

https://dspace.org/

Exploring Challenges Faced by Women in Executive Leadership in the Non-Profit Sector in South Africa

Nsibande, Nondumiso

2023

niversity of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg

https://hdl.handle.net/10539/40047

Nsibande, Nondumiso. (2023). Exploring Challenges Faced by Women in Executive Leadership in the Non-Profit Sector in South Africa [Master's dissertation, University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg]. WireDSpace.https://hdl.handle.net/10539/40047

Downloaded from a DSpace repository. https://dspace.org/

Research Title: Exploring Challenges Faced by Women in Executive Leadership in the Non-Profit Sector in South Africa

Name	Nondumiso Nsibande
Student Number	0008596F
Course	MBA Part-Time (Weekday)
Year of Study	Year 2
Nominated Journal	Leadership Quarterly Journal or Agenda
Name of Supervisor	Sedjro Alovokpinhou

ABSTRACT

Women continue to face challenges in executive leadership positions within non-profit organisations in South Africa which negatively affects their performance. Limited progress has been made on women's representation in decision-making in the last few years, however, those who make it to these positions tend to vacate them because of obstacles that exist while holding these positions. This study used a phenomenological qualitative research design to explore the experiences of women in senior management positions in the non-profit sector. The study used in-depth interviews to collect qualitative data from 20 participants: 16 women leaders, and four men leaders in the non-profit sector. Feminist theory was used to understand the different challenges and discriminations faced by women in senior management based on race, gender, and other forms of stereotype.

The study found that the main challenges faced by participants which affected their ability to thrive in their role as leaders in the organisations was the reinforcement of patriarchal ideologies, including gender norms in the workplace, lack of resources, lack of mentorship and investment in leadership training, gender wage inequality, discrimination based on the intersections between race and gender, and a lack of a family work-life balance. Participants also identified factors that could contribute to sustaining women in leadership positions such as positive organisational culture, and being intentional in challenging toxic gender norms and overall gender inequality; promoting work-life balance policies; investing in mentorship and networking opportunities, networking and leadership training.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

1. INTRODUCTION 5
1.0 Introduction and Background 5
1.1 Problem Statement 7
1.2 Rationale for the study 9
1.3 Research Question 10
2. LITERATURE REVIEW 11
2.0 Introduction 11
2.1 Defining Leadership 11
2.2 Women's Leadership and the role of the Women's Movement 12
2.3 Barriers to Women's Leadership 13
2.3.1 From Glass Ceiling to Glass Cliff Phenomena 13
2.3.2 Work-life balance 15
2.3.3 Socio-cultural factors 16
2.3.4 The Queen Bee Theory 17
2.4 Organisational Culture and Women's Leadership 21
2.5 Representation of Women in Leadership in the Non-Profit Sector 22
2.6 Factors supporting women in leadership 24
2.6.1 Flexible working hours 24
2.6.2 Networking 24
2.6.3 Mentoring 25
2.6.4 Training 25
3. METHODOLOGY 27
3.0 Introduction 27
3.1 Research design 27
3.2 Conceptual Framing 28
3.3 Sampling Procedure 29
3.4 Data collection 30
3.5 Data Analysis 30
3.6 Validity and Credibility of Data 31
3.7 Ethical Considerations 32

3.8 Researcher's Positionality 32
3.9 Research Weaknesses: Technical and Administrative Limitations 33
4. PRESENTATION OF RESEARCH FINDINGS 34
4.0 Introduction 34
4.1 Participants' Profile 34
4.2 Importance of women in leadership positions 35
4.3 Challenges Facing Women In Executive Leadership 36
4.3.1 Patriarchy 37
4.3.2 Lack of Resources 38
4.3.3 Lack of Mentorship 38
4.3.4 Gender wage inequality 39
4.3.5 Socio-Cultural Factors 40
4.3.6 Family-work life balance 42
4.4 Support Required To Sustain Women In Leadership Positions 43
4.4.1 Good Organizational Culture 43
4.4.2 Flexible working hours 43
4.4.3 Mentorship 44
4.4.4 Networking 44
4.4.5. Leadership training 45
4.5 Developmental Lessons Learned 46
5. ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS 46
5.0 Introduction 46
5.2 Research question 1: What are the main challenges facing women in executive leadership in the Not-for-Profit sector? 47
5.3 Research question 2: "What kind of support is required to sustain women in leadership positions?" 50
5.4 Research question 3: *"What are some of the developmental lessons that can be learned by the sector to improve gender transformation?* 52
6. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS 52
6.0 Introduction 52
6.1 Summary 53
6.2 Limitation 54
6.3 Recommendation 54
6.5 Concluding remarks 55
REFERENCES 56
ANNEXURES 64

1. INTRODUCTION

1.0 Introduction and Background

This research seeks to explore the challenges faced by women in executive leadership in the non-profit sector. Historically women have been less represented in leadership positions. The shortage of female leaders is not a new phenomenon, and it is not particular to a specific context (Mayer & Oosthuizen, 2020). Women have been under-represented in leadership positions within organisations; yet they comprise about 50% of the population. Both males and females may start working in an organisation simultaneously with the same qualification and experience, but a female will earn less, progress at a slower rate, and most likely not climb the leadership ranks like her male counterpart (Poltera, 2019). Women prefer to stay away from leadership positions or to move on to be entrepreneurs. Chyu et al., (2020) call this situation of withdrawal backlash avoidance, which refers to the process of steering clear from promotions to avoid the negative societal ramifications that accompany that role. This is an obstacle that hinders women from attaining leadership positions.

There is no doubt that women's employment circumstances and prospects have improved. Women now make up a much larger share of the workforce and are present there for longer periods of time (Abate & Woldie, 2022). Today, women have access to paid maternity leave and many flexible work arrangement structures that make it easier for more women to advance in paid work (Toranse & Sikoti et al., 2023). It is obvious that women need to do more than merely "lean in". The advancement of women is still hampered by outmoded practices, attitudes, and legislation, which also contribute to the pervasive glass ceiling in the workplace. According to the World Economic Forum, closing the gender inequalities in Asia will take between 70 and 107 years; the situation is much worse for Africa (Zahidi, 2019).

Studies regularly show that organisations benefit from having female chief executive officers (CEOs). Recruiting women boosts a company's financial success in addition to tripling its talent pool (Abate & Woldie, 2022; The Humphrey Group 2019). Fortune 500 businesses with more female board members fare financially better than those with fewer female board members. Strong female executives increase return on equity;

organisations with more women directors have stronger capital buffers, a lower percentage of non-performing loans, and are more resilient to stress (Zillman, 2019). In addition, Lorenzo, et al., (2018) note that an organisation is better off with more female staff members, and both men and women report greater job satisfaction at female-led organisations than at those run by males. Yet, women still struggle to advance to executive leadership positions despite all the organisational advantages of increasing the presence and influence of women.

Although the representation of women in senior positions is limited globally, the situation is worse in Africa. Most African women grow in their positions until they reach a mid-management level, at this point, the glass ceiling phenomenon kicks in and bears down on them (Elias, 2018). Race and gender also create barriers that limit the career advancement of African women. In Africa, 34.2% of women are economically productive, yet these numbers are not reflected in leadership positions (Abate & Woldie, 2022). Cultural barriers continue to have an impact on the lives and rights of women despite attempts and laws for women's rights, equal opportunities, and job advancement (Abate & Woldie, 2021; Poltera, 2019).

Understanding the challenges of women in positions of senior leadership is essential. According to a number of experts, in organisations, women who are eligible for promotions may not get them due to gender bias rather than a lack of merit (Abakah, 2018; Javadi et al., 2016). Women leaders around the world continue to fight for their rights and work to have a big impact with their voices, abilities, or capabilities against prevailing stereotypes in society (Javadi et al., 2016). Women leaders face social and professional barriers as a result of the persistently negative societal attitude towards women in leadership. Boateng (2018) further argued that women have historically experienced antagonism, mockery, and other types of social sanctions, frequently stemming from patriarchy, when attempting to pursue professional jobs or leadership roles. In addition, women leaders face tremendous obstacles when fighting for their rights in the workplace because of prejudices held by the public as the gender gap in organisations still remains (Galsanjigmed & Sekiguchi, 2023; Poltera, 2019).

In South Africa, the challenges to women's advancement to senior levels are historical, structural, and social. South African women, especially black women only recently joined

the corporate world after the end of the apartheid regime in 1994 (Poltera, 2019). Despite the South African Constitution's recognition of the equality of men and women in the workplace, women encounter opposition despite their exceptional abilities and impact in enacting social change (The Constitution, Republic of South Africa, 1996). Also, in many African, and South African cultures women are seen as men's subordinates which has also extended into the world of work (Poltera, 2019). Without the required adjustments, the challenges of women in leadership roles could persist (Roca et al., 2018). To improve women's career progression chances and boost their representation in leadership positions, there needs to be more discussion about the gender gap and leadership in organisations, as well as the part stereotyping and discrimination play in women's leadership roles in South African organisations.

This chapter includes a description of the study's background, problem statement, and the rationale for conducting the study. The research questions that guided the study are also provided.

1.1 Problem Statement

Significant efforts have been made across the globe to advance women's representation in the workplace, yet women are still under-represented (Abate & Woldie, 2022; Elias, 2018). Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) 5 seeks to realise gender equality at a higher level. Gender issues for women and female leaders have received a lot of attention recently in line with this objective. Gender equality depends on having more women in leadership positions (Galsanjigmed & Sekiguchi, 2023; Cook & Glass, 2014). Additionally, having women in leadership positions is advantageous as female executives are more likely to be inclusive and collaborative, which improves the mood and effectiveness of the workplace (Galsanjigmed & Sekiguchi, 2023). This challenges gender stereotypes and promotes the notion that leadership does not have to be restricted to one gender. We must recognise the importance of women's leadership in organisations and society as a whole, and we must actively endeavour to eliminate gender stereotypes and prejudices.

There are a number of challenges that affect the recruitment and retention of women in top leadership positions. Gender bias, a lack of representation, and a lack of promotion chances are just a few of the fundamental obstacles that women must overcome to obtain leadership roles (Tannoury & Ltaif, 2021; Galsanjigmed & Sekiguchi, 2023). As an

illustration, the low representation of women in top management and on boards of directors is caused by both biological and socially imposed gender challenges (Wu, et al., 2022). In addition, organisational environments are frequently centred on traditional gender roles, confining leadership concepts to one gender. This is far from optimal. Indeed, gender bias is ubiquitous in many organisations because of gender stereotypes that are perpetuated by imposing fixed expectations of how women should appear in the workplace (Galsanjigmed & Sekiguchi, 2023). The career process is also rife with gender preconceptions, and in settings where males predominate, women frequently hit a glass ceiling. The perceived incompatibility of women with higher management or leadership roles is the main reason behind the glass ceiling, which is a significant barrier that prevents women from advancing in their careers (Manzi & Heilman, 2021). Overcoming the glass ceiling does not, however, ensure that obstacles women face due to gender stereotypes will vanish. Instead, other leadership-specific prejudices that are based on women's gender, personal traits, and leadership skills are frequently encountered by women who hold leadership roles (Galsanjigmed & Sekiguchi, 2023; Tannoury & Ltaif, 2021). These issues reflect a larger societal inclination to associate leadership with masculine characteristics, which frequently creates unfavourable opinions of female leaders who do not meet these standards (Xiong et al., 2022).

In South Africa, the Constitution, which is the highest law of the land makes provision for the promotion of gender equality and non-discrimination (The Constitution, Republic of South Africa, 1996). This law further mandates the legislature to develop laws to address discrimination. However, women have still not received sufficient representation in leadership positions within organisations; even though they represent more than 50% of the population. The Employment Equity Act, 1998 seeks to promote diversity, non-discrimination, and equal access to employment opportunity. This important piece of law establishes the Employment Equity Commission and gender quotas – it mandates all juristic persons to submit reports on an annual basis detailing the progress that had been made by companies to advance, among other issues, the representation of women in senior leadership (Employment Equity Act, 55 of 1998). However, the pace of transformation at executive levels is still very slow with senior positions largely occupied by white people and Indians and as such race and gender continue to intersect, with African and coloured women still bearing the brunt of discrimination (Abate & Woldie, 2022; Employment Equity Commission Annual Report, 2021; Elias, 2018). Within the

political participation and representation space, the country has made positive strides with about 41% women representation in parliament and a 50% representation in the cabinet (BWASA, 2017).

In the workplace, however, progress has been staggered, women's representation on boards remains at a meagre 20.1% (Mulder, 2020). Women's representation is even far lower at the CEO level – a review of JSE listed companies shows that women only make up about 13% (PWC, 2021). While this reflects a grim picture of the advancement of women in executive leadership, various research studies attribute it to several factors that serve as bottlenecks or barriers to their advancement in the workplace (Galsanjigmed & Sekiguchi, 2023; Abate & Woldie, 2021; Ryan, 2021; Poltera, 2019). These factors are defined within the context of the glass ceiling to glass cliff and critical social theories which are discussed in the sections that follow.

