women's styles of expressing themselves are still compared to the male norm suggesting that the environment remains masculine in nature. As experienced by one of the participants, this does not mean that their ideas and opinions will be welcomed, especially if they challenge the status quo.

A further barrier identified is the continuous challenge of achieving and maintaining work/life balance. Bennett (2003) suggested that women managers experience significant work/life tensions as a result of constantly having to make choices between work and family. Two of the participants made conscious choices to compromise their careers in favour of their families by not applying for senior management positions or further promotions which would demand more personal sacrifice. Ivarsson and Ekehammar (2001) suggest that an external locus of control was found to be linked to avoidance coping styles which are demonstrated by non-managerial women who have greater work/life pressures and that these women often avoided competing for management positions. The decision of the two participants to not apply for further senior positions may be related to work/life balance fatigue, prioritizing of values and a sense of already having achieved in their careers and self-actualisation. This is contrary to what is perceived to be an external locus of control, an avoidance coping style or opting out of the competition. Furthermore, as proposed by McKenna (1998), this may indicate that women are prepared to move away from what is commonly perceived to indicate success or achievement to "something more individually rewarding" (McKenna, 1998, p. 106).

5.1.3. Conclusion

Proposition 1 is therefore accepted in this case as the findings demonstrate that female managers experience both environmental and personal challenges in achieving upward career mobility. The majority of the barriers experienced were environmental barriers. The reasons for women managers naming more environmental barriers may be that there are more environmental barriers experienced or that these are less threatening to discuss than personal barriers experienced. The environmental barriers remained largely unaddressed and this may be due to an organizational culture which appears to be culturally and structurally disempowering and women managers may not feel that they have control over the environmental barriers.

5.2. PROPOSITION 2

There are both intrinsic and extrinsic critical success factors which have been experienced and leveraged by women managers who achieve senior management positions within the support sector at Wits.

The second proposition drawn from the literature review suggests that there are both intrinsic success factors, which women cannot control, and extrinsic success factors which a women presumably has some control.

It was not assumed that the critical success factors were survival behaviours as a response to the barriers. Some success factors may however, address barriers experienced.

5.2.1 Intrinsic Success Factors

Competence and education were found to be repeatedly highlighted as a success factor and it was acknowledged by the participants as being essential for promotion into senior management. Many of the participants felt that they had many of the generic competencies as well as analytical, critical and technical competencies developed through education and experience. The literature highlights that the competencies required of senior managers were not made explicitly clear or measured until recently. In the absence of this, the participants identified their own developmental needs and developed informal and personal career plans.

The participants also identified personal qualities which they felt were required and contributed to their success. Furthermore, it was found that over and above competence, education and personal qualities, personal motivation also contributed to the success of the participants. Challenge, doing a job well, personal development and enjoyment of work were found to be high motivators. This indicates a high achievement motive. Robbins (2004) argues that a high achievement and power motive are pre-requisites for success. Although not explicitly stated by the participants, a strong power motive is inherent in the fact that these women have aspired to and already successfully achieved senior management positions. The participants indicated that they wish to be viewed with the same level of regard, accountability and responsibility as male senior managers which also implies a power and achievement motive. Robbins further argues that the higher up the position, the stronger the power motive becomes.

The participants described their management styles as participative, nurturing of informal relationships, developmental, compassionate and supportive which is supported by Dematteo's (2004) findings in the literature. While the literature suggests that the feminine management style is a personal barrier, the participants viewed their management styles as personal success factors.

The participants felt that drawing on networks of people, previous colleagues, superiors, technical experts and colleagues who find themselves in similar situations also served as a critical success factor. Networking provided opportunities for sharing and learning as well as facilitated access to people or information. Luhabe (2002) suggested that networking is a success factor but that women in senior management positions may experience challenges in forming networks. Luhabe also further suggested that alliances are formed with role models and mentors outside of peer networks or groups across race and gender boundaries. This suggests that there may be a difference between networking and the forming of alliances and that the formation of alliances may be an advancement strategy in its own right. The formation of alliances suggests deliberate selection of role players with whom relationships are formed to achieve specific objectives such as high level professional exposure, access to people who are politically connected or who have strategic alliances and are listened to by people in powerful positions.

