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# Coaching for career progression of women managers in the petroleum organisation

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**2021**
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# Coaching for career progression of women managers in the petroleum organisation

**By**

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**Johannesburg, March 2021**

# ABSTRACT

The context of the study is the petroleum sector with the focus on exploration of perceptions and experiences of coaching for career progression of women managers in the petroleum sector. Whilst there are efforts aimed at training and developing women and employees in general, the extent to which these efforts translate into advancement of their career to senior level of management or leadership requires examination. The qualitative study drew on ten male and female participants across different levels of management.Their views on coaching and its viability as an intervention to enhance development and translation of the benefits to progression of the women managers were explored.

*Key findings*

As a result of the historic barriers, specific gender bias and stereotyping continues to prevail and this dilutes training and the efforts of women acting in higher roles in seeking to advance the cause of women's career progression. While many organisations have some of the Human Resource Development strategies aimed at equipping individuals, more is required to ensure returns on such interventions. Real transformation begins at an individual level of learning how to respond and approach an otherwise women-averse organisational environment in terms of systemic barriers and hindrances. Coaching is critical in helping women to navigate the industry, starting at an individual level and proceeding to integrating their academics, their cognition, behavioural and various aspects which contribute towards meaningful and sustainable change.

For internal coaches as well as coaching buyers internally, there needs to be mindfulness on the business case for coaching women. Global petroleum organisations have to transcend legislation and policies which

are supportive of the advancement of women but also ensure that there is a follow-through with the equitable strategic intent and implementation.

**KEY WORDS**

Petroleum Industry, Women Progression, Human Resource Development, Barriers to women managers, Experiential Learning Theory

# DECLARATION

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

Name: Khanyisile Signature: Sibeko

Signed at ……..

On the …….. day of ……. 20…..

# DEDICATION

I would like to dedicate this research report to my immediate and extended family who allowed me to miss important family gatherings and forgave me for being absent in the process of ensuring I deliver on this report.

I dedicate this to the women in the energy sector who are breaking the barriers and allowing themselves to explore the unknown, and are thereby making room for the next generation.

I dedicate this to the bold, fearless and destiny-chasing young leaders I mentor and coach. May you never shy away from shining brighter and pursuing your purpose.

# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I wish to acknowledge my supervisor, Dr Johnny Matshabapala, for his support throughout the entire process of completing the report.

Thanks to our programme director, Dr Jabulile Galawe, and lecturers who challenged us to be more and do better.The robustness of discussions, the laughter and challenging questions asked in class have sharpened me as an individual and also as a coach.

I wish to thank Glory Mkhonza, my study groups who've journeyed with me right through to the coaching circles, and my colleagues at work who provided assistance and support without which I could not have completed my studies. Without my organisation's leadership's progressive view on developing employees and their support I would not have been able to complete these studies.

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# LIST OF ACRONYMS

| | |
|---|---|
| EEA | Employment Equity Act |
| HRD | Human Resource Development |
| HRM | Human Resource Management |
| MPRDA | Mineral and Petroleum Resources Development Act |
| MQA | Mining Qualifications Authority |
| O & G | Oil and Gas |
| RSA | Republic of South Africa |
| STEM | Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematical |

# CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

## 1.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter provides an introduction to the research study, where the background and intention of focusing on the research problem is presented. The context of the petroleum industry within the research is briefly discussed. The research scope and range is outlined and the research objectives are tabled as well as delimitations of where the research is focused. The significance of the study is explained. In conclusion, a brief overview of the structure of the research report is provided.

## 1.2 PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

This qualitative study explored the perceptions and experiences of women managers on coaching for career progression in the petroleum organisation. The study examines perceptions which are held with regard to coaching as one of the transformative tools in the working environment. The main objective was to explore the experiences of women and their perceptions of coaching as an additional tool for advancing women managers' careers. This was aimed at understanding current efforts or opportunities which are available as part of the Human Resource Development interventions. The study seeks to understand how coaching could be incorporated and the possibilities of using it as a developmental intervention for women in a petroleum organisation.

The phenomenon of the petroleum sector being male-dominated is not unique to South Africa. A study conducted by Miller (2004) in the Canadian petroleum industry suggests that the industry is indeed highly male-dominated. Reasons cited for this being the case include habits and behaviours of men that have emerged over time. These include daily

interactions which exclude women and promotion of values and beliefs specific to the dominant occupation by men. It appears that these beliefs and values have reinforced themselves over a period of time and have cemented the exclusion of women in the industry. McGrath and Marinelli (2012) suggest that the industry faces the business imperative of supplying skilled employees which includes addressing the under-representation of women. This will provide a competitive edge and related economic growth which centres around ensuring women are part of the workforce in critical roles.

Whilst some of the factors contributing to this situation are external, such as the influence of legislation, internal factors like recruitment processes are geared more towards attracting women at entry level into the petroleum industry. Nefdt (2017) asserts that in the South African context, progression of women into senior levels has not necessarily been systematic. Malatsi (2019) suggests that the employment into senior positions of historically disadvantaged individuals, of which women are a part, remains a challenge in the petroleum industry in South Africa.

## 1.3 CONTEXT OF THE STUDY

The study explored the perceptions and experiences of both male and female managers on coaching for career progression in the petroleum organisation. The petroleum industry is delineated into exploration which includes a large component of mining, and production which consists of manufacturing activities of petroleum. As explained by Al-Shidhani (2017), the petroleum industry includes both exploration and production capabilities. The exploration process of petroleum consists of mining capabilities which require specific mining-related skills, whilst production entails activities which result in the production of oils and gas capabilities. Such capabilities define the capacity of the industry and its organisations to explore, develop and produce petroleum. Al-Shidhani (2017) describes the

exploration industry of petroleum which is also known as upstream, as a central component and states that its focus is on highly skilled engineering, geosciences, production operations as well as other related professional disciplines. It is these areas that the study will address in relation to women advancing their careers.

According to Botha, Fourie, Botha and Bischoff (2012), women in the petroleum industry remain under-represented, particularly at managerial levels. It is these areas that the study addresses with reference to the levels of management and the core roles in the exploration and production of petroleum.

According to Nefdt (2017), organisations which constitute the petroleum industry in South Africa include Chevron South Africa, Engen Petroleum, BP Southern Africa, Shell South Africa, PetroSA and Total South Africa. In the South African context, according to Sephoti (2010), women not only experience entry barriers into these organisations but they also experience frustration in attaining senior management positions and retaining those positions once achieved. Sephoti (2010) refers to gaps at senior level in such organisations being apparent in senior leadership roles which are filled mostly by males. Al-Shidhani (2017) attributes some of the challenges experienced in the petroleum industry to professional, organisational, industrial and other external context factors. These factors include competition with other industries for talent, inadequate efforts at academic and research institutions to offer higher degrees in the petroleum sector and in supporting emerging talent to choose and navigate the industry. The study addressed the supporting aspect of navigating careers in the industry.

Malatsi (2019) states that according to the Department of Energy, one of the transformation challenges which persists is the industry's inability to fill senior positions with historically disadvantaged individuals. Even though the purpose of the Employment Equity Act (1998) is to ensure that equity in the

workplace is achieved through a range of measures such as promoting equal opportunity and fair treatment in employment through the elimination of unfair discrimination, and implementing affirmative action measures to redress disadvantages in employment experienced by designated groups in order to ensure their equitable representation in all occupational categories and levels in the workforce, South Africa continues to experience the challenges that result from the exclusion of women. It appears that the petroleum industry is also not immune to the challenge of integrating women in the key or core stream as well as ensuring that those efforts translate into their representation at executive levels of leadership. According to Abramson et al (2019), the decline of women representation in the petroleum industry suggests that there are two distinct barriers: getting the first promotion into management and then getting promoted at the senior vice-president level.