1.2 Rationale for the Study

Many studies have been conducted that look into the challenges faced by women in a leadership position (Eagly & Carli, 2020; Mayer & Oosthuizen, 2020; Ryan, 2021). Yet, very few studies have been conducted on women's leadership in the non-profit sector in South Africa, as such women's leadership representation is unknown, and neither are NPOs mandated by law to submit reports on progress made in this regard (Ganzert, 2021). Advancing to executive leadership, however, remains a challenge. Over the years the sector has been engaging in sporadic dialogues on the need for transformation (Thapa, 2020). Where women have been able to break the glass ceiling in this sector, many have vacated these positions, for various reasons (Babic & Hansez, 2021).

In light of this, this research explored women's experiences in leadership in the non-profit sector in South Africa; more specifically women's journey within executive leadership, and how race and gender intersect and influence the experience. This study is important because, women and especially black women are under-represented in executive positions in the NPO sector despite them comprising the majority of employees (Catalyst, 2019). Moreover, when they ascend to leadership, they rarely stay because of barriers such as a lack of support internally and bias towards white male leadership (Poltera, 2019).

This research study contributed to a limited body of research on women and leadership in the non-profit sector by answering the research questions below.

1.3 Research Questions

The **main question** guiding this study is:

What are the challenges facing women in executive leadership in the non-profit sector?

Sub-questions

The sub-questions are

i. What are the main challenges facing women in executive leadership in the non-profit sector?
ii. What kind of support is required to sustain women in leadership positions?
iii. What are some of the developmental lessons that can be learned by the sector to improve gender transformation?

It is hypothesised that women are capable of leadership yet significant barriers exist and persist which make it difficult for them to succeed /outperform/excel, so, if provided with the necessary support, they will excel.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0 Introduction

The literature review section first attempts to define leadership in the context of various leadership theories. Second, it looks at the progression of women's leadership in the context of the evolution of the women's movement. Third, it focuses on the intersections of gender and race in leadership. Fourth, it discusses the barriers within executive leadership for women in the sector as well as the glass ceiling to glass cliff theory and the influence of organisational culture on women's leadership experiences. Finally, it discusses factors supporting women in executive leadership.

2.1 Defining Leadership

The topic of leadership has been widely studied by scholars and various leadership theories have been developed over the years, ranging from situational, authoritarian, transformational, and resonant, to name a few (Nthah & Van Quang, 2023). For example, situational leadership theorised that there is no single way to lead but rather a leader adapts to the situation and transforms their leadership style between task-oriented and leadership-oriented (Vuk and Svetlana, 2020). On the other hand, transactional leadership is defined as a contingent-reward type of relationship focused on rewarding employees for good performance. Richards (2020) critiques these definitions of leadership as being systems-focused and it neglects to provide the technical rules governing effective leadership, in particular transactional leadership is necessary for short-term goal setting but needs to be paired with other forms of leadership. Khan et al., (2020) offer an alternative form of leadership largely based on process-relational thinking where leadership is defined as the joint property of the group, elevating followers to collaborators. This type of leadership, transformational leadership, resonates with the principles of feminist transformational leadership which are largely based on sharing power and ensuring its responsible and transparent use, collaboration, and promoting inclusion (Khan et al., 2020).

Sinclair critiques the earlier defined types of leadership as failing to take into account the unique traits and abilities that women bring into leadership positions. A leadership

theory that resonates with feminist leadership is transformational leadership because of its ability to acknowledge disparities in power which have a tendency to impinge on the ability of organisations and leaders to achieve social cohesiveness. Often these power dynamics are deeply embedded in oppressive systems such as patriarchy, racism and classism (Munive et al., 2022). Lawrence (2018) adds that feminist leadership stretches beyond collaboration and includes resistance and social action to oppressive power and discrimination, utilising an intersectional approach to our multiple identities. Sinclair (date?) argues that without taking into account historical, cultural, and social factors that influence leadership, women's engagement with leadership will be diminished, hence the theoretical lens underpinning this study is that of feminist theory.

2.2 Women's Leadership and the Role of the Women's Movement

While various research studies have been conducted in South Africa on women's equity and representation in senior leadership, these have largely focused on the public and private sector (Vyas-Doorgapersad & Shava, 2022; Babalola et al., 2021; Khwela & Derera, 2020). It unfortunately does not give a true picture of women's experiences in leadership without covering this critical sector. Undoubtedly, and as has been recognised by various studies across the globe, women play an important role in non-profit organisations because of their distinct influence in philanthropic giving, service provision, and advocacy (Vasavada, 2012). Women's involvement in policy advocacy over the years shows that women have played a significant role in shifting policies and advancing gender equality (Gouws et al., 2019).

Similarly, in South Africa, the women's movement has made significant strides in advancing policies and gender transformation, a case in point is the 1956 women's march, which successfully banned pass laws in the country (Gouws et al., 2019). Over the years, the women's movement has successfully fought against women's oppression evidenced by the political transition to the new democratic dispensation in 1994 (Gouws et al., 2019; Mkhize & Mgcotjelwa-Ntoni, 2019). This transition resulted in the reformation of several laws geared towards promoting both racial and gender equality and the establishment of similar institutions (Gouws et al., 2019). Gouws and Coetzee (2020) highlight an intricate link between women's movements, their activism, and the attainment of leadership positions in the public sector. These authors posit that major disruptions to gender roles,

attributed to women's activism, have led to the attainment of new leadership roles for women and overall gender transformations in post-conflict societies.

There is also wide acknowledgment in various parts of the globe that while there is a large representation of women as employees in the non-profit sector, they remain underrepresented in senior leadership positions. For example, in the United States, it is purported that while women comprise 75% of workers in sectors that encompass non-profits, they hold less than 75% of the leadership (AAUW, 2018). In addition, women often lead organisations with far smaller budgets than those run by men (Windsor et al., 2020). There is a prevailing view in South Africa that men's organisations are funded better than women's organisations (Women, Voice and Leadership, 2019).

2.3 Barriers to Women's Leadership

This theme discusses literature on barriers that affect women's leadership such as the glass ceiling to glass cliff phenomena, work-life balance, socio-cultural factors, and the Queen Bee theory, and how these affect women in executive leadership positions.

2.3.1 From Glass Ceiling to Glass Cliff Phenomena

South Africa like many parts of the globe continues to experience the under-representation of women in decision-making positions, this is despite policy advancements by various governments to set gender quotas. For example, Kenya has the highest representation of women on boards followed by South Africa at 19.7 and 17.4% respectively yet this remains way below the prescribed quota of 50% (Bosch, van der Linde & Barit, 2020). In South Africa, women comprise 32% of the Supreme Court Judges, 30% of the Ambassadors, and 24% as heads of State-Owned Enterprises (Polity, 2020). Babic and Hansez (2021) posit that this phenomenon constitutes vertical discrimination. The glass ceiling refers to a qualified person, in this case, a woman, wishing to advance within the hierarchy of the organisation but experiencing barriers or obstacles that prevent her from rising to these positions (Kulich, 2021). Several research studies attribute the glass ceiling to various interpersonal factors such as the lack of organisational mentors, the existence of an informal network of senior men and the lack of visibility and access to such networks (Kulich, 2021; Sabharmal, 2021).

The ‘glass cliff’ phenomenon is also a major barrier to women ascending and maintaining leadership positions in organisations. The glass cliff phenomenon refers to organisational behaviour where women are offered senior leadership positions when an organisation is in crisis, for example, poorly performing; their tenure then tends to be short because they lack the support to accomplish set strategic goals (Kulich, 2021). Sabharmal (2021) emphasises that these barriers often set women up for failure.

Scholars also recognise that despite the limited progress made on women’s representation in decision-making, those who make it to these positions tend to vacate them because of obstacles that exist while holding these positions (Poltera, 2019; Elias, 2018). Not only is this kind of behaviour discriminatory in nature because it limits diversity in an organisation, but also risky because the woman leader is often appointed when the organisation is on the decline (Elias, 2018). The odds of women falling off the cliff tend to be less when women influence policymaking, perceive empowerment and organisational equity, and have satisfaction with work and life balance (Oelbaum, 2016).

The glass cliff effect is prevalent in many countries across the world and various reports in the media have highlighted examples that provide evidence that this phenomenon exists. For example, JC Penny announced that it was appointing its first woman CEO, Jill Saltau, during a period when it experienced significant losses quarter to quarter and after closing dozens of stores (The Vox, 31 October 2018). Similarly, Anne Mulcahy, who served as CEO of XEROX from 2001-2009 was appointed at a time when the company was on the verge of bankruptcy. Although she managed to turn things around there are only a handful of successful cases. Other examples of women who were similarly appointed at a precarious time are Marissa Mayer, CEO of Yahoo in 2012, and Mary Malla, CEO of General Motors in 2014.

In South Africa, KPMG for the first time hired a woman into the position of CEO in 2017 at a time when it was faced with serious corruption scandals (Young, 2017). The African Bank more recently experienced the resignation of the group CEO of the African Bank, Ms Basani with speculation of irreconcilable differences between the chairperson and the incumbent CEO (African Bank Report, 2021). In the political space, the country has had two women deputy presidents but neither of them has ascended to the top position. Other talent management companies in the country, have similarly confirmed that there

is evidence of companies employing women to senior leadership positions when the company is in a precarious position, although this has not been publicly documented.

There is the dominant assertion that the glass cliff is often prevalent in organisations that have a history of being male-led and when men mess up, they tend to resign from their positions. Unfortunately, the tendency to hire men when an organisation is successful and women when it is in a precarious position feed the stereotypical views that women cannot lead. One proposition is that women take up these positions because they feel that this may be their only shot at heading an organisation, whereas the prospects of success are almost nil. An alternative view is that women are good at leading in crises. A study that looked at women's leadership during the Covid-19 pandemic found that countries that responded best to the Covid-19 crisis were women-led, for example, Denmark, New Zealand, Iceland, and Finland (Windsor et al., 2020). Companies need to be introspective where preference for the appointment of women is only exercised in instances of crises.

2.3.2 Work-life Balance

Work-life balance refers to how well someone balances their work and non-work obligations, activities, and aspirations and is considered to be a key factor in determining employee job satisfaction (Djan & Gordon, 2020). Work-life balance and leadership is intertwined. Women's chances for promotion and compensation are significantly impacted by the family-related work interruptions they experience. Family obligations are not the only thing that can make maintaining a healthy work-life balance difficult; it also includes extracurricular activities like hobbies. In addition, compared to men, women in top leadership positions are more likely to be childless or married without children. This suggests that because of social norms and the gender divisions of household labour, there is a perception that if women take leadership positions in the workplace, then their commitments in the home will be compromised. As such they are faced with the difficulty of having to choose between the two (Toranse & Sikoti et al., 2023). Gender divisions of labour prevent women from moving to new areas, as evidenced by empirical studies such as the research reflected above.

Women continue to bear the majority of the burden of managing their homes, raising their children, and juggling commitments to their careers. Professional women often choose to take a less challenging position or look for alternative career opportunities

after having children because of pressure to reconcile work and family. These women often revert to being stay-at-home mothers and even completely give up their corporate jobs. Djan and Gordon (2020) argue that work-life balance has significant effects on how employees feel about their organisations, as well as on how they live their lives and how they interact with clients. Women who are successful at juggling career and family obligations may pay a hefty price in the form of stress. If this stress is not well managed, it could have a devastating impact on their jobs and even their responsibilities to their families.

2.3.3 Socio-cultural Factors

The societal roles of women in Africa are influenced by both good and negative cultural factors. In sub-Saharan Africa, a deeply ingrained patriarchal society in which men govern the household and make decisions is at the root of the challenges that women face (Africa Barometer, 2021). Socio-cultural ideas and societal beliefs have persisted in oppressing women's attitudes and discouraging them from assuming leadership and decision-making roles. Social attitudes and gender stereotypes are shaped by culture, and this in turn affects women's inclinations to aspire to leadership positions. Women are subsequently demoted to inferior positions in this patriarchal culture, which discourages them from aspiring to and taking on leadership and decision-making roles (Abate & Woldie, 2022). In addition, men are often expected to lead and hold decision-making positions in the household, in the community, or national life, while women play a subservient role (Africa Barometer, 2021; Poltera, 2019). This "gendered division" of work is frequently dictated by customary law which is grounded in patriarchal notions.

Many women who are a part of this system find it challenging to break free from socio – cultural norms surrounding the role and positionality of women in society, this is particularly the case in many societies (Djan & Gordon, 2020). Clark et al., (2022) posit that women leaders and organisations are frequently housed within patriarchal structures and systems. Social conditioning plays a critical role in how women are thought of in leadership, where the idea of leadership is often constructed based on gender, race and national biases (Latkin et al., 2022).