Understanding the unwritten rules of the organization was identified by some participants as a success factor. Understanding and playing by the rules of the political game is expected and whether the participants wish to play or not, it is inevitable that they will be affected by it. It was suggested that women in senior management positions have to be politically correct, diplomatic and understand the rules to ensure a smooth existence in their organizations. Martin's (2004) findings, which suggested the ability to learn the character of organizational politics to be one of the success factors for women learning to deal with hostile environments, are reinforced by the findings of this study.

5.2.2. Extrinsic Success Factors

The literature suggested that women also experience extrinsic success factors which arise from their environments.

Professional exposure was found to be a success factor by the participants who were afforded exposure to new projects or challenges which provided opportunities for learning and growth as well as for recognition of their potential and enhanced visibility. Marthur-Helm (2002) found that women who had achieved success attributed their success to having volunteered to work on new projects or challenges. The participants felt privileged to have been afforded the opportunity to work on new projects and to gain exposure to new challenges and senior people.

The literature suggests that networking often presents challenges for women who struggle to penetrate male networks and that the development of peer networks by women within and outside of their organizations is necessary. Luhabe (2002) argues that peer group networks within organisations can be effectively used to drive change. The participant's experiences of the lack of female peer support suggests that this may be difficult to achieve. The findings show that there are some senior women and men who are supportive for the development of peer group alliances. This assumes that women in senior management positions will take on the role of change agents which are likely to meet strong resistance from the organizational culture and benefitting members.

5.2.3. Conclusion

Proposition 2 is therefore accepted in this case as it was found that there are both intrinsic and extrinsic success factors which have been experienced and leveraged by women in senior management positions within Wits University. More intrinsic success factors were identified by the participants, which may be due to their ability to control and change certain behaviours from within themselves. The extrinsic success factors identified are dependent on the behaviours of other people in the working environment.

5.2.4. Summary

Chapter 5 interpreted the data gathered within the context of the literature reviewed in Chapter 2 which gave rise to the propositions of the study. Both propositions have been accepted based on the evidence provided by the participants and the corresponding supporting evidence in the literature review.

CHAPTER 6: REFLECTIONS, LIMITATIONS, CONCLUSIONS, IMPLICATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

In this final chapter, the researcher will first present a brief summary of the research paper. Conclusions and discussions of major findings with a discourse integrating relevant literature will follow. Special emphasis will be placed on findings that shed new light on the knowledge base about senior women leaders in South African higher education. The last section of the chapter contains recommendations for action and further study.

6.1. Reflections

To investigate what it takes for women to succeed in senior management positions in institutions of higher education, a qualitative research study was conducted using semi-structured, open-ended interview questions listed in Appendix D. Semi-structured depth interviews were done for the collection of qualitative data relating to the experiences and perceptions of the participants. Four female and two male participants were selected and invited to participate in the research effort. The participants all held middle to senior management positions; had responsibilities for an area of specialization, all had remarkable leadership experiences and achievements and were diverse in relation to age, race and gender. The interviews took place in locations chosen by the participants.

After extensive and intensive analysis, six major themes and twelve sub-themes resulted from the current study. The first prevailing theme, effective leadership strategies: earning your place at the table, focused on how and why the participants established themselves as effective and successful leaders in higher education. The first and most commonly used strategy for career success was proving oneself to be the best possible candidate for a leadership position. In other words, the participants gained their visibility, reputation, and leading roles by achieving results that nobody could ignore or deny. The second most important element of success, as highlighted by most of the informants, was interpersonal skills. With mutual trust and respect as well as good relationships with people at work, goals were achieved much more effectively and efficiently. Third, being true to oneself and doing the right things for both the institution and oneself served as a lighthouse that helped them navigate through difficult choices and decisions. Finally, help from powerful, good, strong mentors and network groups as well as self- directed learning and improvement were two other critical reasons behind the participants' career success over the years.

The second major theme, tests and trials, depicted common challenges and struggles reported by the participants. The first common problem among the four senior women leaders was barriers to equal treatment in the workplace, such as lower pay, stricter scrutiny, and fewer advancement opportunities into key leadership positions. The second issue was the subtle skepticism of their competence and resistance to their leadership or authority. Campus politics and budget cuts formed another shared challenge among the informants. The last yet universal problem reported by all participants was the difficulty of juggling all of the balls in the air without dropping any one of them, including personal health and stamina.