Legislation which governs the petroleum industry in South Africa includes the Constitution, the Employment Equity Act 55 of 1998, the Skills Development Act and the Preferential Procurement Framework. The legislation is aimed at addressing imbalances in the areas of skills development, procurement, ownership, enterprise development and employment equity with specific focus on designated groups, namely black people, women and people with disabilities. Over and above this legislation, the industry is governed by the Petroleum and Liquid Fuels Industry Transformation Charter which informs the implementation of codes of good practice.

According to the Mineral and Petroleum Resources Development Act (MPRDA) (2002), the petroleum industry has to substantially and meaningfully expand opportunities for designated groups to enter into and actively participate in the mineral and petroleum industries and to benefit from the utilisation of the nation’s mineral and petroleum resources. Furthermore, the MPRDA (2002) states that governance boards of the

various petroleum organisations have a mandate in consultation with the Mining Qualifications Authority (MQA) to ensure the promotion of human resource development in the minerals and mining industry. Human resource development refers to skilling, equipping and empowering through capacity building and training as well as advancing employees within the industry.

According to Abramson, Ahmad and Yanosek (2019), women comprise only 15 percent of the petroleum sector workforce. Statistics identify male managers as those who have access of entry into the industry and their access to entry translates into their representation in higher levels of management. According to Abramson et al (2019), the industry remains predominantly male-dominated, women are under-represented in the management levels, and seldom progress beyond junior roles to management or to executive levels of the industry. Despite the legislation providing guidelines for recruitment, training and potential promotion of women to higher levels of management, the challenge continues.

It is against this backdrop that the research study and the framework was contextualised. While there may be efforts to promote equity through recruitment and support through application of legislation, training and development of women in general, the study explored the feasibility of coaching as an additional tool to enhance and enable the progression of women to higher levels of management in the industry.

## 1.4 RESEARCH PROBLEM

There are various reasons why women managers fail to reach senior levels of management in the petroleum sector. The research considered the development of women manager careers in the sector with the aim of assessing what the contribution of coaching might be. One of the questions asked as part of the study was whether, with women development programmes in the petroleum sector, there is consideration given to

women's life stages? Another consideration was that, while it appears that most petroleum organisations have interventions for attracting and recruiting women into Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematical (STEM) careers, women continue to remain under-represented. Camilli and Hira (2019) on the other hand claim that there is a clear indication of supply and over-supply of skills in STEM fields.

This was explored through the understanding of both female and male managers' perceptions of women's development as well as establishing what women may be experiencing as barriers to their progression. Male managers who are at various levels of management were also considered as part of the study to understand this phenomenon through their lens and experience.

Sephoti (2010) states that although women are no strangers to management and leadership, they still experience frustration in reaching senior management positions and retaining those positions once achieved. Even with supportive legislation, Nefdt (2017) alludes to the fact that women are still less represented in senior leadership or management positions in the South African petroleum industry.

Although there is entry of women into core petroleum careers, they remain less represented in comparison with the males. From observation, there is under-representation of women at the senior levels in the sector. The study explored the context of human resource development with the aim of understanding what role coaching is likely to play as an additional developmental intervention.

## 1.5 RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

The qualitative research study explored perceptions and experiences of women managers on coaching for career progression in the petroleum

organisation with the aim of understanding what current efforts are in place to enable progression of women managers and to assess their impact. The primary research objective was to explore the possibility of having coaching as an intervention which could enhance development with the ultimate result of progress in the careers of the women managers.

## 1.6 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The research questions were the following:-

1. How do women and men perceive the progression of women in the organisation?
2. What are the experiences of women and men on women's development in the organisation?
3. How is coaching perceived as a career development tool?

## 1.7 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

It has been established that the petroleum industry operates within the context of South African legislation. The legislation is clear on the mandate of empowering historically disadvantaged populations which includes women. According to Nefdt (2017), the progress of women from middle management to senior management remains a controversial subject at the international level. Nefdt (2017) asserts that women in the industry face "unseen challenges" as barriers to moving upwards between management levels. According to Sephoti (2010), while there may be strides in terms of building a talent pipeline of women, the question is how far they advance in executive positions in the various petroleum organisations.

The essence of this study was to explore perceptions and experiences of women managers on coaching for career progression in the petroleum organisation. The overarching research question focused on perceptions of

coaching as a tool which is likely to contribute towards progression of women in the petroleum sector. Empirically this study will contribute towards theory of coaching as an additional tool for development with a specific focus on women in the petroleum sector. Stakeholders who are likely to benefit from this research include researchers, academics, policy makers, talent and human resource practitioners.

Literature on development is available but there is limited literature which pertains to how women perceive coaching as a developmental intervention. There is a gap in terms of utilisation of coaching as an intervention to enhance career progression or human resource development processes within the industry. The study is intended to benefit researchers who seek to explore the impact that coaching has on career development and add to the body of knowledge in the field of coaching. Human resource development and talent managers will benefit in understanding how they can build talent pipelines and craft career paths using coaching as an additional intervention. The study's contribution to a better understanding of coaching as an intervention and its contribution to development will add to the ongoing discourse of the development and career advancement of women.

In a context of development in organisations, coaching is considered as a tool that ensures specific competencies. This therefore means that coaching becomes an additional but not the only tool to improve the careers of women. While every other aspect may have been mentioned as pertaining to the whole system of the organisation, coaching is more focused on developing leadership competencies at an individual level. These may be directed at leaders at a certain level and specifically focused on women. In developmental interventions for the petroleum sector, there is limited reference made to any form of coaching intervention aimed at women managers.

## 1.8 DELIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

The focus of the research was:

i. based on women in all management levels of the core business of petroleum, i.e. exploration and production;
ii. conducted within a petroleum entity;
iii. inclusive of male counterparts for obtaining additional insights and perceptions on development; and
iv. focused on exploration of insights for coaching women managers.

## 1.9 DEFINITION OF TERMS

**Petroleum Industry:** According to Rosenfeld and Feng (2011), the petroleum industry is sometimes referred to as the Oil and Gas industry which focuses on refinement of crude petroleum and processes natural gas into a multitude of products. Petroleum processes include oil-field and gas-field operations, gas plant processing operations, refining and refinery operations, and refining technologies.

**Manager:** Robbins and Coulter (2005) define a manager as someone who coordinates work activities so that they are completed efficiently and effectively with and through other people. Schermerhorn (2005) further defines a manager as a person who is involved in the processes of planning, organizing, leading and controlling the use of resources to accomplish performance goals. For the purpose of this study the focus was on the female/women managers who are in the core business of petroleum (exploration or production) at a level where they are responsible for both the technical and people management aspects of the business.

**Career progression or advancement:** Adamson (2002) refers to career progression as a steady, logical progress up the hierarchy of the organisation. Pillay, Dawood and Karodia (2015) define career progression, promotability or career advancement as movement from one level to another, whether hierarchical or moving to a different nature of work with

more responsibility. For the purpose of this research these terms were used to mean transition from one level of management in a career to the next level as opposed to horizontal movement with more responsibility.

**Coaching:** Gooding (2003) defines coaching as an interactive process which helps individuals and organisations to develop and produce more results. Coaches have their impact in various areas, which include business, career, finances, health and relationships. Rogers (2012) states that the essence of coaching is change of behaviour for positive impact or results and its function is also about bridging the gap between potential and performance. Palmer and Whybrow (2018) define coaching as a relationship or intervention where client and coach mutually work for the benefit of the organisation. This is supported by organisational activities and deliberate steps and interventions aimed at delivering on the objectives of the organisation. In this study coaching was referred to as an intervention or catalyst which would result in a particular change, taking into account behavioural change as a process which individuals go through.

## 1.10 ASSUMPTIONS

The assumptions made about the study were that:-

1. The participants were open to participate by sharing their existing perceptions of coaching as well as being willing to participate in the research through being coached.
2. The views and perceptions they share were authentic so that the study would be realistic, i.e. solve real existing challenges which may have contributed to lack of progression to senior levels of management.