Women have always been perceived as being less competitive and competent than men (Marvin, 2021). This study reveals that cultural views and traditional beliefs shape how

women are viewed and treated in society. The study further shows that women follow cultural norms out of fear of social rejection; historically, women's roles were that of a housewife and child bearer, viewed as having less importance.

As there are so many challenges to overcome to become a manager or leader, many women lose their motivation to succeed. Also, men and women are typically not ready to work for a woman because they believe that once a woman holds a managerial position, her femininity is completely lost (Abate & Woldie, 2022). Djan and Gordon (2020) contend that women leaders are always at fault. If they are powerful, they are seen as aggressive, tough, and not feminine; if they are outgoing, they are permissive; if they weep, they are emotional; and if they make a mistake, it is assumed that it is because they are women, which is offensive and discriminatory.

The early socialisation of girls, founded in African cultural and social norms, is thought to help young women become good wives and mothers while the boychild's rituals and rites of passage prepare them for leadership roles (Poltera, 2019). Several African countries' proverbs and traditional sayings concerning women's responsibilities in society are examples of how traditional cultural beliefs perpetuate women's exclusion from leadership and decision-making positions. For instance, a Botswanan proverb "A team of oxen is never led by females, else the cattle will fall into a ditch," and the Kenyan proverb "Woman and a sick man are the same things" are examples of deeply rooted ideas that oppress and limit women's potential and their capacity to influence society (Abate & Woldie, 2022). These proverbs suggest that a woman is weak and should not be allowed to take up any leadership role. Such ideas will negatively influence women's leadership as the community already perceive the woman as incapable and therefore do not support her leadership.

2.3.4 The Queen Bee Theory

A theory that has been developed in the last few years is the "Queen Bee" phenomenon which describes where women assimilate in male-dominated organisations, particularly where the organisation has been largely led by males, by distancing themselves from junior women, therefore, perpetuating gender inequality (Xiong et al., 2022). This study further contends that this is in reaction to discriminatory practices and social identity threats that women have faced in male-dominated organisations. Mufti and Basit (2021)

also opine that this behaviour is not a feminine response but rather one that is founded on a gender-based stereotype. Evidence of this syndrome is drawn from studies showing women criticising the professional and leadership skills and the levels of assertiveness of other women. It is similarly evident in female leaders distancing themselves from attributes that relate to their gender in favour of masculine traits (Xiong et al., 2022). These studies conclude that women also perpetuate gender stereotypes in the workplace based on socialisation and the prevalence of gender norms. Unfortunately, this stereotyping has the effect of hindering women in executive leadership from acting as role models for other women.

Mufti and Basit (2021) caution against this particular view which tends to see women in leadership as problematic, but rather propose focusing the problem on organisational culture. The authors further posit that often there is an unfair expectation that women, when in leadership positions, should champion other women in management and further lead the committees that deal with issues of inclusion and diversity while this is an organisational responsibility. The result is that when they decline to take up this heavy responsibility, they are often seen as Queen Bees while when men decline, nothing changes about their perceptions as strong leaders (Derks et al., 2016). These negative stereotypical views of women in leadership, founded or not, are harmful to the reputations of women in general in the workplace and may hinder the promotion of other women in the workplace.

The argument put forward by both authors can be explained by Bell Hooks's theory on feminism, that we are all born into a sexist world that holds particular views around women, men, and gender non-conforming persons, and unfortunately, this type of socialisation gets to be embedded in workplace culture (Biana, 2020). As such, when women project this behaviour, they are seen as “Divas, Queen Bees, Mean Girls” bute this requires the transformation of organisations and society at large. Therefore, organisations need to be intentional in unlearning toxic gender norms and behaviour, which perpetuate gender bias.

2.3.5 Backlash Theory

In the context of gender, the term "backlash phenomenon" refers to the unfavourable response that some men have to the shifting roles and expectations of women in society.

Some men's conventional attitudes and behaviours towards women are reinforced by the backlash, which could eventually undermine women's advancement and rights (Morrison, 1992). Women are required to display masculine qualities and behaviours in the context of gender stereotypes and leadership to be perceived as powerful leaders. But being overly assertive might make them seem to be unlikable, while exhibiting too many feminine qualities and behaviours can make them seem to be inadequate (Ellemers, et al., 2012). Because of this, women who act masculinely to be acknowledged as leaders experience a backlash in which they are penalised for breaking gender norms (Ciancetta & Roch, 2021). The pushback against women in positions of leadership and who act in traditionally masculine ways is more pronounced. To address the mismatch between gender and leadership roles, women who aspire to positions of leadership must take proactive measures (Heilman, et al., 2004).

However, women have the conundrum of trying to be more feminine while simultaneously needing to appear knowledgeable, demanding, and determined. As a result, when women behave and are competent in a masculine way, other women may regard them differently and criticise and discriminate them (Schein, 2001). These prejudices cause mismatches and make it challenging for women to succeed in positions of leadership. In addition, women's interactions with other women also suffer from backlash because it can lead to a separation between those who have succeeded in male-dominated situations and those who have not. While less successful women may be less engaged in career progress, successful women may remove themselves from the women's movement or avoid their careers (Ciancetta & Roch, 2021).

2.3.6 Double Bind Theory

A double bind occurs when a person making a choice is presented with contradictory information, leading them to believe that whatever they choose to do, it will be viewed as being wrong (Galsanjigmed & Sekiguchi, 2023). Women who adopt a gender-biased leadership style may set a better example for others and perform better. Because of cultural gender norms, women may face a double bind which could force them to choose between two possibilities that are incompatible since they are either expected to conform to gender-biased standards or limit their behaviour (Lee & Huang, 2018). With social gender preconceptions, women who hold leadership roles may be presented with two

opposing possibilities. First, in order to be taken seriously, women must appear assertive and masculine; nevertheless, if their behaviour is seen as being overly assertive, they may be judged as unlikable. Second, women may come across as likeable yet incompetent if they exhibit too much femininity in their behaviour (Eagly & Carli, 2007). Because of the possibility that women may be seen as more capable of assuming traditionally masculine leadership methods, the double bind is a very challenging condition, particularly in a workplace where men predominate. Women are also more inclined to adhere to gender norms in their relationships with others, which may impact how they lead (Lee & Huang, 2018).

Adopting leadership styles that are successful and non-masculine is one-way women can get out of the double bind. According to research, women are better suited to two of the most effective leadership philosophies: transformational and servant leadership (Van Dierendonck, 2014). To effectively increase employee work happiness, dedication, and performance, transformational leadership uses emotional intelligence and interpersonal abilities to forge deep bonds with followers (Eagly, et al., 2003). Additionally, it is said to encourage leadership behaviours that prioritise the happiness of followers by providing them with care, stimulating their minds, and individualised attention. Because of this, both male and female employees believe that transformational leadership is a successful leadership approach, but it is especially beneficial for female leaders (Eagly, et al., 2003). Servant leadership prioritises followers and stakeholders, for example, in ways that are uncommon in more conventional kinds of leadership. Servant leaders put their followers' interests and growth ahead of their own demands or power aspirations, encouraging implicit benefits for female leaders in employee management (Lemoine & Blum, 2021). Servant leadership has a favourable impact on women's flexibility and performance, and women are equally as effective at transformative leadership than males. Gender stereotypes can be used to determine the socially preferred leadership style of women, where they are anticipated to be capable and have a beneficial impact on the business. However, males frequently have a prejudice that they were born to lead and favour male leaders over female bosses (Galsanjigmed & Sekiguchi, 2023).

2.4 Organisational Culture and Women's Leadership

Organisational culture is defined as the shared values, beliefs, and perceptions held by employees within an organisation or organisational unit (Taylor, 2018). It can also take the form of artifacts such as signage, branding, and physical establishments. Patriarchal ideologies continue to shape workplace culture, as such workplaces tend to be gendered (Longman et al., 2017). This is especially the case because workplace culture plays a critical role in shaping behaviour in an organisation; in some instances, it reflects the realities of a male workforce. The author postulates that this is evident in the rewards system often offered by organisations especially in incentivising and attaching worth to promotion that reflects an all-male industrial, leadership culture. A study by Oxfam America (2020) argues that leadership theory was developed within a gendered system, although over the years various definitions of leadership have been developed. This also extends to the multiple roles women experience and societal expectations. Al-Matuwa (2020) explains this as workplace culture being impacted by women's standing in society, which influences misconceptions that men are better leaders than women, endorsing sexist stereotypes and legitimatising these myths. The author further contends that gender indeed is a discriminating factor in leadership – it is also a leading factor in the under-representation of women as the prevailing notion is the think-manager think-male paradigm. Alqathani (2019) similarly holds this latter view and postulates that gendered stereotypical norms or roles of women and men in society are transferred to the workplace with the consequence that men will occupy higher positions of power and influence than women will. Socialisation has similarly contributed to the internalisation of the expectation of care and protection of vulnerable persons and there is a huge representation of women in the care sectors (Babalola, 2021).

These gendered norms tend to perpetuate dominant notions of masculinity which result in unequal distribution of access and progression to leadership and powerful positions. Duong et al., (2017) also emphasise the influence of culture, in particular national culture, as determining the nature and composition of formal institutional arrangements, which in turn define the legal rules known as governance. Pigot et al., (2020) similarly posit that patriarchy reinforces gendered structures of dominance, which privilege men as natural leaders, thus shaping leadership traits in workplaces. Unfortunately, these outcomes or

beliefs around women elucidate people's personal views concerning women's ability to lead and are perpetuated within organisational culture.

2.5 Representation of Women in Leadership in the Non-Profit Sector

There is limited literature on the leadership representation of women in the non-profit sector in South Africa. Even though no statistical data exists on women's representation in this sector in South Africa, women continue to play an important role in shaping the tenets of democracy (Chyu et al., 2020). There is, however, limited literature seeking to understand the experiences of women in leadership and more importantly their contribution and ability to stay in these positions. Anecdotal evidence also points to the existence of several factors which work against women's ability to succeed in leadership positions, this is particularly the case where race and gender intersect (Elias, 2018). To be specific, the representation of black women in senior leadership in the non-profit sector remains minimal and where these women of colour hold such positions, the assertion is that they face numerous barriers which make it difficult for them to stay (Poltera, 2019).

Gouws (2018) briefly expands on the challenges the sector faces and posits that women's rights organisations or formations continue to experience funding challenges that have implications for leadership. These particularly relate to the NGOisation of these organisations either through co-option by the state or to face the challenge of barely surviving. NGOisation also often results in the imposition of certain conditions by the funders from the North which is where most funding for civil society organisations is drawn from. Julie (2009) alludes to the funding challenges which date as far back as the transition to democracy where the state intentionally channelled funds from foreign donors to establish the National Development Agency and later the National Lottery did not necessarily have gender and women's rights as key priorities for their funding. In light of this, it will be important to understand women's experiences in leadership in the non-profit sector including the challenges they face in these positions.

Gender and Race Intersections in Leadership in the Non-Profit Sector

Despite the wide recognition of women's influence as change agents, research presented above shows that women experience gender bias, which impedes their professional

development and leadership journey (Whittaker, 2019). Evidence suggests that race plays a significant role in executive leadership development, and black women face even greater barriers attributed to social beliefs and biases including their dual minority status based on genderism and racism, to the extent that these intersect with injustice (Zenya, 2017; Gobin, 2020). Biu (2020) on documenting black women's leadership in the sector notes that while black women desire to lead, they are still hugely under-represented in the non-profit sector, remaining under 20% in the past 15 years. The latter study alludes that despite black women holding similar qualifications as their white counterparts, this has not been sufficient for them to be considered for such positions. Similarly, negative stereotypes, including organisational culture, continue to undermine black women's ascendance to leadership (Poltera, 2019). It was therefore imperative in this study to ask the respondents, what challenges existed in leadership and whether gender and race influenced women's experiences in these positions.

A study conducted by Khuzwayo (2019) looked at black women's experiences in senior leadership in the private sector, focusing on their professional advancement. While this study contributed to diversity in discourse, it is limited in terms of its focus on the private sector, and neither could the findings be generalised based on the limited sample size. This study contributed to the discourse on female leadership in the non-profit sector by exploring women's experiences in leadership focusing on the intersections between race and gender in the non-profit sector in South Africa.

In conclusion, the above sub-themes confirm the existence of barriers or bottlenecks that shape women's experiences in executive leadership. These barriers are summarised in Table 1 below.

Negative Perceptions of Women's Leadership driven by gender stereotyping	Toxic Organisational Culture
Lack of Mentorship and Support from the Board	Lack of Organisational Commitment
Gender and Racial Bias	Existence of exclusive informal networks
Masculine notions of leadership	Burden of Care

2.6 Factors Supporting Women in Leadership

Supporting women in executive leadership is important and facilitates gender transformation in the workplace. Some of the factors that support women in leadership are: allowing women to work flexible hours, networking with other women, and providing and receiving mentorship as well as leadership training.