The third salient theme, maintaining focus and political savvy, incorporated four major strategies for overcoming barriers and challenges as the participants strive for success in the profession. First, when faced with overt discriminative behaviours, challenges, or conflicts, the most popular strategy was 'going one-on-one.' Most of the participants said they were not afraid to engage in direct, open confrontations behind closed doors to deal with problematic issues or individuals. The second most critical strategy was forming multiple, strategic layers of support and alliances to counteract resistance, tackle challenges and achieve goals. Building formal and informal power as well as influence at multiple levels was highlighted as the most indispensable criterion for leadership success and effectiveness. When faced with various forms of adversity or provocative situations, what worked best for coping was the ability to control one's emotions and see through the 'muck' to remain focused and productive. Last, the juggling act was achieved through the utilization of all possible skills, support and resources, such as multi-tasking, time management, help from spouses and hired individuals, employing university facilities and activities, protecting personal relationships and health, and use of internal drive and motivation to sustain oneself.

The fourth, yet the most important, finding resulting from this study was the differences that the number of men and women in a leadership group can make to individual leader's experiences at work. All but one participant voluntarily testified how once women reach parity in numbers, their vulnerability to gender bias, exclusion, resistance, or skepticism can be significantly reduced. The next theme revealed the fact that being a woman continues to bring more disadvantages than advantages to women, whether at the professional or personal levels. Although the door to leadership opportunity was opened for participants,

when they compared themselves with their counterparts, they found themselves making more sacrifices and being burdened with more implicit and explicit challenges with much less support.

The last theme, competing as a woman: prepared and ready, can be summarised into the following advice and strategies for career success. Based on the collective wisdom of the female participants, the following pieces of gold were offered. They are in fact good for anybody who is interested in top leadership positions in higher education, men or women.

DO:

- Get the terminal degree and all required qualifications.
- Do your homework and request equal treatment as well as institutional support.
- Gain a solid base of expertise and do a spectacular job.
- Surround yourself with good, strong mentors.
- Study your institution and understand the norms of practice.
- Socialise with people and develop good interpersonal skills.
- Develop decision-making and negotiation skills.
- Serve on campus community and professional committees to gain visibility.
- Engage in professional development programmes to enhance leadership skills.
- Use multiple as well as strategic layers of support networks and assistance.
- Be creative and flexible with things you can do or change.
- Utilise both masculine and feminine traits as well as strengths.
- Know yourself, be yourself, and follow your inclinations.
- Focus on your goals and use humour as well as emotional intelligence.
- Listen to criticism and make the necessary adjustments.
- Develop a passion for learning and reading.
- Learn to assess and navigate through campus politics to accomplish goals.
- Develop expertise in finance, law, personnel management and supervision.
- Learn to handle stress and be attentive to health issues.

DO NOT:

- Lead like a man.
- Be afraid to stand up for yourself and say ‘no’.
- Emulate male leadership behaviours or language.
- Stay in a job for too long.
- Take things for granted.
- ‘Help others out’ without getting any credit or recognition.
- Be afraid to take risks or limit yourself.
- Confide in people you should not trust.
- Expect to be treated as a second- rate citizen.
- Hold grudges or give up easily.
- Wait for others to ‘find you.

Comparisons of results drawn from this study with existing literature and discussion of major findings as well as contributions of this research to the literature about women leaders in higher education will be presented in the following section.

6.2. Limitations Of The Study

The study was limited to exploring the resonant factors which serve as barriers and factors which contribute positively to the career mobility of women who achieved senior management positions at Wits. The focus was on the successful women’s lived experiences and their views on reasons behind their success as well as issues facing women in higher education administration. Since only a small sample of senior women leaders was included, the findings and outcomes cannot be generalized to women serving in other types of higher education institutions or all women in higher education administration. Moreover, the richness of the results relied on the researcher’s interview skills as well as the participants’ openness and willingness to disclose, reflect and analyse different aspects of both their positive and negative experiences in the profession.