## 1.11 STRUCTURE OF THE REPORT

Chapter 1 presents the research problem which explores the perceptions and experiences of coaching for career progression for women mangers in the petroleum organisation. The scope of the research locates itself in relation to the key roles within the industry and not support roles. The focus is on processes and practices which are aimed at enhancing careers for women. Perceptions and experiences on career progression processes from both men and women in the organisation will be established to understand the phenomenon of under-representation of women in the higher levels of leadership and management. The research objectives and limitations of the study were outlined.

Chapter 2 presents a review of literature on women under-representation in the petroleum sector, and the current developmental efforts of women in the petroleum sector. The literature focused on the phenomenon of career progression of women in the petroleum sector. The study explored the possibility of integrative development with the aim of progressing women in their careers. The transformative nature of coaching was explored as an additional enabler through the lens of the experiential learning theory. The study focused on the contribution of coaching with the aim of advancing women's careers to more senior positions within the petroleum industry.

Chapter 3 explains the qualitative methodology used to conduct the research. This chapter presents the research approach, the research design, data collection method, data collection process as well as the data analysis and interpretation employed in the study.

Chapter 4 presents the findings and provides a detailed assessment of the challenges identified through the interviews conducted with research participants. Ten participants were interviewed. The research findings are presented in the form of transcribed interviews and themes.

Chapter 5 provides an analytical discussion of the data presented and analysis of the findings, drawing on the literature review.

Chapter 6 presents conclusions and recommendations as well as suggestions for future research.

# CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

## 2.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents a literature review on the progression of women managers in the petroleum industry and the developmental needs of women in the petroleum sector. The study explored the possibility of integrative development with the aim of progressing women in their careers. The transformative nature of coaching was explored as an additional enabler through the lens of the experiential learning theory.

Figure 1 below depicts a conceptual framework developed for the purposes of explaining this research study, namely the developmental continuum on which career progression hinges. The entry level into the organisation or any level is through recruitment, followed by training and development which will develop the skills required for the role, followed by mentoring and succession planning. The subsequent processes after recruitment may not necessarily follow a sequence and the framework seeks to illustrate some of the processes which typically contribute towards development of individuals. Entry into careers for all employees begins with them being recruited into their role which is about their entry and being sourced into the industry.

Employees are subject to performance management processes where they are contracted and expected to deliver outputs at a specific level. Subsequent to being contracting, there is training and development of individuals according to what is expected of the role and future career requirements. Where succession and mentoring processes exist, individuals are exposed to relevant processes based on their career trajectory. With coaching part of the framework, the suggestion is that over and above the processes which lead to promotion or progression, coaching

will enable and enhance interventions which are aimed at the promotion and progression of women managers' careers.

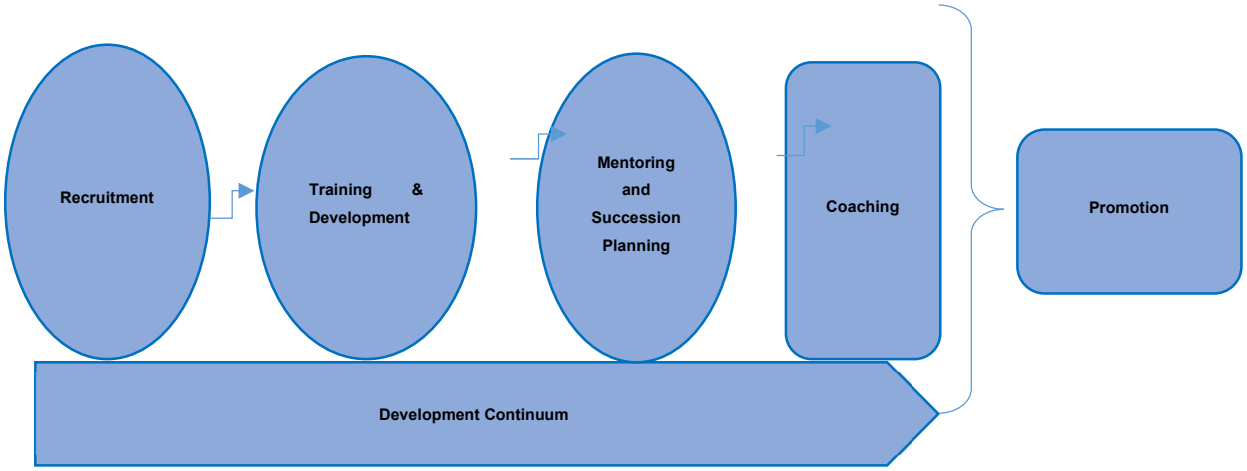



**Figure 1: The conceptual framework of the study**

The chapter explores the literature on the phenomenon of under-representation of women in the petroleum industry. In doing so, the focus of the literature examined the available avenues for training and development and the extent to which these could enable career progression. Coaching was approached through the theory of experiential learning to examine its transformative nature as well as gain insights as to what extent it could be considered for career progression.

## 2.2 BACKGROUND DISCUSSION

Careers in the petroleum value chain include exploration, development and the production services of the petroleum sector. Miller (2004) explains that upstream of petroleum consists mostly of positions as engineers and geologists which have traditionally been held by males. In his definition of the petroleum industry, Pike (2013) made an analogy of a three-act play: early years spent hands-on for young workers, before managing field activities and then holding senior management positions, and worker reminiscences. Nefdt (2017) suggests that while there were a number of

women in leadership positions in this industry, males are still the chairpersons on many of these boards, including some of the major funders. Males tend to make all the important decisions in terms of funding and the direction the organisations should take. The suggestion is that barriers worth examining may also include the fact that the voice of women is not necessarily heard when it comes to major decisions on issues pertinent to women advancement in the industry. Human resource development processes are aimed at addressing the existing skills gap as well as building necessary future capabilities. As alluded to in the conceptual framework, these processes are not limited to training and development but would also include succession planning, and/or mentoring as well as coaching. This research study focused on the purpose of coaching under the banner of human resource development processes, with the ultimate result being to gain insights into how this can influence career advancement.

Coaching forms part of development and is a process of learning along with other interventions which constitute training, where the theory of experiential learning was used to examine the process of learning and growth of careers for individuals. The historical legacy of women not being included in the industry lends itself to challenging the assumptions and lenses which require a new way of approaching learning for women's career advancement. According to Kolb (2007), experiential learning theory consists of learning as a process rather than an outcome, unlearning and relearning, resolution of conflicts, and holistic process of adaption. He further states this learning process is transactional between the person and her or his environment and as a result this creates knowledge. Kolb (2014) further describes experiential learning as direct learning from sense, experience and context as primary sources of learning. Thus there has to be dialectic tension and conflict between immediate concrete experience and analytical detachment and that such an environment enables stimulation and allows learning to occur.

Part of the challenge in the working environment centres itself on adult learning and in particular on effectiveness of the learning that does take place. The question relates to whether that learning translates into transformation with the result of career advancement. Bélanger (2011) describes experiential learning as a process where significant learning and knowledge is created through the transformation of one's experience and the transformation is in relation to those specific experiences.