2.6.1 Flexible Working Hours

Internationally, the availability of childcare facilities, innovative technologies, and flexible work hours help women in top executive positions balance their obligations to their families and their employers (Asumi et al., 2023). In organisations that offer flexible work schedules and a flexible working culture to enable female employees to manage their many responsibilities, it is beneficial to the employer as it offers job satisfaction and reduces absenteeism (Grangnano et al., 2020)

2.6.2 Networking

To develop women's careers into senior leadership positions within organisations, women's networks are a crucial strategy. Women often lack access to social capital which networks provide, yet these offer social and professional support, access to contacts and resources which are often beneficial for career progression (Lopez et al., 2022).

Effective organisational networking helps employees advance their careers by facilitating faster access to information, professional and social guidance, more employment prospects, promotions, and career satisfaction (Latchanah & Singh, 2016). In addition, networks offer a growing number of personal and professional references that might help promote women's job prospects. Networks can share information via newsletters or word-of-mouth about systems with job openings and contacts, and they can also provide guidance on the advantages of positions, and salaries (Roe, 2012). When pursuing their jobs, women need to actively look for networks with both men and other women to get visibility, knowledge, guidance, and moral support (Djan & Gordon, 2020).

2.6.3 Mentorship and Coaching

Studies on professional development have shown the value of encouragement from significant others in a person's life (Mcilongo & Strydom, 2021; Mankayi & Cheteni, 2021). Women who dared to pursue occupations outside of gender-constrained roles reported receiving encouragement and mentoring from people other than their families, including educators like teachers, professors, and guidance counsellors. Also, their supervisors and co-workers were crucial in inspiring them to succeed in their present job trajectories. Cross et al., (2019) and Barkhuizen (2022) posit that a significant organisational barrier preventing women from taking up more senior positions is the absence of role models and mentorship programmes. Senior co-workers should prioritise mentoring and coaching young women to upskill them (Mcilongo & Strydom, 2021).

A mentor can open doors, make introductions, promote policies and programmes for career advancement, and offer advice (Mcilongo & Strydom et al., 2021). Despite the value of mentoring, studies revealed that there do not seem to be enough readily available male or female mentors for women – this serves as an impediment to women advancing in leadership (Mankayi & Cheteni, 2021) When men serve as mentors, they frequently choose other men or people who are similar to them (Djan & Gordon, 2020). Mentors can provide advice, open doors, make introductions and support in dealing with barriers in the workplace (Mcilongo & Strydom, 2021). These research studies emphasise how important social connections and mentoring are for women's career progression.

2.6.4 Training and Leadership Development

Training is very important as it empowers a woman to perform well. However, some scholars note that extra academic training is always going to men employees, hampering women's future potential to compete with men who have further academic training. So, organisations may need to establish a framework that gives women an equal opportunity to pursue higher education (Abate & Woldie, 2022). According to the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) (2014), governments must redesign their recruitment and development strategies to guarantee that all women have equal access to managerial, entrepreneurial, technical, and leadership training because training and other forms of capacity building are strategically important for increasing the presence of women as senior leaders of organisations. Organisations that have clear policies and guidelines that

support women's career advancement have shown improvements in gender parity in leadership positions.

3. METHODOLOGY

3.0 Introduction

This section discusses the qualitative research design as the approach that was followed in this study. It also discusses the sampling procedure followed, the data collection and analysis method, the rigour of the study as well as ethical considerations.

3.1 Research Design

A phenomenological qualitative research design was used to collect and analyse data in this study. The purpose of this phenomenological qualitative study was to explore women's experiences in senior leadership in the non-profit sector with a particular focus on the intersections of race and gender. Phenomenological qualitative design as a research approach was relevant as it sought to describe the essence of a phenomenon and explored it from the context of those who have experienced it (Neubeur, 2019). Simplified, it studies the conscious experiences of humans and is important in helping scholars to learn from the experience of others (Neubeur, 2019).

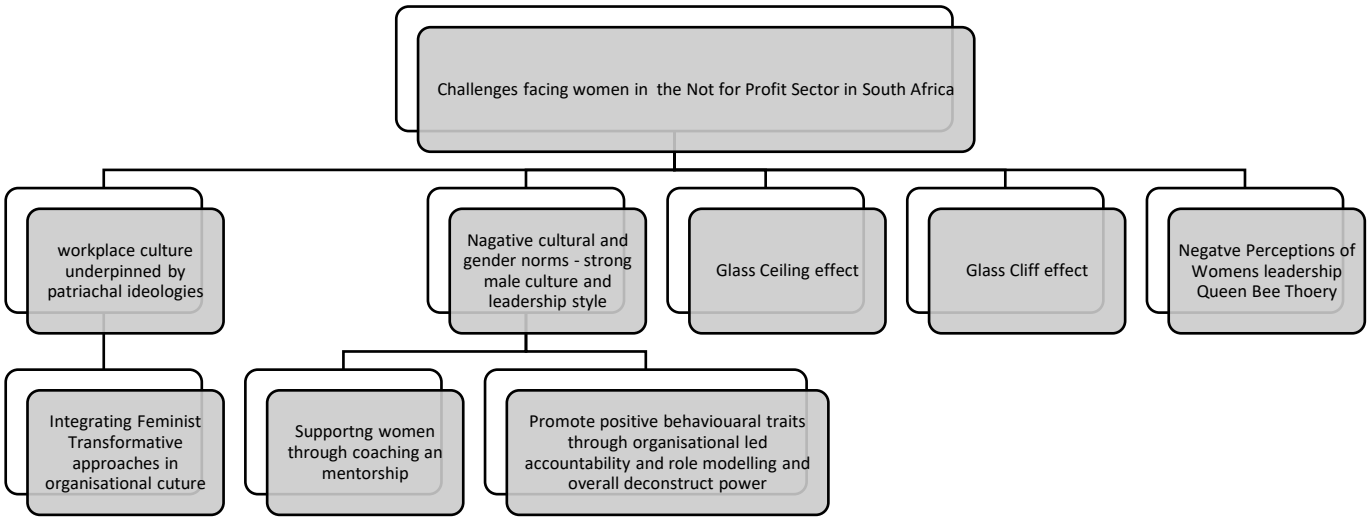
It was important in conducting this research, that the evolution of the sector was analysed in the context of women's leadership. The study was confined to internal leadership, particularly looking at the interface with governance, strategic planning, funding, and financial management. A feminist lens was used to examine women's experiences within this subject of study. This study contributed to a limited body of knowledge on women and leadership in the sector and raises greater awareness of the issues that present challenges to the professional development of women as far as gender and race intersect. It is also hoped that the study will help other women as they navigate the terrains of leadership.

3.2 Conceptual Framing

The analytical lens the researcher used for framing this research was grounded in feminist leadership theory. This theory emphasises the nature of power, personal and physiological aspects of leadership, and norms that discriminate against women (Biana, 2020). This was important because as much as the subject of leadership has been widely researched, many of these studies fall short of analysing leadership in the context of feminist approaches. Hopkins et al., (2021) argue that the few times that gender has been considered in leadership discourse are when noting the "lack of fit" for leadership. These authors further postulate that without looking into these factors, women's engagement with leadership will be severely diminished.

A diagrammatic representation of the conceptual framework for this research, as guided by the literature review is provided below:

Figure1: Challenges facing women in the NPO sector



It is clear from the above, that underpinning these challenges are patriarchal ideologies that find expression in the workplace. These can be categorised as behavioural, structural, and attitudinal barriers that disadvantage women to attain executive leadership positions and stay in these positions. Patriarchal values are also so deeply ingrained in society's consciousness that they are largely invisible, and that the very social fabric of organisation has been woven by males for males hence, the normalisation of the over-representation of men in executive leadership positions (Author unknown). The author further argues that men's perspectives are that social norms are representative of the wider, gender-neutral organisations, creating the assumption that organisational structures are asexual; therefore, even in instances where women take up these positions, they are conditioned by these perspectives and power structures to maintain the status quo. As such the underlying structures of power, knowledge, status, and wealth are not challenged.

3.3 Sampling Procedure

The researcher used purposive sampling to identify the primary participants and to look for those who live the experience of the phenomena. It is also useful to select respondents that are most likely to yield relevant and useful information (Campbell et al., 2020).
These participants were drawn from the following groups:

a. Women currently in executive leadership in the women's rights sector
b. Women in executive leadership in the human rights and the funding sector
c. Women in executive leadership in community-based organisations (CBOs)
d. Young women in management positions who aspire to ascend to executive leadership
e. Men who have demonstrated support for women's leadership and are viewed as allies in the feminist struggle.

These groups were purposively selected to participate in the study because they are or have been in leadership positions in the NPO sector and were thus presumed to have relevant information regarding the experiences of women in leadership positions in the sector.

In addition, a snowballing sample method was used which is basically about asking one informant to recommend another person to interview.

3.4 Data Collection

This study used in-depth interviews to collect qualitative data from participants. A total of 20 in-depth interviews were conducted using open-ended questions with 16 women leaders and four men leaders in the sector, including those who have left their leadership positions (see Annexure 2 for a sample of interview questions). The rationale for using in-depth interviews was that it enabled the researcher to probe deeper and gain a detailed understanding of complex issues relating to participants' experiences in leadership in the non-profit sector (Aspers, 2019). In addition, the interviews were carried out using open-ended questions, which offered the researcher access to participants' views and perspectives on the topic under study (Aspers, 2019). These interviews were tape-recorded and later transcribed for analysis.

3.5 Data Analysis

Qualitative data from the interviews was subjected to a specific type of content analysis, called thematic content analysis, using Atlas ti software. This method of analysis was chosen for its compatibility with semi-structured interviews. In addition, this method of data analysis is suitable to the qualitative approach used in this study as it takes into account the experiences, meanings, events, and realities of the participants in leadership positions within the sector (Braun & Clark, 2023). The process of thematic analysis used is a six-step process suggested by Braun and Clark (2023) and is a descriptive phenomenology (Sundler, 2019). It involved familiarisation and immersion with data, generating initial codes; searching and review of themes; interpreting the newly created themes and organising themes into existing categories, and writing up the report. This approach to data analysis is flexible and enabled the researcher to present rich and detailed data (Braun & Clark 2023).

3.6 Validity and Credibility of Data

The **credibility** of data is concerned with the stability and consistency of the informant's accounts as well as the investigator's ability to collect and record information accurately (Brink, 1993). The following steps were taken to ensure the credibility of the data:

Research approach: The researcher carried out this investigation using tried-and-true research techniques (qualitative approach). To explore the topic under study from many perspectives and develop further depictive representations of existing viewpoints, data sources and collection methods were triangulated. The researcher made an effort to find research participants with various backgrounds, gender, and differing viewpoints. To ensure the credibility of the data, the researcher developed a specific selection criterion for the participants and interviewed them according to the interview schedule.

Member check: The researcher conducted member checking with the same participant to ensure credibility, this is an important validation technique that provided participants with the opportunity to engage with their responses after their interviews (Birt et al., 2016). It also provided the researcher with a way to ensure the accuracy of participants' voices by allowing the participants the opportunity to confirm or deny their responses, therefore enhancing the credibility of the study (Candela, 2019).

Use of direct quotes: The researcher limited interpretation of the research participants' feelings and thoughts in the transcribed text by using direct quotes to help the voices of the respondents come through.

Validity

The validity of the questions was guided by theories drawn from the literature. The researcher shared recordings and transcriptions of the interviews with the participants to validate their perspectives regarding the phenomenon being studied. This ensured that the researcher and informant were reviewing the data consistently. In addition to this, the researcher sought expert consensual research validation, to be specific, independent experts were invited to generate their category system.

3.7 Ethical Considerations

In accordance with ethical considerations, the researcher ensured that all tenets of ethical research such as consent, and confidentiality were maintained. The researcher employed strict data handling protocols to ensure sensitive data remained secure. The data collected from participants was anonymised to protect the privacy of all human subjects. Key ethical considerations were anonymity and confidentiality, informed consent (see Annexure 1 for a sample of the consent form), voluntary participation, and not harming the participants:

- The anonymity of the respondents was maintained. The respondents were identified using a unique ID and names were not featured either in the datasheets or the final report.
- The information shared by the respondents will be kept confidential and used only for purposes of this research study, it will not be disclosed to the public or unauthorised individuals.

  The informed consent agreement detailed the following:

  a. Purpose of the research and a request to participate

  b. The producers of the research and risks and benefits

  c. The voluntary nature of the research participation

  d. The procedures used to protect confidentiality

3.8 Researcher's Positionality

As Bourke (2014) posits, research is a shared space between the researcher and participants, therefore the biases of the researcher often influence the research process and, in some instances, can serve as checks and balances. As a young black woman who currently holds an executive leadership position and has previously held various managerial positions in the non-profit sector, I can identify with some of the literature findings, especially the dynamics of power and gender discriminatory practices that exist in the sector.