6.3. Conclusion

The main purpose of this study was to determine the leadership dilemmas of women in senior management positions in higher education institutions and the strategy, struggles and

survival tactics required to succeed. Based on the participant's own life experiences as well as their observations of other women leaders in higher education, patterns of success and challenges- adaptions emerged. The rich, thorough, inspiring profound data and findings presented in chapter four and five in this study not only answered all research questions posed in chapter three but also can be developed into a rich handbook for practice. While many points and findings are worth mentioning, the following conclusions drawn from this study are most important from the researcher's standpoint.

There has been little research done in the field of gender role stereotypes within the higher education sector, and this study has gone some way to uncover the perceptions of gender role stereotypes and women's career progression in this industry. This study found that women who responded in the interviews believe that higher education, particularly at Wits, was still male dominated and that there is not enough being done to support women to move into senior leadership roles.

The qualitative experiences of women in leadership was evident in this study. Slower career advancement existed for women, women were presumed incompetent and that women leaders were faced with the 'glass cliff' (Ryan and Haslam, 2009) and not just a 'glass ceiling'. Women were excluded from informal networks, they were often given a token status and they suffered negative consequences from work-family conflict.

Both propositions were accepted based on the evidence. The factors affecting the promotion of senior women at Wits are summarized in Fig 4.2.1. This summary highlights the factors which organizations should be focusing on to create an enabling environment and the factors which women managers should be focusing on to achieve senior management positions.

One of the limitations of the research methodology identified in Chapter 3 was that the research assumed a capacity for self-insight by the participants. This self-insight may also be unconsciously biased by the participant due to the attribution of internal and external causation (Foster, 1998, Robbins, 2004). In essence, this means that people often attribute their successes to factors within themselves and their failures to factors outside of themselves.

The researcher believes that this bias must be considered at all times in the reading of the data and interpretation presented in Chapter 4 and 5. It is evident that there are many more external barriers and personal success factors mentioned with very few personal barriers and extrinsic success factors reported. This may imply that the success factors are perceived by the participants to be a result of their own actions whereas the factors which they could not change are blamed on the external environment. The fact that participants focused on intrinsic success factors and succeeded in achieving senior management positions despite the absence of organizational support may indicate that they do not require their employers to provide more organizational support mechanisms. This suggests that organizations may provide greater support by addressing the intrinsic success factors through developmental interventions for aspirant women managers.

In this study it was found that the glass ceiling is perceived to be a reality and that its causes are believed to be of external and internal nature. From this study it is clear that women dominate in lower administrative ranks and that the division of labour is distributed amongst gender lines. Women are seen as the organizational "wives". Possible external causes of the glass ceiling were perceived to be gender stereotyping, power techniques employed by women, exclusion of women from advancement programmes, lack of child-care facilities, covert discrimination against females and the fact that women have to work harder than men to scale the corporate ladder. Likely internal causes were perceived to be female attitudes, role conflict experienced by women mangers, long hours and the exclusion of women from informal male networks.

The literature reviewed demonstrated that these factors are not exclusively experienced in the higher education sector and thus the results could be of interest to both the private and public sector. Given the importance of gender diversity in our modern society, the researcher believes that this study is critical in assisting Wits to understand why there are still so few females in senior management positions. It is hoped that the research will assist Wits to make changes to support the development and progression of more women into senior leadership roles in the future.

6.4. Implications

Educational institutions at all levels need to examine the kinds of professional development programmes offered to aspiring leaders, faculty and other staff. In order to help women become more successful in educational leadership roles activities should be developed and implemented that help employees examine how various policies, procedures, rules and norms may limit the success of women.

The first implication focuses on the fact that educational institutions should engage in critical reflection about issues of inclusion and expand the opportunities for diverse leadership styles and for women at all levels. A second implication centres on the importance of critical and robust discussion among senior executive management around gender. The third implication focuses on the importance of transcending the cultural norms. A fourth implication concerns leadership and mentoring programmes. Mentoring is not readily understood in the organizational behaviour paradigm. Suggested research would entail a direct examination of the correlates of leadership and mentoring with respect to characteristics and attributes in the education arena. Finally, there is an absence of essential practical information for administrators in the traditional literature. This literature gap not only leaves women without a clear conception of issues important to them, it also deprives men from understanding how their cultural identity as men interacts with women's cultural identity as females and the effects their interaction has on organizational dynamics.