## 2.3 THE CHALLENGE OF CAREER DEVELOPMENT FOR WOMEN IN THE PETROLEUM SECTOR

Sephoti (2010) examines challenges faced by women and issues which hinder women's advancement into senior positions in the petroleum industry. Barriers include male domination of the industry, women not being taken seriously, "boys-club" effect, work-life balance and long hours as well as dealing with stigma and perception. This refers to historical systemic barriers to entry into the industry which may have been maintained by the practices and norms which have built up over a period of time. Cox (2015) suggests that significant personal learning can be described as learning in which adults reflect and question any norms and beliefs which have been cemented over a period of time. The theory of experiential learning focuses itself with the subjectivity and to a large extent individual experience of what may be occurring in the environment. The actual action results from the interaction of the individual with their environment Cox (2015) argues further that change occurs when old assumptions and lenses are challenged to necessitate a shift towards a newer perspective, and this requires reflective learning. Kolb (2014) reiterates that the emphasis of subjective experience has its roots in the practice of experiential learning which hinges on personal involvement, responsibility and humanistic values with extensive focus on feelings as well as thoughts. Mezirow (1990) asserts that learning occurs when there is differentiation and new frames of reference for processing what is new against that which has always been believed to be true. His

view is that through reflective action one examines their frame of reference and this becomes pivotal to decision-making. It is argued that for one to justify their belief system, they ought to be reflective, and this ultimately informs thoughtful action. Central to adult learning is elaborating established meaning schemes which constitute a process of reflecting on prior learning to determine whether what has been learned is justified under current circumstances. March (2010) cautions against focusing on experiential learning as a "silver bullet" and suggests there may also be failure to learn from experience. He argues that experience itself may have problems and be challenged by loopholes which lead to flawed conclusions or correlations with reality. On the other hand, Kolb and Kolb (2009) describe the process of consciousness of one's learning as metacognition, or learning which occurs on all aspects of an individual, whether cognitively, emotionally or interpretation and processing what occurs within their environment or context, thus making a case for experiential learning.

Starling and Robertson (2004) conducted a study with 28 participants with long tenure within the industry who shared their reflections and experiences of the energy industry, of which oil and gas is part. The study suggests that progress is not as responsive as it should be to addressing the skills demand as well as the ageing dynamic. Yet Camilli and Hira (2019) in their response to a debate on the shortage of STEM skills, refer to the evolving workforce within the same field. It could be a matter of timing, supply and demand of skills which contributes to the perceived shortage of skilled workforce.

Starling and Robertson (2004) in their research drew on nine women who were professional engineers and four who were professional geologists, which are reported as entry level and specialist roles. Some of the 11 participants had positions at the executive level of large multinational energy corporations, with four at the vice-presidential level. There is agreement by Abramson et al (2019) that the industry should pay closer attention to the

value of diversity and its contribution to the productivity of an organisation. This diversity includes having representation of women which the industry struggles to attract, retain and promote. The study further referred to the fact that addressing this problem is critical since the industry has an aging workforce. Consideration of diversity along the lines of inclusivity for women in an otherwise male-dominated environment is not only about women as individuals but as a collective group which is mandated for special focus in terms of integration into the working environment. According to Kolb (2014), learning from experience is essential for individual and organisational effectiveness and is achievable where personal values and organisational norms support action based on valid information, free and informed choice, and internal commitment.

According to Abramson et al (2019), female talent is generally untapped and the same is applicable and more acute in the oil and gas industry where the industry ranked last in women representation compared with other science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) industries. The interesting consideration, however, is that the skills in this study are not only restricted to the traditional STEM careers but extends to emergent skills in areas such as advanced analytics, machine learning and robotics. Camilli and Hira (2019) state that this phenomenon around STEM is characterized by job demand and supply and varies from workforce to workforce as well as being influenced by the timing of when employees enter the workplace.

Botha, Fourie, Botha and Bischoff (2012) suggest that some women opt for the industry due to their own financial needs and do not necessarily see their roles as permanent in the industry. For those who do access basic and entry roles or positions, their hope is to attain better roles. It would seem that perceptions of the prospects of succeeding in the field of petroleum for women needs to be viewed from the entry level or mid-career perspective. Some women attain executive level but their representation remains limited. This suggests that from inception of recruitment or early stages of careers

for women in the sector, there is already a need to intervene to shape career paths. Lahiri-Dutt (2011) suggests that sometimes culture in similar male-dominated environments is influenced by the same male leaders that shape the recruitment and orientation of the women who come through.

Jones, Woods and Guillaume (2016) state that in the context of human resource management (HRM), coaching represents an approach to employee learning, training and development. They further purport that although there remains a lack of consensus about the core processes of coaching as a development intervention, coaching sessions where coaching does exist are frequently characterized - either directly or indirectly - by a number of performance-promoting features. According to Brockbank and McGill (2006), certain types of coaching such as functional coaching seem to address the immediate issues and achieve instantaneous results. However, this leaves underlying values, practices and ways of seeing things unchanged. It is aimed at supporting employees to achieve minimal qualification or competence, with the process being like teaching, which is referred to as first generation coaching. According to Brockbank (2008) this is termed functionalist as it immerses itself in achieving improvement of performance and meeting requirements of delivery. On the other hand, experiential learning and the transformational approach suggest a broader, more integrative and considered process to learning.

O'Neil, Hopkins and Bilimoria (2015) state that development of women leaders has to consider organisational context, work-life balance and life and career stages. The myriad of challenges can be summarised as ranging from organisational and systemic barriers, skills and capacity gaps as well as behavioural aspects informed by norms and practices. Mezirow (1990) suggests that for transformation to take place at the individual level, people need to consider their position with regard to specific circumstances. In essence, growth and progress against the challenges mentioned constitutes a decision informed through the reflective process.

### 2.3.1 Career development needs of women in the petroleum sector

There is growing recognition that training approaches have changed from the traditional way of transferring skills to that of providing trainees with a more reflective approach. In their study of petroleum relating to the building of a refinery in the Niger region, Omorodion (2004) purports that globalisation and patriarchy have neglected women's economic activities by making them invisible and insignificant. Internal to the oil company systems, practices and policies could still be improved in their design so as to align and ensure that women are progressing at the same rate as their male counterparts. Sephoti (2010) suggests, based on 35% of the respondents who are women in her research, that mentorship, coaching and accelerated training programmes can be solutions to advancing careers of women. Bélanger (2011) suggests that for transformation to take place, the individual's various encounters have to be transformed into action in their career journeys through a reflexive process. Leimon, Moscovici and Goodier (2011) suggest that there is validity in coaching women specifically so that they are able to express full potential, and furthermore, that there are aspects of a career which relate to women as a specific category of workers, due to historical factors of inequality as previously alluded to . O'Neil, Hopkins and Bilimoria (2015) suggest that although executive coaching is gender-neutral, the realities of leadership in the work environment are different for males and females. They therefore suggest that for women to be effective, the drivers of these different realities need to be identified, thereby necessitating differentiated coaching for women leaders.

Nefdt (2017) suggests that a diversified working environment which is inclusive of both genders and other aspects of diversity is associated with effectiveness. The gender diversity requires the consideration of factors specific to women which entail working hours, differentiated remuneration and recognition, reasons why women select the industry as a career, and

policies on sexual harassment, employment equity and pregnancy. These have a bearing on career progression and effectiveness in their roles. Kolb (2007) describes learning as a process rather than an outcome; holistic adaptation to the world; resolution of conflict between opposed models of adaption; resulting from transactions between person and environment; a process of creating knowledge; as well as a re-learning process. Kolb and Kolb (2009) posit that learning takes place through connected experiences which transform knowledge, processing of beliefs and ideas, as well as resolution of conflict which stimulates reflection, action, feeling and thinking. March in Kolb (2014) criticises experiential learning and claims that lessons extracted from life experience are not nearly enough to constitute learning. However, Mezirow (1990) describes reflection which distinguishes learning which entails drawing inferences, generalizations, analogies, discriminations and evaluations, as well as feeling, remembering and solving problems. Learning is thus an integrative process which integrates a learner's environment with their thinking, feeling, perception and behaviour.

Botha et al. (2012) explores progress in implementing the balancing efforts which include integration of women specifically in the petroleum industry and the identified barriers. The barriers are also weighed against available opportunities which are afforded to women. At the stage of early promotion to management and further promotion to executive levels there seems to be a need to consider these women-specific concerns. According to Rogers (2012), coaching deals with two different kinds of goals, either transformational or transactional, and purports that transformational goals are geared towards building internal capacity as opposed to immediate skills, as well as being more sustainable than transactional goals which yield short-term benefits. Cerni, Curtis and Colmar (2010) state that developmental coaching has business benefits and impact in the workplace. They suggest that executive coaching definitely has transformational results for the coachees.