3.9 Research Weaknesses: Technical and Administrative Limitations

Due to the limited number of interviews conducted, it may not be possible to generalise the findings of the study. In addition to this, qualitative studies are not statistically representative, making it difficult to generalise. The timelines of data collection proved challenging during the festive season, and the threat of a new Covid-19 variant which resulted in another lockdown.

4. PRESENTATION OF RESEARCH FINDINGS

4.0 Introduction

The first three chapters introduced the study, gave an overview of pertinent literature, and described the methodology used to carry out the research. To address the research questions highlighted earlier, this section presents findings in light of the research sub-questions raised (i) What are the main challenges facing women in executive leadership in the non-profit sector? (ii) What kind of support is required to sustain women in leadership positions? (iii) What are some of the developmental lessons that can be learned by the sector to improve gender transformation? This section starts by presenting the profile of participants who took part in the study, it will then discuss the importance of women in leadership, the challenges facing women in the NPO sector, and the kind of support needed to sustain them in their leadership role. Finally, it presents some development lessons learnt.

4.1 Participants' Profile

The Table below presents the profile of the participants in the study. Participants' names have been replaced with the first letter of their names to protect their identity.

	Participants	**Age group**	**Duration in leadership positions**
1	Ms A	30 – 40	7 years
2	Ms J	40 – 50	10 years
3	Ms P	40 – 50	5 years
4	Ms L	30 – 40	10 years
5	Ms V	40 – 50	10 years
6	Ms C	50 – 60	20 years
7	Ms M	40 – 50	7 years
8	Ms N	40 – 50	7 years
9	Ms S	50 – 60	10 years
10	Ms H	50 – 60	15 years
11	Ms SM	40 – 50	10 years
12	Ms W	50 – 60	7 years
13	Ms I	50 – 60	15 years
14	Ms F	20 – 30	10 years
15	Ms SN	40 – 50	7 years
16	Ms B	20 – 30	3 years

17	Mr T	40 – 50	5 years
18	Mr M	40 – 50	2 years
19	Mr K	50 – 60	15 years
20	Mr A	40 – 50	12years

The majority of the participants were female with four males because the study aimed to explore the main challenges facing women in executive leadership in the non-profit sector. In line with feminist principles, women are in a better position to narrate their own experiences. Interviewing men helped to correct any biases in the responses of the women in the sample. As seen in the Table above, the researcher conducted 20 in-depth interviews with 16 women and four men in executive and senior leadership positions from different NPOs across the Gauteng province. Participants' ages ranged from 30-60 years. Only two of the participants ascended to leadership in their 20s and are still leaders in their 30s. However, the majority of women ascended to leadership in their 30s and are still leaders in their 40s and 50s. Criteria for selecting participants were discussed in chapter three of this study.

4.2 Importance of Women in Leadership Positions

Women need to hold leadership positions in organisations. This theme discusses the reason why women aspire for leadership positions, which is mainly to affect a transformative agenda, drive strategic vision and to encourage other women to take up leadership positions.

Most participants noted that it is important for women to take up leadership roles to support other women because women have often been disadvantaged when it comes to being considered for a leadership role. One of the participants noted that:

> *"Leadership is sometimes considered a man's thing, so few women get that far. So, we owe it to our daughters and other young women out there to show them that women can do it too" (Ms V).*

Although all women need to be supported and encouraged to aspire and stay in leadership positions, the majority of participants feel that black women need more encouragement. For example:

"you get into this leadership with a big sense of I can't let black women down. In other ways, there's a lot of stress and strain about, but can't let black people down" (Ms L).

Researchers documenting black women's leadership in the sector note that while black women desire to lead, they are still hugely under-represented in the non-profit sector, remaining under 20% in the past 15 years (Biu, 2020). Another participant highlighted the importance of black women knowing their value which will help them overcome negative stereotypes. For example, one of the participants pointed out:

"It is important to know your contributions to the company so you are not made to doubt yourself" (Ms H).

The ability of black women to lead is always questioned by employers. Some employers question whether black women are capable to lead which results in these women doubting their capabilities and competence thereby fuelling the imposter syndrome. One of the participants explained that:

"Because I think psychologically, as black women we live under so much of, will she make it? Will she succeed etc? Are you too much, or are you not too much? And you end up doubting yourself and that is what happens" (Ms L).

The above quote by Ms H echoes the assertion of Poltera (2019) that negative stereotypes, including toxic organisational culture, continue to undermine women and especially black women's ascendance to leadership. The situation is not new as literature confirms that despite black women holding similar qualifications as their white counterparts, this has not been sufficient for them to be considered for such positions (Biu, 2020).

4.3 Challenges Facing Women in Executive Leadership

This theme seeks to answer the first sub-research question which is, *what are the main challenges facing women in executive leadership in the non-profit sector?* The main challenges identified by participants which affect their ability to fully function in their role as leaders were patriarchy, lack of resources, lack of mentorship, gender wage inequality, race, gender, and cultural issues, family-work-life balance, lack of training, and one-size fits.

4.3.1 Reinforcement of Patriarchal Norms

All participants interviewed highlighted patriarchy as a challenge to women's leadership. Patriarchy is an ideology that has long been a challenge for career women, especially in Africa. Participants felt that women's leadership is always questioned and undermined and a woman's ability to make decisions is always doubted. For example, Ms P explained that:

> *"A woman in leadership, sometimes in some space It's not received as naturally as I think a man would be received. There's always a question of who are you, what do you bring to the table?" (Ms P).*

In addition, one of the men agreeing with the idea that patriarchy has limited the advancement of women in the sector noted that:

> *"As a country, the issue of women's leadership has taken a back burner – the push back is so deep and it's driven by patriarchy. There is a notion that women's representation must be pushed in the board room but when it comes to the NPOs sector, this is ignored" (Mr M).*

Participants also reported that patriarchal ideologies have resulted in society questioning women's credentials and abilities to lead. For example:

> *"It's almost like you always have to prove your credentials for people to start to accept you and to value what you say, so it is sometimes when you start speaking, that's when you start to hear that some people start to now think that you are the leader, that you should be" (Ms B).*

In addition, patriarchal ideas also influence how a woman should be remunerated. Some participants held that:

> *"When a woman gets into these executive positions, where people are getting all of this money, we almost demonise them in a way, because they are in this job that the big boys are in and getting big money" (Ms L).*

The above quotations from participants are examples of how patriarchy and some cultural views held that women should not earn more than men, and society tends to be shocked when a woman gets a well-paid job such as that of an executive.

4.3.2 Lack of Resources

Lack of resources affects women and negatively affects their ability to manage well. Some of the respondents highlighted that as women's organisations they struggle to run their organisation in terms of paying salaries and paying expenses. Ms J noted that:

> *"There was no salary increase for staff and also no benefits like medical aid etc. While you are acting director you worry about things like that and you feel it is unfair for people and people can apply for jobs in other places and you lose good staff" (Ms J).*

Also,

> *"We lost a lot of staff because there were divisions etc. I co-acted with someone, but I had to make decisions and the pressure was a lot because I was still a manager for my offices and dealing with DSD plus my health. Maybe I am naive but those are some of the reasons I don't want that position honestly because of the challenges attached to it and I thought it was something temporary. I have written to the board twice that I want to step down, but you couldn't do anything, they couldn't do anything because there was nobody else to lead until they get a director" (Ms J).*

The lack of resources often leads to the glass cliff phenomenon when women are offered senior leadership only when an organisation is in crisis.

4.3.3 Lack of Mentorship

Lack of mentorship is another factor that has impeded the successful leadership of women. Some of the participants noted they have not had mentors who could guide them and support them in their leadership journey. For some of the women, the women leaders who were out there were not willing to mentor the next generation. For example:

> *"women that we look up to we have not seen them passing on the baton stick to other women particularly women of our generation. They stayed there, but they have not been really supportive of us" (Ms A).*

Other women noted that they were not aware of these mentors and therefore struggled alone to climb the ladder or to stay in leadership positions. For instance:

> *"As a woman, you also get into these places where there haven't been many other black women that you have access to. Even the whole issue of mentorship I learned about it at a very late stage" (Ms L).*

Another participant added:

> *"Without mentoring is like having to not know how to deal with mistakes which happen during leadership. Taking every mistake, you've made so personally like it's personal failure" (Ms S).*

Women continue to struggle in leadership positions due to a lack of support from relevant mentors.

4.3.4 Gender Wage Inequality

Most participants think that women receive less pay than their male counterparts in similar leadership positions. One of the participants noted that:

> *"A lot of us also lead NGOs where men go into business and a lot of us do a lot of good work, but with very little remuneration. The idea that a woman leader can ask for a lot of money seems to be very foreign. I think that is why many men don't stay in NGOs the kind of NGO work is left on women and we are part of a continuum as far as I'm concerned, of the gendered pay gap" (Ms T).*

In addition, another participant added:

> *"The issue of pay has always been an issue. I must say …. was one employer that was very good with money, but every other employer I have gone to the salary negotiation had to be an issue where what was offered was less than what I was earning because I am a young woman" (Ms SM).*

Some participants noted that they also get paid less not only because they are women, but because they are black women. For instance:

> *"There was once a situation where a black woman asked for a certain remuneration in a certain position and she was asked by a white person what she will do with the money. Another scenario was when black managers were asked if they have ever seen a million cash in their lifetime" (Ms H).*

The above quotes highlight that society thinks badly of a woman who asks for a salary increase or a supposedly huge amount of pay. This has resulted in women leaders receiving less pay for the work they do especially in the NPO sector, this situation as shown above and supported by literature, is worse for black women.

4.3.5 Socio-Cultural Factors

This theme discusses the intersectionality of culture, gender, and race and how these negatively influence women in leadership positions.

4.4.5.1 Culture and Gender

Culture and gender play a role in women taking leadership positions. This is because culturally, African women were not raised to take up leadership roles and therefore always believed that leadership is not for them. For example, one of the participants noted that:

> *"Look at black women, for instance, we really find it difficult to rise to leadership, executive leadership positions, and part of it really is because of our socialisation, the opportunities we didn't have growing up" (Ms A).*

Another participant added:

> *"For white people, for instance, you have leadership qualities, you have leadership traits sort of inculcated right into your culture. You almost grow up understanding that you are a leader, the privilege available to you, makes it easy for you to become a leader. Whereas for us as black people, first you must learn the English, learn computers, you have to study with a candle. The journey to the top for black women is not linear, it takes a lot of detours, fight against culture, whereas for white people you know, it's almost like you're born and leadership is inculcated everything around you, speaks, trains you, prepares you for leadership" (Ms I).*

And Ms T added that:

> *"you know as a black woman, you are raised to get married, look after your family, support your husband and community. So, you are not expected to go outside and work, not to talk of being a leader to lead a man, no. But it is acceptable if you work as a nurse or some other care work in the community" (Ms T).*

4.4.5.2 Race and Gender

Race also plays a big role in women taking leadership roles. For example, one of the participants noted that:

> *"Gender, and race to a greater extent are factors that hinder women's growth into executive leadership positions. If you are a black woman you have to prove yourself beyond reasonable doubt that you are capable" (Ms H).*

Another participant added that:

> *"I think race really plays a big role. if you are a black person, your journey to leadership becomes very long and challenging. You constantly have to prove yourself and fight for your rights. If you are not a strong person, you will give up. Some white people do not believe that black people are capable to lead. To them, a black woman is even worse" (Ms B).*

In addition, some participants explained that gender intersects with race when organisations start considering whether to employ a woman, particularly a white or a black woman. For example, Ms N highlighted that

> *"Stereotyping in the workplace is detrimental. These often play a role when people consider whether to employ a woman or a black woman"* (Ms N).

All the male participants interviewed explained that there are strong intersections between gender and race given the history of racial discrimination in South Africa, which continually affects especially black women.

> *"Given the history of the country and – there is a sense of doubt when women are appointed in executive leadership. This is doubled with black women, yet white women and their proximity to power and privilege are often not as doubted. Black women must work twice as hard. As such you can't talk about black women's leadership and not relate it to the history of the country in terms of racism and gender the intersections are glaring" (Mr A).*

Hence, race combined with gender creates a barrier for women and particularly black women to ascend or remain in leadership positions. This is because as a black woman,

they are required to prove that they are capable beyond a reasonable doubt, this, however, is not expected from their white counterparts.