6.5. Recommendations for Action

Women moving into leadership positions across all industries is a vital part of modern organizations in order to bridge the gap which currently exists. Most successful organizations continue to evolve their leadership team to a more representative version that they were previously. Is this happening at Wits University?

Considering the results of this research, in order to bridge the gap at Wits University the researcher will make recommendations as follows:

For Wits to consider the following:

- To reflect on their institutional culture and determine whether there are indeed barriers affecting the upward mobility of female employees into senior leadership positions.
- Address both structural and interpersonal barriers to gender equality.
- Continue to support affirmative action initiatives by hiring more women leaders because the historical social issue of gender inequality at multiple levels of higher education has neither been quickly nor easily 'fixed'
- Determine whether diversity is indeed being tolerated or integrated into the workforce and implement relevant strategies to manage gender diversity appropriately.
- Ensure that enabling organizational processes, policies, practices and structures are implemented to address existing barriers and to empower and support female employees.
- Adopt multiple strategies to increase the number of women in professional ranks.
- Review and redefine employment equity plans and evaluate whether targets for women in

  senior management positions are being achieved on a regular basis.
- Integrate women vertically and horizontally across the university hierarchy.
- Encourage high-quality cross gender work relationships.
- Develop and implement a retention strategy to ensure that women managers are retained by addressing the multiple, yet common needs of individuals. Many individual needs are mentioned in the environmental barriers and intrinsic success factors section of this paper.
- Develop resources and tools for women to supplement and further enhance their professional careers and aspirations, is a critical component of ensuring change. This can include women's development programmes, forums, mentoring support etc.
- To encourage specifically men in leadership positions to be aware of the real issues which are prevalent in their organization.
- More public relations and communication of the success of female role models is critical. Women need women role models to show what can be achieved and organizations should be able to celebrate the success of their own phenomenal women.

- Make sure that when leading an imbalanced work group or leadership team, the voices of the few receive equal attention, recognition and respect. Encourage avoidance, whenever possible, of gender
  stereotypes or special scrutiny toward the disadvantaged group.
- Promote inclusiveness and diversity at all levels by inviting a diversified pool of participants for ideas, discussion, talents and decision-making.
- Create a family-friended working environment by providing programmes, facilities and services that respond to the needs of people with children and elderly family members Revise university policies to make the balancing act between work and life easier for both men and women.
- Encourage research on women's issues and equitable treatment for women. For instance, conduct campus- wide salary equity studies, and if disparities are found, initiate necessary actions to ensure quality for all.

For all women employed at Wits aspiring to achieve a senior management position (these recommendations all emanate from the data):

- To identify managerial and functional competencies required of relevant senior management positions
- Ensure that the relevant competencies are developed
- Have a personal career plan in place
- To solicit feedback and build networks and relationships with strategic role players
- To build support structures in the home and the workplace
- To support other women
- To make themselves visible and to serve as a change agent
- To have confidence in their abilities
- To leverage their feminine management styles
- To realize that they add value in ways to the organisation that are not defined by them needing to be more like a man to succeed.
- To find one's own individual recipe for success and area of contribution and
- To be aware of stereotypes, both the ones which bias women and the ones which bias men. Work with the organization to ensure that women are leading the way to a better, more balanced work environment for all staff.

This research effort developed into a wealth of interesting issues and topics that are worth further examination and exploration. Based on the research findings and conclusions drawn from the study, the researcher recommends the following strands of inquiry for further investigation:

6.6. Recommendations for Further Research

- Many women are choosing not to compete for more senior management positions. The literature and findings of this study suggest that there are a number of factors which may contribute to this including self-actualisation, a self-imposed glass ceiling and a link to a locus of control, which may be worthy of further investigation.
- Many women in senior management positions indicated that men also face challenges in achieving more senior positions. A study of the factors affecting the promotion of male managers and a comparison of the factors affecting the male and female groups is recommended.
- Research should be conducted in order to understand the impact on the culture of the organization and the propensity for women to leave organizations before reaching senior roles, based on stereotypes which are prevalent.
- Compare and contrast comparable institutions that have many versus few women in senior leadership posts. Analyze both internal and external contextual factors that help perpetuate opposite campus climates for women in leadership positions. Identify the elements required for some institutions to accept more women at the helm and the reasons why changing patriarchal traditions has been so hard for some institutions.
- Has the increase in the proportion of women in senior leadership created negative effects or discomfort for men? When men become the token executives, do they experience the same special scrutiny, exclusion, isolation or extra pressure to perform or do they retain their status as equal members with their voices well attended?
- Compare and contrast differences between women's perceptions about gender bias and their gender identities, particularly between those who come from male-dominated fields and those from female-dominated disciplines. What factors can influence women leaders' awareness, advocacy and commitment to women's needs? What are the consequences of their actions?

- Continue to identify both blatant and subtle barriers and challenges facing women leaders today and their combating strategies. If possible, use the snowball sampling strategy to focus on women who experienced a lot of obstacles in their careers. What other difficulties or problems have women experienced in higher education administration? What other skills and strategies have been employed to help women succeed more easily? How do the results compare to this study?

In conclusion, when Pearson, Shavlik and Touchton (2008) addressed the issue on the national context for women in higher education, they concluded:

'The history of higher education for women is replete with challenges by women for access to institutions, to particular academic disciplines, to programmes. Some of these challenges have been met with positive change, some with indifference, some with rejection, claiming women cannot succeed. The history of women in the academy has been one of pluses and minuses, pushes and pulls, but never has higher education fully responded to women for themselves (p.3)'.

Other scholars concurred (Ireland, 2003; Kellerman, 2003, Morris, 2002 and de la Rey, 2011). As Ireland (2003) contended 'progress does not equal parity.' Kellerman's (2003) concern resided in the over-optimism about women's progress as well as the quick achievement of a fully equal society. She argued, 'No just society could tolerate the inequalities that women now experience in status, income, power and physical security. The challenge remaining is to make those inequalities visible and to translate our personal aspirations into political commitments' (p.20). Consequently, both the task of proving "the difference 'difference' makes" (Rhode, 2003, p. 93) and that of finding personal as well as institutional strategies needed for the creation of an equitable working environment must be continued before true equality, diversity and inclusion can be secured for all and for good.

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Annexures

Annexure A: Letter to the Registrar of the University of Witwatersrand

Lamese Abrahams

86 Club Street

Linksfield

2192

The University Registrar

University of Witwatersrand

Jorissen Street

Braamfontein

2000

Dear Registrar

Re: Permission to conduct research with senior support staff within the Division of Student Affairs

As you know I am currently studying my Masters in Education Part time at the University of the Witwatersrand (Wits). My research topic focuses on "Leadership Dilemmas of Women in Senior Management Positions (Support) in Higher Education: Strategy, Struggles and Survival.

The research project outline

The purpose of the research is twofold. Firstly, to understand the factors that affect women's participation and career progression in senior and executive management positions (support) in South African Higher Education Institutions. Secondly, to further understand the strategies employed by selected women leaders to overcome various challenges or obstacles in their paths to success. The focus will be on female insiders' views on women in leadership positions and the subjective meanings attached to these lived experiences. The study is aimed at uncovering the story behind the stories contributing to women leader's success, particularly highlighting their ways of handling difficult situations encountered in their professional and personal life, so that valuable lessons and advice can be learned from their success stories for the benefit of other current or aspiring female leaders.

In addressing the research problem, as I am in a middle management position at Wits, I will use the Wits context as a case study for this research project. An attempt will be made to explore the factors which affect the promotion of women at Wits and to gain a better

understanding of how women overcome those challenges in order to achieve senior management positions. The research will provide insight into the personal experiences of these women by increasing the volume of their voices and to allow them to create their own meanings outside of the dominant male paradigm of the executive culture.

Confidentiality

Confidentiality will be maintained throughout the study. The names of staff will not be included in the study at all. However, should participants not object to being identifiable in the study, then this option will be made available to them.

I will provide your office with a copy of my final research project for your interest and reference.

Thank you.