### 2.3.2 Integration of developmental needs for career development of women in the petroleum sector

Lawton-Smith and Cox (2007) observes that while training is aimed at addressing the deficit of a missing skill, coaching is aimed at expanding skills which may already exist. It would seem that all these efforts, including training as an intervention, are aimed at ensuring that learning takes place so that employees are skilled. These skills and capabilities are about the ability to respond productively by delivering to expected standards. Honey and Mumford (1982) outline Kolb's learning styles: activist, theorist, reflector and pragmatist, to explain the way in which learning takes place at any given point with an individual. Kolb and Kolb (2009) explain the experiential model of learning as an interactive, multi-fold view of learning based on the experience of working through conflicting dialectics of action/reflection and experience/abstraction. Kolb and Kolb (2009) emphasise that learning extracts the learner's personal beliefs which integrate into new ideas and these experiences could include conflict, differences and disagreement and the resolution thereof to create learning opportunities.

Hansman (2001) states that learning from context is about paying attention to the interaction and intersection among people, tools and context or environment within a learning situation. Ives (2008) suggests that adults learn through reflection on experiences and they are able to apply these in their new situation. This is further supported by McLeod, Pollock and MacCaluim (2010) who claims learning only occurs when a learner is able to execute all four stages of the experiential learning model. This suggests that learning experience and interventions cannot be a one-size-fits-all but must take cognisance of the various learning styles which Truong (2016) defines as those constant indicators of how a learner processes information, interacts with it and responds to the factors that are encountered.

Lawton-Smith and Cox (2007) considers that there may be an overlap between training and coaching as interventions which are all aimed at improving individual performance, dealing with under-performance and improving productivity. There must be consideration of the difference between training interventions and coaching interventions as they yield different outcomes. Transactional outcomes may not necessarily translate into effectiveness at the level of progressing or advancing the careers of women who receive only technical or functional training interventions. Some of the interventions may well be coaching but focus on performance-related coaching as indicated above. According to Joo, Sushko and McLean (2012), coaching has become significant in most organisations and is seen as part of all processes linked to human development which include leadership as well as career success. Whilst coaching may be significant, its application may be misunderstood or misinterpreted. Jones et al. (2016) suggests that research has not applied itself in terms of examining the effectiveness of coaching. Thus, while there are advantages and potential for coaching to improve performance, the claim is not conclusive. The absence or limited consideration of what the training and coaching interventions are aimed at respectively should be clarified and specified to ensure adequate application and thereby yield the expected outcomes. The challenge seems to lie with the fact that there may be little or no concerted effort to understand what type of learning is applicable at which stage of career development.

## 2.4 COACHING CAN BE CONSIDERED AS A TRANSFORMATIVE TOOL FOR ENABLING CAREER PROGRESSION OF WOMEN

According to Bimrose (2006), development as a practice which is directed at career progression or advancement has to provide employees with opportunity for reflection. There is further reference to the fact that practitioners seem more reliant on the traditional approaches to career navigation and little emphasis is placed on openness to exploring what works.

Starling and Robertson (2004) state that workplace competency initiatives are addressed through dedicated recruitment and selection strategies which encompass career guides, coaching in the form of handbooks, and coaching courses. This confirms the view that practitioners have been reliant on traditional approaches to navigate careers. Grant (2017) purports that workplace coaching methods have evolved over time from performance management as first generation coaching, the leader as a coach in second generation coaching, to the third-generation approach which focuses on sustainable and meaningful enhancement of both performance and the well-being of staff. This view is supported by Kolb (2007) who claims that experiential learning requires constant resolution and is an holistic process of adaptation and a transaction between a person and their environment.

### 2.4.1 Coaching as a developmental tool in developing women's careers in the petroleum industry

According to Rogers (2012), transformational coaching entails clients turning their transactional goals into transformational goals. Clients are invited to reframe their focus towards a solution. Lawton-Smith (2007) suggests that the development of coaching represents a shift in terms of people development. Leonard-Cross (2010) argues that there is a wide range of perceptions about coaching and that it has become a new way of development which helps coachees to shorten the learning curve, and adapt to new roles and a range of other issues relating to work. They argue that the coaching way of developing people is centred on the person. When considering that there are systemic factors and organisational barriers which result in under-representation of women in the petroleum sector, within the current efforts aimed at advancing women's careerscoaching as a transformational tool and the benefits of coaching women as a specific target audience are worth exploring.

Brockbank (2008) refers to transformative consequences or outcomes of learning from coaching which change the individual as well as the organisation. She refers to evolutionary coaching which considers the client experiences, their social reality, the influences of their behaviours, and the environment contributors to their learning and development. Similarly, Leonard-Cross (2010) affirms that through coaching organisations must aim for employees to develop beyond their technical skills but through coaching also enable them to learn interpersonal skills. This provides the opportunity for the client to reflect, identify and challenge their discourse and this results in double-loop learning and transformation.

Rogers (2012) defines coaching as a process where the coach and the coachee work towards promoting the coachee's effectiveness through focused learning. The coach's role is to help the client unleash her or his potential.

An important aspect is the shift to the coaching being person-centred and not ending it at that, but appreciating the fact that individuals have a social reality, their own experiences and other factors which influence their learning, decisions and actions. Bond and Naughton (2011) emphasise the importance of coaching employees through transitions. Deiorio, Carney, Kahl, Bonura and Juve (2016) assert that the constructs on mentoring and advising are prescriptive as opposed to coaching which uses methods such as asking reflective questions. This makes coaching central in competency development as well as in helping to identify performance goals for the coachees to improve on. According to Stober, Wildflower and Drake (2006), this transitional type of coaching helps clients to transition in the workplace and involves supporting nominated individuals to manage the changes that come from personal development through transitioning into a new leadership role. The core of this research is about exploring the creation of possibilities for women to transition from one role to the other or from one level of function or management to a higher level of leadership.

Brockbank (2008) suggests that coaching approaches a client or coachee and takes into account that they exist in a system and need to interact and therefore the process itself has to respond to all elements of the system. An additional aspect of the engagement coaching foundation involves person-centred principles, with the emphasis on the nature of the working relationship between the coach and the coachee regarding their advancement and how that could be achieved. The focus is on the positive disposition and self-actualisation as the driving force of the human psyche. Fielden, Davidson and Sutherland (2009) on the other hand suggest that innovation in coaching and mentoring results in significant development in terms of career development, leadership skills and capabilities. According to Joo et al. (2012), coaching has become significant in most organisations and is seen as part of all processes linked to human development which include leadership as well as career success.

Mezirow (1990) alludes to the critical reflection on individual experiences which results in elaboration, creation or transformation of meaning schemes. Reflection becomes critical in the various stages of transition such as when coachees are exploring options for new roles, building relationships, planning a course of action, or building competence and self-confidence in new roles. Fielden et al. (2009) affirms that respondents who have gone through coaching experienced the highest level of development scores in eight areas of leadership and management and areas of career impact as a result of coaching. They suggest that both coaching and training are aimed at changing what people do and how they respond to circumstances in their thinking, and furthermore, that training meets work-related goals whereas coaching is person-centred development with answers which cannot be predetermined.

### 2.4.2 Organisational benefits for coaching for women managers

Ives (2008) alludes to transformative learning as a systemic approach to coaching which helps clients to recognise patterns of behaviour and becomes a journey of searching for patterns from which a client can learn. A client in this regard can be at individual level or a collective, either of which presents learning at different levels. The opportunity is available to utilise coaching as one tool in the already existing suite of solutions towards preparing women to lead or manage at senior levels as well as addressing support initiatives which are aimed at the progression of women.

Hughes and Albertyn (2017) supports this claim that coaching uses tools which are useful to facilitate change in organisations. Leedham (2005) concurs with the view that coaching is the solution which addresses enhanced career opportunities, helps with promotion prospects and provides subsequent steps for career advancement. It appears that there are benefits to focusing on coaching and specifically for women to help them navigate their careers and overcome barriers to their career progression.