4.3.6 Family-work-life Balance

All participants agreed that it is challenging to balance work and family responsibilities. This is because they are expected to be full-time mothers, wives, and caregivers and also perform their roles as executive leaders in their organisations. Sometimes, these executives' positions demand that the women move from one location to another, which is mostly at the expense of their families. For example, one of the participants noted that:

> *"Gender also plays a big role because if I have children, I am a mother and I'm expected to be jetting from one area to another. It's at the expense of my family. So many women shy away from leadership, executive leadership positions because again, when they try and balance their home life and the personal lives and the executive, the demands of the executive it's almost like you have to choose, whereas men do not have this dilemma at all" (Ms A).*

Another participant explained that the difficulty in balancing work and family responsibilities results in some women accepting management roles, but not executive ones. And if they do accept it, they might decide to be single or divorced to fully function in that role. She noted that:

> *"you see many women perhaps being comfortable going to senior management roles, but not taking the executive leadership roles because again, it's that you have to make a decision, or you have to be either a single woman or a divorced woman" (Ms F).*

This theme discussed the challenges women face in executive positions. It discussed how patriarchy as an ideology has continued to oppress women in Africa by keeping them in a disadvantaged position even in the workplace. The lack of resources in the NPO sector in general continues to impede the ability of women leaders to perform at their best. This lack of funds and other gender stereotypes often result in less pay for women in executive positions in the sector. The theme discussed socio-cultural factors such as race, gender, and cultural issues that impact women's leadership. Finally, balancing work and family life for most women leaders remains a challenge and they are sometimes required to

choose between family and work. The section below discusses some suggestions from the participants on how women in leadership positions can be supported.

4.4 Support Required to Sustain Women in Leadership Positions

This theme answers the second sub-research question which is, *What kind of support is required to sustain women in leadership positions?* It starts by discussing good organisational culture, flexible working hours, mentorship, networking, and leadership training.

4.4.1 Good Organisational Culture

Some of the participants posit that a positive organisational culture could be a strong motivation for women to aspire to as well as to remain in leadership positions. One of the participants noted that a good organisational culture is important, and being a leader in an executive position has enabled her to implement policies that will make the work environment comfortable for women. She noted that

> *"A good organisational culture is important, and the role allowed me to build an organisational culture that works for me. Our policies leaned heavily on feminist leadership ideas. We were recruiting a lot of young people who were going to be instructors in schools. I had managed to develop that kind of environment. I also felt that in designing our policies, I had the opportunity to put policies I yearned to see in the policies of organisations where I worked. I mean, if we say that we are a feminist organisation, shouldn't we be led by feminist principles? If we say we are a human rights organisation, shouldn't we be living and practising what we preach?" (Ms P).*

Workplace culture plays a critical role in shaping behaviour in an organisation.

4.4.2 Flexible Working Hours

All participants agreed that if organisations would implement flexible working hours, it could assist women to navigate between family and work responsibilities easily and adequately. These flexible working hours could mean that young mothers are offered childcare facilities at work or nearby. For example, one of the participants explained that:

"We needed flexible hours that allowed, young mothers, to go and collect their children in school and come back home. Flexibility, when you work, was important. Covid itself brought a lot of flexibility around how people navigate the workspace, and we were able to also capitalise on that and we tried to meet the needs of our staff" (Ms B).

Flexible time should be available to women leaders to fulfil their obligations to their families.

4.4.3 Mentorship

Mentorship is an important ingredient that supports women to thrive in leadership. Some of the women noted that mentorship eases the burden of leadership. This is because younger women will have someone to look up to or learn from which will help them avoid making certain mistakes or taking risky decisions. For instance,

"Currently as women who find themselves now in leadership positions, we need to pull other women, particularly the younger generation, the generation after us, to pull them up and start building the next cohort of women leaders so that we never ever have to have a gap of women in leadership. Start mentoring or supporting younger women for leadership so that they don't see it as a burden but see it as an opportunity to create change and really bring what they have to the big table to the leadership table. Learning to leave the centre and make room for the upcoming generation" (Ms A).

In addition, two of the men explained that mentorship of women by other women is necessary and especially for black women. For example:

"Some black women in the position of leadership get too busy trying to prove themselves and have little time to mentor younger ones. But it is important that they make time and offer mentorship to the upcoming women especially in the black community" (Mr T).

4.4.4 Networking

Some participants pointed out the importance of networking and that these networks should be tailored to their needs. One of the participants explained that:

> *"As women leaders, the space is closed for us, we need to find innovative ways of socialising, networking that really is tailored for our needs, our gender that conforms right to our gendered needs and our gendered priorities in a way that you know will not be misconstrued" (Ms H).*

These networks are crucial strategies to develop women's careers into senior leadership positions within organisations.

4.4.5. Leadership Training

Some participants suggested the implementation of leadership training, especially for African people. One of the participants noted that:

> *"black people need a lot of training. You see the schools white people go to and opportunities they get prepare them for leadership. As black people we learn leadership as a leader" (Ms I).*

Another suggested this training should start as early as primary school. Leadership skills should be included in the curriculum so that as the child grows, they begin to identify and develop these leadership qualities as Ms A noted.

> *"then we need to start with our education system to say how do you train a primary school child to lead and all the way to university? Because literally, as a black woman or as a black person compared, you're playing catch up always whereas someone already is way ahead in terms of leadership traits, qualities, preparation, each, etc"* (Ms B).

Training is important to how a person performs their duties. However, two participants believed that women need opportunities and not further training. They explained that:

> *"women don't need further training; they need opportunities. There are way too many executive development programmes for women. While this is good, it plays to the overtraining of women. Men are often given opportunities that they are not qualified for, yet they are not required to go on training beforehand" (Ms N).*

Women as well as men still need training to perform better in their executive roles.

This theme discussed possible factors that could help women remain in executive leadership positions. Some of these included a good organisational culture that ensures a culture of respect and equality for all. It also discussed flexible working hours as another factor that could encourage women to take up leadership roles. Mentorship, networking, and training are also some of the factors that are crucial if women must ascend and also stay in leadership positions. The section below discusses some developmental lessons that can be learned by the sector to improve gender transformation.

4.5 Developmental Lessons Learned

This theme answers the last research sub-question which is, *what are some of the developmental lessons that can be learned by the sector to improve gender transformation?* Participants highlighted a number of factors that if addressed could bring transformation to the sector and improve gender equality. Such as:

> *"gender policies in the workplace are important as society and women are beginning to be treated with the respect they deserve" (Ms B).*

Another speaking on flexible working hours noted:

> *"Times have changed, and we are no more struck with this working in the office idea. People work from home or anywhere as long as the work gets done" (Ms A).*

Mentorship cannot be overemphasised,

> *"when black people unite and support each other, they succeed better" (Ms J).*

These are some of the development lessons learned which could bring more gender transformation to the NPO sector.

5. ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

5.0 Introduction

In accordance with the literature reviewed, this chapter gives an analysis and discussion of the study's findings from chapter four. The key sub-questions guiding this analysis were (i) What are the main challenges facing women in executive leadership in the non-

profit sector? (ii) What kind of support is required to sustain women in leadership positions? (iii) What are some of the developmental lessons that can be learned by the sector to improve gender transformation? The results of this investigation are consistent with earlier research and theories in the area of women's leadership and contribute to a greater understanding of the challenges women experience in executive leadership.

5.2 Research sub-question 1: What are the main challenges facing women in executive leadership in the non-profit sector?

Reinforcement of patriarchal norms in the workplace: Based on findings that corroborate literature, patriarchy is an ideology that has long been a challenge for career women, especially in Africa. Participants, including the men, felt that women's leadership is always questioned and undermined and a woman's ability to make decisions is always doubted. Longman et al., (2017) echo participants' views that patriarchal ideologies continue to shape workplace culture, as such workplaces tend to be gendered. And because these patriarchal views are deeply embedded in workplace culture, they influence workplace values both formally and informally (Schuneman, 2020). In this study, patriarchy questioned women's ability to lead, their credentials, and also questioned what they can offer in the leadership position, unlike for their male counterparts. This finding echoes the double bind theory that due to cultural gender norms women may face a double bind which could force them to choose between two possibilities that are incompatible since they are either expected to conform to gender-biased standards or limit their behaviour (Lee & Huang, 2018).

Literature also confirms participants' views that patriarchal ideologies continually reinforce gender inequality in the workplace by influencing how a woman should be remunerated. Mavin and Yusupova (2021) allude that women have always been thought of as being less competitive and competent than men. These societal beliefs have persisted in oppressing women's attitudes and discouraging them from assuming leadership and decision-making roles. Literature also notes that social attitudes and gender stereotypes are shaped by culture, and this in turn affects women's inclinations to aspire to leadership positions (Abate & Woldie, 2022).

Gender and racial disparities in funding: Gouws (2018) confirms the concern raised by this study by briefly expanding on the challenges the sector faces and posits that women's rights organisations or formations continue to experience financial challenges that have implications for leadership. Although the challenge of funding to sustain operations is not new to the NPO sector, various research studies allude to racial disparities in how funding is allocated to organisations, having cascading impacts that perpetuate a cumulative advantage towards white males (Chen & Kahanamoku, 2022; Dunning, 2022). Similarly, scholars point out that there is a prevailing view in South Africa that men's organisations are financed better than women's organisations (Women, Voice, and Leadership, 2019).

Literature confirming the resource challenge note that despite the limited progress made in the few years on women's representation in decision-making, those who make it to these positions tend to vacate them because of obstacles that exist while holding these positions. These obstacles include the difficulty to raise funding as black women because of gender and racial hierarchies that permeate institutions of giving (Poltera, 2019; Dunning 2022; Dorsey & Kim 2020). Black women consistently receive far less funding than either black men or white women (Dorsey& Kim,2020). According to the view of some participants, demanding so much from a woman leader when an organisation was already struggling is unfair and also risky for career progression. Babic (2021) argues that not only is this kind of behaviour discriminatory in nature because it limits progression but also risky because the women leaders are often appointed when the organisation is on the decline. This finding corroborates the glass cliff phenomenon that women are offered senior leadership positions when an organisation is in crisis, for example, poorly performing; hence, their tenure tends to be short because they lack the support to accomplish set strategic goals (Kulich, 2021).

Lack of mentorship. Research findings revealed that some participants have not had mentors before while a few were not even aware of the services of mentors which meant that they had no support system. Literature alluded that research studies attribute the glass ceiling to various interpersonal factors such as the lack of organisational mentors, and the existence of an informal network of senior men, including the lack of visibility and access to such networks (Glass, 2016; Kulich, 2021).

Gender pay inequality. According to research findings, most employers offered less than what some participants deserved during salary negotiation. And some participants believe that getting reasonable pay as a woman is difficult. The situation is worse for a black woman as some employers go as far as questioning what they need more money for and their ability to manage money. Literature also confirms that both males and females may start working in an organisation simultaneously with the same qualification and experience, but a female will earn less, progress at a slower rate, and most likely not climb the leadership ranks like their male counterparts (Elias, 2018). The reinforcing of the gender pay gap at the workplace by some employers confirms Alqathani's (2019) claims that gendered stereotypical norms or roles of women and men in society are transferred to the workplace; with the consequence that men will occupy higher positions of power, income, and influence than women will.

Socio-cultural factors and gender norms. Based on findings, the intersectionality between culture, gender, and race continues to influence the lives of black women in leadership today. The socialisation of black children negatively affects their ability to think like a leader or act as one. This is because black people are raised differently from white people in terms of exposure to leadership training and opportunities. This is even worse for a black woman than for a black man. Latchanah and Singh (2016) also echo that women are continually stereotyped due to cultural upbringing, which places restrictions on their success in the workplace. Unfortunately, many African women who are a part of this system find it challenging to break free from this culture and custom since traditional beliefs and cultural attitudes surrounding the role and position of women in society are still dominant in the African environment (Djan & Gordon, 2020). Hence, men's conventional attitudes and behaviours towards women are reinforced by the backlash, which could eventually undermine women's advancement and rights (Morrison, 1992).

Culturally, black women are raised to be good housewives and mothers and are not given a chance to contribute to the world of work. Poltera (2019) confirms that the early socialisation of girls, founded in African cultural and social norms, is thought to help young women become good wives and mothers. This socialisation has similarly contributed to the internalisation of the expectation of care and protection of vulnerable persons hence, there is a huge representation of women in the care sectors (Babalola, 2021).

In addition, race, and gender continue to create barriers that limit the career advancement of African women. Evidence from participants and literature suggests that race plays a significant role in executive leadership development; black women face even greater barriers attributed to social beliefs and biases including their dual minority status based on genderism and racism, to the extent that these intersect with injustice (Zenya, 2017; Gobin, 2020). Elias (2018) asserts that factors such as race and gender work against women's ability to succeed in leadership positions. In South Africa, the pace of transformation at executive levels is still very slow with senior positions largely occupied by white people and Indians; as such race and gender continue to intersect with African and coloured women still bearing the brunt of discrimination (Elias 2018; Employment Equity Commission Annual Report, 2021).

Family-work-life balance. Research evidence agrees with the literature on the challenge that comes with balancing family responsibilities and executive roles. Scholars confirm that family obligations prevent women from moving to new areas, as evidenced by empirical studies that found married women were less likely than their husbands to relocate in quest of better career possibilities (Latchanah & Singh, 2016). The literature agrees with some participants that professional women often choose to take a less challenging position or look for alternative career opportunities after having children because of pressures to reconcile work and family. Several of these women revert to being stay-at-home mothers and even completely give up their corporate jobs (Djan & Gordon, 2020). Unfortunately, when women decline to take up this heavy responsibility, they are often seen as Queen Bees while when men decline, nothing changes about their perceptions as strong leaders (Derks et al., 2016).

