ENRICH THE NARRATIVE, EMPOWER THE LEADER

The role of narradrama in enriching the narratives of women in corporate leadership

Researcher: Vasintha Pather Student Number: 8804018N

Abstract

This research aimed to explore problem-saturated narratives about self-efficacy in leadership amongst a group of women leaders from corporate organisations in Johannesburg, and the effectiveness of *narradrama* (Dunne, 2009) a drama therapy method, in enriching these narratives. Analysis points to the pervasiveness of gendered notions of men and women in society and how this plays out in the contexts of corporate organisations.

The rationale for this study was that if corporate leadership is an historically socio-culturally male-dominated and gender-stereotyped domain from which women have been excluded, and in which traits stereotypically associated with women were undervalued, then dominant narratives embedded in this domain could be that women are not effective leaders, and that they do not belong. This could negatively affect perceived self-efficacy in leadership among women, and indirectly, efforts to address gender disparity in the context of corporate leadership.

Sociocultural development theory (Vygotsky, 1978), and empowerment theory (Rappaport, 1987, Zimmerman, 2000), both of which assert the primacy of the sociocultural context in learning and development, theoretically informed the research. Thematic analysis was used to identify key themes.

The research showed that problem-saturated narratives about leadership self-efficacy did exist and that narradrama proved effective in fostering enriched narrative possibilities amongst participants.