Cohen (2009) suggests that while coaching improves individual performance it tends to have an impact on organisational processes as well. He further states that coaching is tactical and that capabilities built through the coaching process tend to be generic and broad, and recommends that a next generation of coaching ought to consider context and deliver on the basis that organisational objectives will be met. Bélanger (2011) observes that this,

> "learning is more than a mental retrieval process governing the learner's actions. It is the reflexive act of a subject. In a situation where people experience inconsistency between personal belief or acquired knowledge and new belief or ideas, they tend to reduce this dissonance either by changing their attitudes, beliefs and behaviours, or by justifying and rationalising their own conviction and

> prior knowledge. Significant learning takes place through such deconstruction and reconstruction of one's representation and through such mobilisation of new knowledge."

Recommendations from 35 percent of the respondents of a study conducted in the petroleum sector by Sephoti (2010) suggest mentorship, coaching and accelerated training programmes as solutions to advancing the careers of women. Mentoring is described as a tool "designed by a supporter (a mentor) who acts as a guide to provide an avenue for advancement, showing protectors how to navigate organisational barriers". Mentoring networks are primarily integrated into social meetings (for example, the golf course or a social setting). As a result, many women did not benefit from these settings as there are social and domestic responsibilities to attend to during the allocated times for such gatherings. Leimon et al. (2011) states that there is validity in coaching women specifically so that they are able to express their full potential. They suggest that beyond legislation and other official requirements in balancing the workforce, there are aspects of career which relate to women as a specific category of worker.

Al-Shidhani (2017) explores organisational factors which entail the technical and managerial capabilities, personal professional perspectives of the professionals in the industry in terms of their career development, different career models as well as alternative frameworks which are emerging perspectives and strategies that may be appropriate for development or capacity-building in the industry.

Where there are specific points where women in the industry appear to be less successful, as indicated by the Abramson et al (2019), such as the promotional stage, then coaching interventions can be customised to address specific issues which are associated with those stages of change in women's careers. According to Kolb (2007), the creation of knowledge is

viewed as the transaction between social, historical and personal contexts and this constitutes the personal.

Fielden et al. (2009) observes that there was significant development in terms of career development, leadership skills and capabilities in the study they conducted which reported a high level of development scores that increased in eight areas of leadership and management and areas of career impact.

Leimon et al. (2011) states that reasons which make a case for coaching women include:

- Diversification of the workforce that addresses leadership gaps which the workforce experiences;
- Meeting the legislative requirements for women (in the South African context);
- Managing typical stages of career paths for women which may include child-bearing and child-rearing phases;
- By implication of women being under-represented, growing role models through lessons;
- Developing leadership qualities that are required for management and leadership roles;
- Guiding organisations on building a woman-friendly environment; and
- Learning how to coach other women to lead in the absence of role models, given the traditional male-dominated environment.

## 2.5 CONCLUSION OF LITERATURE REVIEW

Literature has revealed that factors which contribute to less representation of women can be linked to their entry into the industry and their motivation for choosing their career. Perceptions of women's careers in the petroleum industry by women themselves has been viewed as temporary and short-

term, resulting in little deliberate effort in pursuing or shaping an upwardly mobile career. If women at the personal level go through different experiences at different life stages, then learning should be tailored for navigating the various stages of their careers. Closer attention should be given not only to the women's early years of career stage, but to mid-career and then senior levels of management for long-term sustainability.

### 2.5.1 Efforts to ensure progression of women in the petroleum industry can be enhanced

Some of the barriers to progression of women's careers are being addressed through legislation and internal policies of organisations. At an individual level, women make decisions at different stages of their careers which have a bearing on the extent of their representation at senior levels of management.

Literature suggests that there could be a more systemic approach to building capacity which would also position the organisation to respond to external factors relating to skills. It is argued that there should be clarity of understanding that training is about equipping employees with skills which they do not possess, including technical skills, while coaching is about building competencies and specific behaviours which may exist or need to be developed and/or enhanced in individuals to ensure they translate into career progression. This process should be experiential; integrative of all aspects of an individual; work through conflicts and dialects; be reflective at an individual level; and take into consideration the various aspects which constitute the unique context for each woman manager.

Abramson et al (2019) suggests that flexibility should be built into career paths of the industry to give individuals options to step out of operational or frontline roles depending on their personal circumstances. They suggest that if younger employees are able to see a way of balancing their work they may be more likely to want to stay with a company or sector. Progression of

women in their careers in the industry is highly dependent on considerations of life stage and motivation for career choice in the industry.

### 2.5.2 Coaching can be considered as a transformative tool for enabling career progression of women managers

The literature suggests that coaching is viewed as facilitative or a catalyst of change. The tools such as reflective questions used are seen as helping coachees set goals and improve their performance. It is a different way of thinking or approach in executing development which may not be easy and straightforward but allows for growth to be realised for coachees. It will require intentional effort to achieve the desired coaching transformational objectives that will enable women managers to progress to senior management levels.

Coaching is seen as reflective in that it offers a new technique of ensuring that skills and competencies are built through a sustainable approach to building capacity. It offers capacity building for employees beyond just performance in their day-to-day jobs, thereby better positioning them to develop competencies which will enable women to lead and manage organisational objectives. Since coaching is relatively new and is not widely utilised even within the petroleum industry, it could be explored for further benefits. It would seem that some progress is being made but literature also alludes to practices which need to be aligned to the intended spirit of the legislation that seeks to redress imbalances of the past.

The various studies concur that coaching is beneficial for closing performance gaps which exist as a result of historical reasons, just as there is room to close those gaps through other interventions such as training and mentoring. Coaching forms part of that continuum, yet goes beyond that to developing specific competencies which may be generic to all leaders, or all women leaders, but also relates to individualised competencies.

**Table 1: Consistency table: research questions and propositions**

| RQ # | State Research Question | Prop / # | State Proposition |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1. | What are the needs of women? | 1 | Efforts to ensure progression of women in the petroleum industry can be enhanced to include coaching. |
| 1.1 | What opportunities are in place to ensure career progression of women? | | |
| 2 | What are the perceptions of coaching and contribution towards developing careers | 2 | Coaching is a transformative tool which can be used for enabling career progression of women managers. |
| 2.1 | What are the likely benefits of using coaching as an additional transformative intervention? | | |

# CHAPTER THREE: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

## 3.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter describes the qualitative methodology which was followed to understand the phenomenon of women's career progression in the petroleum industry. In this chapter the research approach, the design of the study, sampling, limitations of the study, data collection and interpretation is explained to address the "what" question of research. A section of the chapter addresses the "how" of this being done in the form of ethical considerations and building trustworthiness.

Research methodology can be explained as a way of creating new theory. According to McNiff and Whitehead (2010), research is a way of generating new theory which involves a long process. Depending on the direction that the research follows, these steps can be ordered sequentially or be conducted in a range of different approaches. This chapter illustrates the approach of the research and design as well as the data collection process. There is limited literature on the topic which is specific to women's progression in the petroleum industry as it pertains to coaching. Coaching was explored as a transformative tool which can assist with enabling and equipping individuals to be better leaders and managers. The qualitative approach explored the theory of the transformative nature of coaching as a practice.