Yours sincerely

Lamese Abrahams

082 304 1597

Lamese.Abrahams@wits.ac.za

Annexure B: PARTICIPANT INFORMATION SHEET

Dear Wits Staff member

My name is Lamese Abrahams and I am a Masters student in the School of Education and I am in a middle management position at Wits.

As part of the requirements for the degree, I am conducting research, my research topic focuses on "Leadership Dilemmas of Women in Senior Management Positions (Support) in Higher Education: Strategy, Struggles and Survival.

My research involves understanding the underlying drivers of the low representation of women in senior and executive management positions (support) in South African Higher Education Institutions.

As part of my research project I am hoping that you would agree to be interviewed by me. Your participation is entirely voluntary and refusal to participate will most certainly not be held against you in any way. If you agree to participate, I shall arrange to interview you at a time and place that is suitable for you. The interview will last approximately one hour. You may withdraw from the study at any time and you may also abstain from answering any question that you may feel uncomfortable with answering.

With your permission, the interview will be tape-recorded. If you would prefer that the interview is not tape-recorded then this option will be made available. Participants will have the opportunity to verify the transcription of the tapes. The tapes and interview schedules will be kept for two years following any publications or for six years if no publications emanate from the study. All electronic data will be password protected. Please be assured that your name and personal details will be kept confidential in the final research report (unless you do not object to being identifiable in the study).

Furthermore, please note that given the fact that I plan to interview senior management support staff and the study focuses on the few women in this position, there is a possible risk that based on your responses you could be identifiable. Therefore even if your responses are anonymous, confidentiality cannot be guaranteed.

Please feel free to ask any questions regarding the study. I shall answer them to the best of my ability. I can be contacted on 082 304 1537. Should you wish to receive a summary of the results of the study, an abstract will be made available on request.
Thank you for taking time the time to consider participating in the study. I look forward to working with you.

Thank you.

Yours sincerely,

Lamese Abrahams

NAME: Lamese Abrahams

EMAIL: lamese.abrahams@wits.ac.za

TELEPHONE: (011) 7179258 or 082 304 1537

SUPERVISOR: Professor Felix Maringe

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Appendix C: CONSENT FORMS FOR PARTICIPATING IN THE STUDY AND FOR AUDIO-TAPING OF THE INTERVIEW

Dear Participant

Please complete the reply slip below and sign it in order to provide me with consent to use your input as part of my case study research which I am conducting at Wits University.

Thank you.

Yours sincerely,

Lamese Abrahams

CONSENT

I hereby consent to participate in the research project mentioned above as well as consent to the tape-recording of the interview (if tape recording not allowed, please indicate below). The purpose and procedures of the study have been explained to me. I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I may refuse to answer any particular items or withdraw from the study at any time without any negative consequences. I understand that my confidentiality will be maintained at all times (if there is no objection to being identifiable in the study, please indicate below) and that the tapes will be destroyed two years after any publication arising from the study or six years after completion of the study if there are no publications.

I understand that my responses will be kept confidential.

Name of Participant: ……

Date: ……

Signature: ……

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION PERTAINING TO CONSENT RE TAPE-RECORDING AND PERMISSION TO BEING IDENTIFIABLE IN THE STUDY

……
……
……
…….

Annexure D: INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

1. Can we begin by providing me with a background to your career history?
2. What attracted you to work for the University of Witwatersrand?
3. Have you being overlooked for a promotion to a senior management position at the University of Witwatersrand? What do you think the reason was in this case?
4. What do you think are the personality characteristics (intrinsic and extrinsic) that enable some women, and not others, to conquer barriers and progress to senior management positions at University of Witwatersrand?
5. What environmental factors (external and internal) do you think contributes to women's ability or inability to achieve professional success?
6. To what extent do you think the glass ceiling exists at the University of Witwatersrand? Or does the concept of a glass ceiling not exist at the University of Witwatersrand?
7. What do you think are some of the struggles facing women seeking senior leadership positions within the support sector at the University of Witwatersrand?
8. What factors (survival and strategy) do you think contributes to the successful achievement of senior management positions by women employed at the University of Witwatersrand?
9. Have you been provided with adequate support from the University of Witwatersrand in order to develop your career?
10. The final question to the male recipients would be focused on whether as a male working at the University of Witwatersrand if they feel they have better opportunities for career development into senior management positions?