5.3 Research sub-question 2: What kind of support is required to sustain women in leadership positions?

Good organisational culture. Based on findings, a positive organisational culture is a strong motivation for women to aspire to as well as to remain in leadership positions. Scholars caution against seeing women in leadership as problematic but rather propose focusing the problem on organisational culture (Derks et al., 2016).When an organisation starts building a healthy work culture focused on gender equality and justice as some participants are doing, women could be encouraged to take up executive leadership roles.

Flexible working hours. Research evidence revealed that flexible working hours could assist a lot of women to navigate between family and work responsibilities. This corroborates the literature that the availability of childcare facilities, innovative technologies, and flexible work hours help women in top executive positions balance their obligations to their families and their employers (Latchanah & Singh, 2016).

Mentoring. This study's findings highlighted the importance of mentorship in guiding women to be effective leaders. Literature also emphasises the importance of mentoring as mentors can provide advice, open doors, make introductions, and offer professional mobility methods (Roe, 2012). Mcilongo and Strydom (2021) echo research findings that senior co-workers should prioritise mentoring and coaching for young women to upskill them. Contrary to the finding on the importance of mentorship, the backlash theory argues that women's interactions with other women can lead to a separation between those who have succeeded in male-dominated situations and those who have not. While less successful women may be less engaged in career progress, successful women may remove themselves from the women's movement or avoid their careers (Ciancetta, & Roch, 2021), thereby negatively affecting the mentorship process.

Networking. This research found that networking provided an important platform where women leaders could gain knowledge and support. Latchanah and Singh (2016) also agree that effective organisational networking helps employees advance their careers by facilitating faster access to information, professional and social guidance, more employment prospects, promotions, and career satisfaction.

Leadership development programmes. Research points to the need for women to receive leadership training, emphasising its importance and that organisations must redesign their policies and development strategies to guarantee that all women have equal access to managerial, entrepreneurial, technical, and leadership training because training and other forms of capacity building are strategically important for increasing the presence of women as senior leaders of organisations (UNDP 2014). However, two participants believed that women need opportunities and not further training. Scholars argue that contrarily, extra academic training is always going to men employees not to women, as the two participants highlighted, which hampers women's future potential to compete with men who have further academic training. So, organisations may need to

establish a framework that gives women an equal opportunity to pursue higher education (Abate & Woldie, 2022).

5.4 Research sub-question 3: What are some of the developmental lessons that can be learned by the sector to improve gender transformation?

Patriarchy has posed a serious challenge to women's professional advancement. Africa, a deeply ingrained patriarchal society in which men govern the household and make decisions is at the root of the challenges that women face (Africa Barometer, 2021). Therefore, NPOs that have developed a good organisational culture that supports women and promotes gender equality can attract and retain women leaders. This can be done by NPOs designing and implementing gender transformation policies in the workplace.

Providing mentorship and coaching to women, especially black women, is key. As discussed in the literature and by participants (both males and females), most black women do not have role models to look up to or mentor in their leadership roles. Therefore, if organisations begin to invest in mentorship where experienced black women leaders mentor young and upcoming women, it could result in more women aspiring for leadership roles (Djan & Gordon, 2020).

Externally, and as shown in literature, the women's movement has previously played a significant role in advancing women in leadership, however, the NPO sector has been a largely neglected area of focus over the years. Currently, the subject of women's leadership in the country is in the spotlight, political movements such as the ANC women's league have been vocal on supporting women in leadership and calling out discriminatory practices. It is imperative that a focus is also given on the NPO sector to encourage the development of policies in the country that meaningfully support women's leadership, such as gender transformation. Men similarly have a role as allies in advancing women's leadership by calling out gender inequality and challenging stereotypes of male domination and female subordination in the workplace.

6. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

6.0 Introduction

The purpose of this study was to assess the challenges facing women in executive leadership in the non-profit sector. Such a journey was intended to help the researcher

comprehend why women and especially black women are underrepresented in executive positions in the NPO sector despite them comprising the majority of employees. The main question guiding this study is: What are the challenges facing women in executive leadership in the non-profit sector?. The following sub-questions were posed to further unpack the study question:

i. What are the main challenges facing women in executive leadership in the non-profit sector?
ii. What kind of support is required to sustain women in leadership positions?
iii. What are some of the developmental lessons that can be learned by the sector to improve gender transformation?

This section provides a summary and synthesises the study results from the earlier sections. It then provides the limitation and recommendations for the study.

6.1 Summary

The first chapter of this research presented the problem that motivated the study, the research questions, the justification for the investigation, and its relevance. Chapter two defined key terms discussed in literature on women's leadership, barriers faced by women in leadership such as the glass cliff phenomenon, socio-cultural factors, balancing work and life as well as the Queen Bee theory. Organisational culture was also discussed as one of the main hindrances to women ascending and staying in leadership positions. Finally, in chapter two, literature on how women can be supported to stay in leadership was discussed such as providing training, networking, and mentoring to women in leadership. This study used the qualitative approach to data collection discussed in chapter three. Data was collected mainly through in-depth interviews where 16 female participants and four male participants were interviewed to provide their experiences in executive leadership. The data collected was transcribed and analysed using the Atlas ti software. The researcher adhered to all ethical requirements in handling research participants such as maintaining confidentiality, getting signed informed consents, and doing no harm.

The findings of this study addressed the sub-research questions which were: *What are the main challenges facing women in executive leadership in the non-profit sector?* The study reported that the main challenges facing women in executive leadership were

patriarchal ideologies which continue to undermine and oppress women in the workplace. The lack of resources and limited pay also affect women in these positions. Lack of mentorship was another challenge highlighted by participants and the difficulties of balancing life and work. Finally, socio-cultural factors such as race, gender, and culture continued to limit the ability of women to ascend and stay in leadership. The second sub-research question: W*hat kind of support is required to sustain women in leadership positions?* reported that a good organisational culture can go a long way to make the workplace conducive for women leaders. Participants also suggested that flexible working hours are crucial as well as proper mentoring for younger women aspiring to leadership roles. Networking and leadership training are also important factors participants pointed out. Finally, findings on the last sub-research question were presented: *What are some of the developmental lessons that can be learned by the sector to improve gender transformation?* The NPO sector can continue to attract and sustain women's leadership by developing a good organisational policy where gender equality and equity are at the centre. Experienced black women in leadership providing mentorship to other young women could motivate more women to take up leadership roles. And finally, implementing flexible working hours could promote gender transformation as more professional women could take up more senior roles.

6.2 Limitation

The research participants are senior executives who are constantly busy, hence reaching the target audience and gaining access to them was quite difficult. This resulted in the data collection process taking longer than usual as participants kept postponing interview appointments. Because of issues with Covid-19, obtaining approval to perform this research from the university's ethical committee took a while. By the time the approval was granted, I had limited time to collect data and submit the report. The sample size used is small, therefore the results of the study cannot be generalised.

6.3 Recommendation

To enable generalisation and more understanding of the challenges women leaders face in the NPO sector, a larger sampling population with participants from various NGOs around the nation might be used.

The main methodologies used to conduct this study were qualitative. Researchers in the future who want to repeat this study should explore using both qualitative and quantitative methodologies to collect and analyse data. This will deliver richer and more varied findings on gender transformation and women's leadership.

Participants in this study were mainly females and a few black males. Future studies should consider capturing the experiences of both female and male leaders to holistically understand the challenges women go through and the level of gender transformation attained or needed.

6.5 Concluding remarks

This study investigated the challenges women face in executive leadership positions in the NPO sector. It attempted to explore the experiences of some women leaders by describing the challenges they face and also documenting the support needed to keep women in leadership positions. The study acknowledged that women in executive leadership positions are still affected by patriarchal ideologies, gender, race, and culture intersectionality, lack of mentorship, and a challenge to balance work and family life. However, a good organisational culture, networking, mentorship, and leadership training are some suggested factors that could promote gender transformation in the workplace.

REFERENCES

Abate, GB. & Woldie, AT. (2022) Breaking Barriers to Women's Advancement in the Public Sector in Sub-Saharan Africa. University of Gondar: Ethiopia.

Al-Mutawa, R. (2020). "I Want to be a Leader, But Men Are Better Than Women in Leadership Positions", *Hawwa*, *18*(1), 31-50. doi: https://doi.org/10.1163/15692086-12341369

Alsulami, Alanoud, Fatma Mabrouk, and Jihen Bousrih(2023) . "Flexible Working Arrangements and Social Sustainability: Study on Women Academics Post-COVID-19" *Sustainability* 15, no. 1: 544. https://doi.org/10.3390/su15010544

Aspers P, Corte U. What is Qualitative in Qualitative Research. Qual Sociol. (2019) retrieved from doi: 10.1007/s11133-019-9413-7. Epub PMID: 31105362; PMCID: PMC6494783.

Africa Barometer (2021). Women's political participation: International Institute for democracy and electoral assistance, Stockholm: DOI: https://doi.org/10.31752/ idea.2021.21.

American Association of University Women (2018) Broken Ladders: Barriers to Women's representation in the Not-for-Profit Sector retrieved from https://www.aauw.org/app/uploads/2020/03/women-in-leadership.pdf. Accessed 13 September 2021.

Babalola, O. Du Plessis, Y. & Babalola, S. (2021) Insight into the Organisational Culture and Challenges Faced by Women STEM Leaders in Africa. Social Sciences retrieved from doi.org/10.3390/socsci10030105. Accessed 15 October 2021.

Babic, A. & Hansez, I. (2021). The Glass Ceiling for Women Managers: Antecedents and Consequences for Work-Family Interface and Well-Being at Work. Frontiers in Psychology, (12):1-17

Biana, HT. (2020). Extending bell hooks' Feminist Theory. *Journal of International Women's Studies*, 21(1), 13-29.

Birt, L. Scott, S. Cavars, D. Campbel,C. & Walter, F. (2016). Member Checking, A Tool to Enhance Trustiworthiness or merely a nod for Validation. Qualitative Health Research (26).

Bosch, A., van der Linde, K., & Barit, S. (2020). *Women on South African boards: facts, fiction, and forward-thinking*. University of Stellenbosch Business School, South Africa.

Buhle Charlotte Khwela & Evelyn Derera(2020) Women In Leadership And The Glass Ceiling Effect: A Comparative Study Of The Private And Public Sectors In Kwazulu-Natal, South Africa

Braun, V. & Clarke, V. (2023). Toward good practice in thematic analysis: Avoiding common problems and be(com)ing a *knowing* researcher, International Journal of Transgender Health, 24:1, 1-6, DOI: 10.1080/26895269.2022.2129597

Businesswomen's Association South Africa. (2015). *Women in Leadership Census 2015.* Johannesburg: BWASA.

Campbell S, Greenwood M, Prior S, Shearer T, Walkem K, Young S, Bywaters D, Walker K.(2020) Purposive sampling: complex or simple? Research case examples. J Res Nurs. Retrieved from doi: 10.1177/1744987120927206. Epub 2020 Jun 18. PMID: 34394687; PMCID: PMC7932468.

Candela, A. (2019). Exploring the function of member checking. *The Qualitative Report*. DOI 10.46743/2160-3715/2019.3726.

Christine Yifeng Chen, Sara S Kahanamoku, Aradhna Tripati, Rosanna A Alegado, Vernon R Morris, Karen Andrade, Justin Hosbey (2022) Meta-Research: Systemic racial disparities in funding rates at the National Science Foundation eLife 11: e83071

Ciancetta, L.M.; Roch, S.G. (2021). Backlash in performance feedback: Deepening the understanding of the role of gender in performance appraisal. Hum. Resour. Manag. 60, 641–657.

Cook, A. & Glass, C. (2014). Women and top leadership positions: Towards an institutional analysis. Gend. Work. Organ. 21, 91–103

https://doi.org/10.7554/eLife.83071

Dorsey, C., Kim, P., Daniels, C., Sakaue, L., & Savage, B. (2020). Overcoming the Racial Bias in Phil anthropic Funding. *Stanford Social Innovation Review*. https://doi.org/10.48558/7WB9-K440

Djan, Y.B. & Gordon, A. (2020) Challenges of Women in Educational Leadership Position in Tano North Municipality of Ahafo Region, Ghana. *Journal of Education and Practice*, 11(31): 25-35.

Dunning C. (2022). No strings attached: Philanthropy, race, and donor control from black power to Black Lives Matter. *Nonprofit and Voluntary Sector Quarterly*. Advance online publication. https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/abs/10.1177/08997640211057390

Duong, H. K., Kang, H., & Salter, S. B. (2017). National culture and corporate governance. *Journal of International Accounting Research*, 15(3), 67-96. doi:10.2308/jiar-51346.