For the purposes of examining the phenomenon of career progression of women managers in the petroleum industry, a qualitative methodology was adopted. According to Ochieng (2009), qualitative approaches to studies have a way of constructing new theory and frameworks. These new ways lead to discoveries and innovative approaches or fresh perceptions. This research aimed to answer the question of "why" there is seemingly a lack or

slow progression of women managers from the lower levels to upper levels of the industry. The second aspect of the research sought to answer the question of "how" coaching could potentially address that gap. The descriptive nature of qualitative research was utilised to gain insights into the reality of this phenomenon. Below is a proposed research approach:

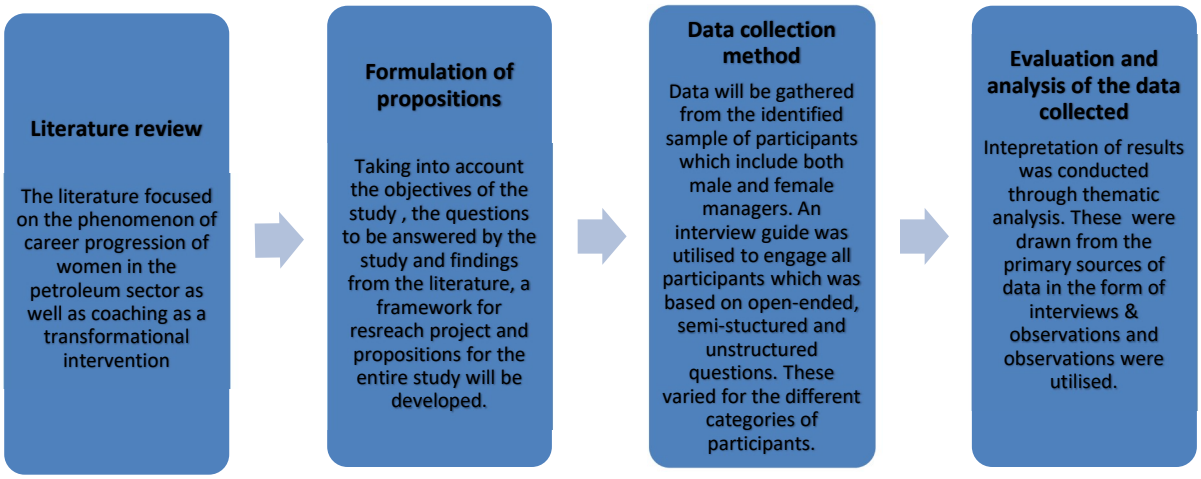



**Figure 2: Research Approach**

### 3.2 RESEARCH APPROACH

By its nature, qualitative approach is descriptive in that it is about paying attention to the words in relation to a specific context. The approach was informed by the nature of the proposition as well as the dynamic or challenge of limited information on the subject under study.

The assumptions of the qualitative study according to Ochieng (2009) are that qualitative research concerns itself with a) Process, rather than outcomes or products; b) Meaning of how people make sense of their lives, experiences and their structures of the world; c) Fieldwork since the researcher physically goes to the people, setting, site, or institution to observe or record behaviour in its natural setting; d) The process is inductive in that the researcher built abstractions, concepts, hypotheses and theories from details.

The study sought to understand perceptions, thoughts, motives and opinions on the subject of progression of women in the industry. For this reason, it was appropriate to interview both male and female managers to ascertain the various lenses of what they perceived to be challenges with regards to the progression of women in the petroleum industry. The qualitative enquiry into the phenomenon thus offered those lenses. According to Ochieng (2009), behaviour of human beings is influenced by the circumstances within which that phenomenon occurs and therefore should be studied within that particular context.

## 3.3 RESEARCH DESIGN

According to McMillan and Schumacher (2014), every study starts with an appropriate research question or purpose. McNiff and Whitehead (2010) suggests that design refers to the outline of how the study will be carried out and relates to how the new or emanating questions may be addressed and how probable risks may be dealt with.The study was carried out as explained below.

The researcher engaged extensively with the context to establish what the perceptions, experiences and opinions on progression of women into higher levels of management within the industry were. The responses or answers go beyond the female population, hence the sample included males.

Ochieng (2009) suggests that by its nature qualitative research is inductive and conclusions are drawn from details associated with the context. Due to limited research and availability of information on the coaching of women in the petroleum industry, the study sought to examine the validity of coaching as a transformational tool for women to progress to the next levels of management. McNiff and Whitehead (2010) purports that design also pertains to how the claims to the new knowledge will be elicited.

According to Denscombe (2014) advantages of the qualitative approach to research include the following:

a) Lenience of ambiguity and inconsistencies. This is not a reflection of weak analysis but of a reality or a phenomenon being explored.

b) Depth and detail to the data. The in-depth study of focused areas, modest research and rich descriptions means that qualitative research is good at dealing with complex behavioural situations.

c) The prospect of different explanations, which allows for the possibility that different researchers might reach different conclusions despite using broadly the same methods. In following this approach the aim was to further interrogate insights relating to the phenomenon by eliciting responses in detail.

## 3.4 DATA COLLECTION METHODS

Interviews were conducted using the interview guide and were facilitated using semi-structured questions. Primary data came from the participants in the sample.

Secondary data includes documentation or archival material like annual reports and historical information about the organisations. According to Ochieng (2009), the qualitative study concerns itself with description which is derived from understanding how things are done, and the meaning which is gathered through words and pictures. It is about gaining insights into what might be impediments to the realisation of the objectives.

## 3.5 POPULATION AND SAMPLE

Chenail (2011) suggests that while quality research is popular, having the researcher as a facilitator may negatively impact on rigor and be biased in terms of the interpretation. It was necessary for the researcher to be

reflective as a result of this potential challenge. Over and above this, the interview guide was developed and used for collecting data throughout.

### 3.5.1 Population

The population was drawn from the petroleum industry which is located within the energy industry. The study also focused on the phenomenon that pertains to career progression of women managers who are in the core or key petroleum business, not supporting functions like finance but including talent managers who facilitate career development in the organisation. The exclusion was aimed at narrowing the study to one segment which is petroleum for scalability of the study.

The sample of focus groups consisted of a specific level of managers and the coaching sample was specific to women who are in managerial level, specifically in the petroleum industry, although the managers may differ in their tenure or number of years worked in the industry.

### 3.5.2 Sample and sampling method

The sampling was homogeneous, meaning participants shared similar characteristics as it relates to a specific grouping of “managers”. According to McMillan and Schumacher (2014), qualitative sampling has to be from an environment which is “rich” with information. The sample for the research was drawn from the population of State Owned organisation. The sample consisted of entry/junior level managers up to executive level and included both male and female managers with short tenure and longer tenure within the industry. The size of the sample consisted of ten participants, both male and female managers across entry/junior level management, and mid to senior management up to executive level.

**Table 2: Profile of respondents by position**

| Description of Levels of Management | Number to be sampled |
|---|---|
| Talent Managers<br>Senior Executives<br>Senior Managers | 2<br>3<br>1 |
| Middle Managers & Junior/Entry Level Managers | 4 |
| Total number of respondents | 10 |

## 3.6 THE RESEARCH INSTRUMENT

Questions were developed to form an interview guide which was one of the instruments for collecting data throughout. Information from documentation and other organisational archives such as pictures, stories and articles was captured as input under general notes which pertain to the study.

## 3.7 PROCEDURE FOR DATA COLLECTION

Permission was given to conduct the study through Human Resource Managers in the two organisations but with the researcher being required to liaise directly with the chief executive officer of the women's empowerment organisation. The reason for entry through Human Resources/Talent Managers was that they may be the primary beneficiaries of the outcome since they manage talent processes, and furthermore, they would be best placed to motivate internally for the study to be conducted. The researcher then conducted interviews with all participants using the interview guide. The specific questions asked yielded responses to the propositions. Chenail (2011) suggests that researchers in qualitative studies tend to conduct sets of open-ended questions so as to discover more from the study.

## 3.8 DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

According to Denscombe (2014), qualitative research data and the analysis are usually substantiated. A particular strength associated with the qualitative research is that the descriptions and theories that such research generates are substantiated in reality.

Data was analysed, coded and then categorised according to themes. Since the study used structured, semi-structured and unstructured questions, analysis of content, theme analysis and coding was used. Morse (2015) states that it is ideal to establish a coding system when such questions are used. The use of the mentioned questions generated a lot of content to work with in response to the research objective.

Tracy (2010) states that with regard to the data-analysis approach, the researcher has to build in rigour through sorting, choosing and organizing the data. Theming of information was according to the emerging patterns. The themes were eventually linked back to the categories which fed into propositions and how they were responding to the “why” or the “how” question of the study.