Eagly, A.H.; Carli, L.L. (2007). *Through the Labyrinth: The Truth about How Women Become Leaders*; Harvard Business School Press: Boston, MA, USA.

Eagly, A.H.; Johannesen-Schmidt, M.C.; Van Engen, M.L. (2003). Transformational, transactional, and laissez-faire leadership styles: A meta-analysis comparing women and men. *Psychol. Bull*. 129, 569.

Elias, E. (2018). Lessons learned from women in leadership positions. *Work*, *59*(2), 175-181.

Ellemers, N.; Rink, F.; Derks, B.; Ryan, M.K. (2012). Women in high places: When and why promoting women into top positions can harm them individually or as a group (and how to prevent this). *Res. Organ. Behav*.

Gabi Mkhize & Nwabisa Mgcotyelwa-Ntoni (2019) The impact of women's movements' activism experiences on gender transformation policies in democratic South Africa, Agenda, 33:2, 9-21, DOI: 10.1080/10130950.2019.1618637

Galsanjigmed, E. & Sekiguchi, T. (2023). Challenges Women Experience in Leadership Careers: An Integrative Review. *Leadership in the Workplace*, *3*(2), 366-389.

Ganzert, R. (2021). Why Non-profits Need Female Leaders And How To Retain Them. Available at https://www.forbes.com/sites/forbesnonprofitcouncil/2021/04/27/why-nonprofits-need-female-leaders-and-how-to-retain-them/?sh=4d6bcce520d9. Accessed 5th March 2023

Gragnano, A. Simbula. S, & Miglioretti, M. (2020) Work-Life Balance: Weighing the Importance of Work-Family and Work-Health Balance. Int J Environ Res Public Health. retrieved from doi: 10.3390/ijerph17030907. PMID: 32024155; PMCID: PMC7037206.

Gobin, D. (2020). The Executive Director Experiences of African American Women in Mainstream Not Profit Performing Arts Organisations retrieved from https://scholarworks.waldenu.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=9885&context=dissertations. Accessed 15 May 2022.

Gouws. A & Coetzee A. (2019). Women's Movements and Feminist Activism, Agenda, 33:2, 1-8, DOI: 10.1080/10130950.2019.1619263.

Heilman, M.E.; Wallen, A.S.; Fuchs, D.; Tamkins, M.M. (2004). Penalties for success: Reactions to women who succeed at male gender-typed tasks. *Journal of Applied Psycholo*gy, 89, 416.

Hopkins, MM., O'Neil, DA., Bilimoria, D. & Broadfoot, A. (2021) Buried Treasure: Contradictions in the Perception and Reality of Women's Leadership. Front Psychol. doi: 10.3389/fpsyg.2021.684705. PMID: 34122282; PMCID: PMC8187584.

Joseph, O. O., & Kibera, F. (2019). Organizational Culture and Performance: Evidence from Microfinance Institutions in Kenya. SAGE Open. https://doi.org/10.1177/2158244019835934. Accessed 10 September 2021.

Khan. Z., Nawaz, Z. & Khan, I. (2016) Leadership Theories and Style: A Literature Review. Journal of Resources and Development, 16 retrieved from https://core.ac.uk/download/pdf/234696192.pdf.

Khan, H., Rehmat, M., Butt, T.H. *(2020)* Impact of transformational leadership on work performance, burnout and social loafing: a mediation model. Retrieved from https://doi.org/10.1186/s43093-020-00043-8

Kulich, C., Gartzia, L., Komarraju, M. & Aelenei, C. (2021). Contextualizing the think crisis-think female stereotype in explaining the glass cliff: Gendered traits, gender, and type of crisis. PLoS ONE 16(3): e0246576. https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0246576. Accessed 12 September 2021.

Lawrence, L. (2017). Understanding Collaborative Leadership in Theory and Practice retrieved from https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/full/10.1002/ace.20262. Access 12 September 2021.

Lee, M.; Huang, L. (2018). Gender bias, social impact framing, and evaluation of entrepreneurial ventures. *Organ. Sci*. 29, 1–16.

Lemoine, G.J.; Blum, T.C. (2012). Servant leadership, leader gender, and team gender role: Testing a female advantage in a cascading model of performance. *Pers. Psychol*. 74, 3–28.

Longman K., Daniels. J., Lammbray, D. & Liddel. W. (2018). How Organisational Culture shapes Women's Leadership Experience. Admin Sci. 8(2) 8; https://doi.org/10.3390/admsci8020008.

Lopez Hernandez A, Weinberg JL, El-Harakeh A, Adeyemi L, Potharaj N, Oomman N. & Kalbarczyk A. (2022). Connectedness Is Critical: A Social Network Analysis to Support Emerging Women Leaders in Global Health. Ann Glob Health;88(1):64. doi: 10.5334/aogh.3811. PMID: 35974981; PMCID: PMC9336789.

Lorenzo, R., Voigt, N., Tsusaka, M., Krentz, Matt., & Abouzahr, K. (2018). How diverse leadership teams boost innovation. Boston Consulting Group. Available at: https://www.bcg.com/publications/2018/how-diverse-leadership-teams-boost-innovation. Accessed 30th September 2023.

Mayer, C.-H. & Oosthuizen, R. M. (2020). Concepts of creative leadership of women leaders in 21st century. Creativity Studies, 13(1), 21–40.

Mandisa Mankayi & Priviledge Cheteni | H. L. Wendy Pan (2021) Experiences of female deans in South African universities: A phenomological study, Cogent Education, 8:1, DOI: 10.1080/2331186X.2021.1981199

Manzi, F. & Heilman, M.E. (2021). Breaking the glass ceiling: For one and all? *J. Personal. Soc. Psychol. 120*, 257.

Mavin, S., & Yusupova, M. (2021). Competition and gender: Time's up on essentialist knowledge production. *Management Learning*, *52*(1), 86–108. https://doi.org/10.1177/1350507620950176

Mcilongo, K. Strydom (2021). The significance of mentorship in supporting the career advancement of women in the public sector, Heliyon, Volume 7, Issue 6, e07321,

ISSN 2405-8440,

Mirčetić, Vuk & Vukotic, Svetlana. (2020). The analysis of situational leadership models: origin, divergence and development.

Moreno-Gómez, J., Lafuente, E. & Vaillant, Y. (2018), "Gender diversity in the board, women's leadership and business performance", Gender in Management, 33(2), pp. 104-122. https://doi.org/10.1108/GM-05-2017-0058.

Morrison, A.M. (1992). New solutions to the same old glass ceiling. *Women Manag. Rev*. 7.

Mufti, R., Moazzam, A., & Basit, A. (2021). Queen Bee Syndrome a Part of Sexual Politics or another Gendered Stereotype. *Journal of Business and Social Review in Emerging Economies*, *7*(4), 835-846. https://doi.org/10.26710/jbsee.v7i4.2005

Mulder, S. (2020). Companies must do more to ensure gender diversity of boards. Retrieved from: https://www.sun.ac.za/english/Lists/news/DispForm.aspx?ID=7588. Accessed 19 November 2021.

Neubauer, B. E., Witkop, C. T., & Varpio, L. (2019). How phenomenology can help us learn from the experiences of others. Perspectives on medical education, 8(2), 90–97. https://doi.org/10.1007/s40037-019-0509-2.

Nthanh,N.,& Van Nquang (2022) Transformational, Transactional ,Laissez Faire Leadership Styles and Employee Engagements :Evidence from Vietnams Public Sector . Sage Journals. Retrieved from https://doi.org/10.1177/21582440221094606

Oelbaum, YS. (2016). "Understanding the Glass Cliff Effect: Why Are Female Leaders Being Pushed Toward the Edge?" *CUNY Academic Works. Retrieved from* https://academicworks.cuny.edu/gc_etds/1597. Accessed 12 October 2021.

Piggott, L. V., & Pike, E. C. (2020). 'CEO equals man': Gender and informal organisational practices in English sport governance. International Review for the Sociology of Sport, 55(7), 1009–1025. https://doi.org/10.1177/1012690219865980.

Poltera, J. (2019). Exploring examples of women's leadership in African contexts. *Agenda*, 33(1), 3-8.

PWC. (2020). Practices and Remuneration Trends Report: Executive Directors.12th Edition. Retrieved from https://www.pwc.co.za/en/assets/pdf/executive-directors-report-2020.pdf. Accessed 19 November 2021.

Richards., A (2020) Exploring the benefits and limitations of transactional leadership in healthcare. Retrieved from doi: 10.7748/ns. 2020.e11593.

Ryan, M., Haslam,S.,(2023) The Glass Cliff Cliff :Evidence that Women are Represented in Precarious Leadership Positions . The British Journal of Management ,Vol 16,81-90.Doi 10.1111/j.1467-8551.2005.00433.x

Shankie, E. (2015). Women in Power – or not so much: Gender in the non-profit sector. Retrieved from the Not for Profit Quarterly retrieved from https://nonprofitquarterly.org/women-in-power-or-not-so-much-gender-in-the-nonprofit-sector/. Accessed 04 November 2021.

Schein, V.E. (2001). A global look at psychological barriers to women's progress in management. *J. Soc. Issues* 57, 675–688

Schuneman,A (2020). The effect of culture in female leadership: Towards Equality Everywhere. Retrieved from https://diposit.ub.edu/dspace/bitstream/2445/172129/1/TFM-INTBUS-Schünemann_2020.pdf

Sundler AJ, Lindberg E, Nilsson C, Palmér L(2019) Qualitative thematic analysis based on descriptive phenomenology. Nurs Open.retrieved doi: 10.1002/nop2.275. PMID: 31367394; PMCID: PMC6650661.

Van Dierendonck, D.; Stam, D.; Boersma, P.; de Windt, N.; Alkema, J. (2014). Same difference? Exploring the differential mechanisms linking servant leadership and transformational leadership to follower outcomes. Leadersh. Q. 25, 544–562.

Vyas-Doorgapersad, S. & Shava, E. (2022). African Journal of Gender Society and Development (formerly Journal of Gender Information and Development in Africa)retrieved from https://badge.dimensions.ai/details/id/pub.1149128517/citations

Taylor, W. C., Suminski, R. R., Das, B. M., Paxton, R. J., & Craig, D. W. (2018). Organizational Culture and Implications for Workplace Interventions to Reduce Sitting Time Among Office-Based Workers: A Systematic Review. Frontiers in public health, 6, 263. https://doi.org/10.3389/fpubh.2018.00263. Accessed 10 May 2021.

Tripp, AM. (2016). 'Women's movements and constitution-making after civil unrest and conflict in Africa: The cases of Kenya and Somalia', *in Politics & Gender*, 12: 78–106.

Watson, C. (2016). A critical Feminist Perspective on Leadership Excellence and Gender(book) retrieved from https://www.researchgate.net/publication/306280878_A_Critical_Feminist_Perspective_on_Leadership_Excellence_and_Gender/citation/download. Accessed 18 October 2021

Whitaker, EJ. (2018). "Stories of Black Women Leaders of Non-Profit and For-Profit Organizations: A Narrative Study". *ETD Collection for Fayetteville State University*. AAI13872028

Windsor, L., Reinhardt, G., Windsor, A., Allen, S., Burns, C., Giger, J. & Wood, R. (2020). Gender in the time of COVID 19: Evaluating national leadership and COVID 19 fatalities. Retrieved from https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0244531. Accessed 20 November 2021.

Women, Voice and Leadership Fund. (2019). Mapping of Women's Rights Organisations in South Africa retrieved from and http://www.wvlsa.org.za/wp-content/uploads/2019/11/WVL-SA_MappingResearchFindings-revised_nmmkr_-19112019.pdf. Accessed on 20 November 2021.

Wu, J., Richard, O.C., Triana, M.C. & Zhang, X. (2022). The performance impact of gender diversity in the top management team and board of directors: A multiteam systems approach. *Hum. Resour. Manag. 61*, 157–180.

Xiong A, Xia S, Wang Q, Lockyer J, Cao D, Westlund H, Li H(2022) Queen Bees: How Is Female Managers' Happiness Determined? Front Psychol. 16;13:741576. doi: 10.3389/fpsyg.2022.741576. PMID: 35250703; PMCID: PMC8888411.

Zahidi, S. (2019). *Accelerating gender parity in Globalization 4.0*. World Economic Forum

Zenya, A. (2017). Leaning in and Pushing Through: The challenges and Strategies of African American Women of Not-for-Profit Organisations in the New York Metropolitan Area retrieved from https://fisherpub.sjfc.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1345&context=education_etd. Accessed on 25 October 2021.

Zillman, C. (2019). Wall Street has never had a woman CEO. Why not? Fortune. Available at: https://fortune.com/longform/banking-finance-women-ceos-wall-street/. Accessed 29th September 2023

ANNEXURES

1. Sample of Informed consent form
2. Interview guide
3. Ethics certificate