## 3.9 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

The researcher encountered limitations in terms of accessibility of participants for the study due to time constraints; limited participation of women in the higher levels of management and senior leadership in the petroleum industry; and a limited understanding due to lack of personal exposure to coaching as a transformative tool.

## 3.10 TRUSTWORTHINESS

The fact that the researcher is an instrument in the study required particular care with regard to specific activities so that the researcher was not biased and did not anticipate any specific outcomes (Morse, 2015). This addressed the aspect of leaning on value-laden theory and personal bias towards the subject of the study. According to Chenail (2011), this could be a threat to trustworthiness if time is not spent on preparing adequately, if the researcher does not reflect sufficiently and also alludes to humility and the possibility of creating a co-facilitated container for the work being undertaken.

## 3.11 TRANSFERABILITY

Tracy (2010) notes that the extent to which the stories of others in the research can evoke a feeling of having experienced the same thing is described as transferability. The positive transferability was created by allowing individual participants to share their experiences and for these to translate into plausible and valid findings in the study.

## 3.12 CREDIBILITY

Tracy (2010) suggests that credibility is about the extent to which one can trust the applicability of the findings of the study. In conducting the research study through focus groups and action research, the aim was to obtain information from participants through building credibility into the study.

## 3.13 DEPENDABILITY

Chenail (2011) states that dependability is about the trustworthiness of the study and suggests that time should be spent preparing for the study, while

also alludingto characteristics associated with that such as humility and the ability to work with others. On the other hand, Morse (2015) describes dependability as reliability, meaning one would obtain the same results following the same method. For this research to build dependability, the researcher had to take into consideration contributions of the participants and prepare accordingly so as to attain the objectives of the study.

## 3.14 CONFIRMABILITY

Confirmability of the study was accomplished through the use of the same set of questions throughout the study with all the partcipants. The scope or depth of the study was only explored through probing the responses from participants and picking up on cues from the interviews.

## 3.15 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

According to Tracy (2010), ethics are not just a means, but they contribute to the intended outcomes and the quality of the qualitative research. Tracy (2010) further states that ethics form part of the quality of the research with various other ingredients that make the research valuable. Ethics permeates across practices with regard to procedures, varying situations and relations within the study as well as after the research has been completed. According to Resnik (2011), ethics is defined as norms which distinguish between acceptable and unacceptable behaviour.

Informed consent is understood to be a verbal or written agreement between the researcher and the participant, with the explanation of what the study is about and the details prior to the commencement of the research. It is about adherence to what is agreed between the participants and the researcher.

With regard to confidentiality and anonymity, Fouché and Schurink (2012) states that the purpose of ethics, violation of privacy, the right to self-determination and confidentiality can be viewed as being synonymous. Privacy, in its most basic meaning, is to keep to oneself that which is normally not intended for others to observe or analyse. Tracy (2010) notes that method in the procedures by the researcher must protect the participants' information and details from exposure as well as the privacy of participants and the data they supply to the study. This is not limited to how the study is conducted but includes how the results of the research may be shared or disseminated.

Due care was an important consideration for the researcher, who exercised a "no harm" policy. The researcher was respectful and treated the study and participants with dignity. According to Tracy (2010), how the researcher relates to the participants' ethical self-consciousness must be exercised. This means they ought to be mindful of their actions and interactions with the participants.

# CHAPTER FOUR: FINDINGS & DISCUSSION

## 4.1 INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this chapter is to present the research findings from the qualitative study conducted with ten participants. The chapter begins with the profile of the participants, aggregated into years of service and management levels of the participants. The research findings are presented in the form of themed quotes from participants which were derived from the transcribed interviews. These have been aligned according to their relevance in response to either the first proposition, *"Efforts to ensure progression of women in the petroleum industry can be enhanced to include coaching",* or the second proposition, *"Coaching is a transformative tool which can be used for enabling career progression of women managers".* The chapter then closes with a summarised conclusion of the findings.

The themes that emerged from the categories were derived from the coded responses of the participants. These were transcribed together with the storylines and/or quotations to form part of the findings. Interview participants received a letter of what the research study covers as well as the permission from the Head of Human Capital to conduct the study via email. The researcher used an interview guide to interview the participants and conducted one-on-one interviews through video calls. Summarising, listening and clarifying, and probing were used in the interview. Probing was used as a follow-up on the responses from the participants. Data was thereafter transcribed verbatim.

The barriers to women's achievement and career progression in the petroleum sector have been well researched. It has long been acknowledged that career breaks for child-rearing, for example, and women's self-beliefs about their abilities can impact negatively on their

careers, and many programmes and policies have been implemented to redress these around the world. Through the accounts of 12 participants, the researcher detailed findings in response to both propositions, namely Proposition 1: “Efforts to ensure progression of women in the petroleum industry can be enhanced to include coaching” and Proposition 2: “Coaching is a transformative tool which can be used for enabling career progression of women managers”.

## 4.2 DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE OF RESPONDENTS

Table 3 below presents the demographic profile of participants in the study.

**Table 3: Profile of the respondents**

| Partic-ipant | Gen-der | Role and background | Tenure |
|---|---|---|---|
| Participant 1 | F | Senior Executive – Bio Chemics | 10 years |
| Participant 2 | M | Senior Executive – Process Engineer | 13 years |
| Participant 3 | M | Middle Management-Human Resources Manager | 10 years |
| Participant 4 | F | Middle Management -Contracts and Services department | 13 years |
| Participant 5 | M | Middle Manager – Process Engineer | 7 years |
| Participant 6 | M | Senior Executive - Operations | 30 years |
| Participant 7 | F | Middle Management- Human Resources Manager | 10 years |
| Participant 8 | F | Junior Management - Senior Process Controller Blending and Storage | 8 years |
| Participant 9 | F | Junior Management – Senior Process Controller | 8 years |
| Participant 10 | F | Senior Manager Blending and storage in the Department of Operations. | 13 years |

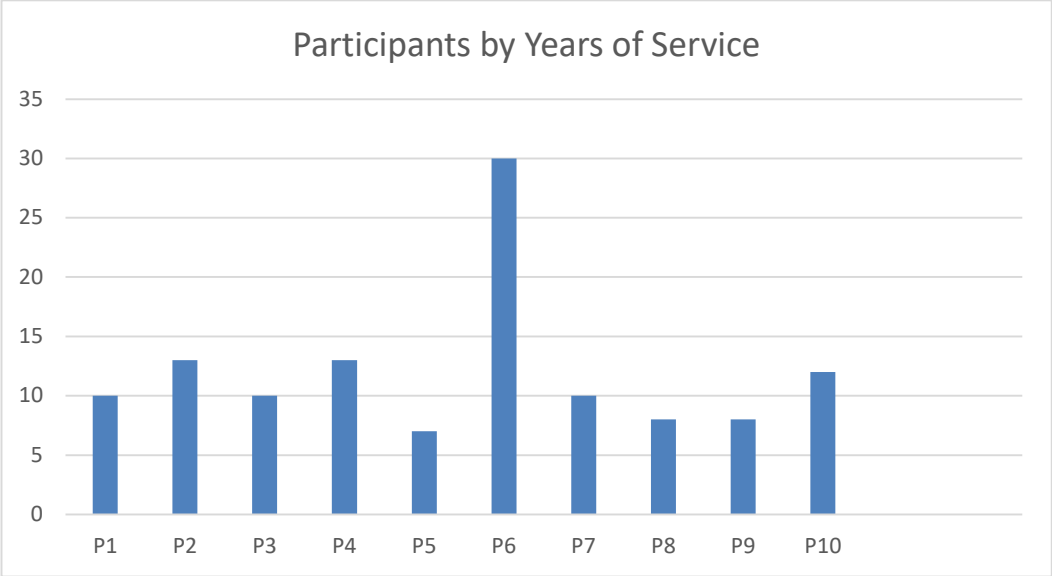



**Figure 3: Participants by years of service**

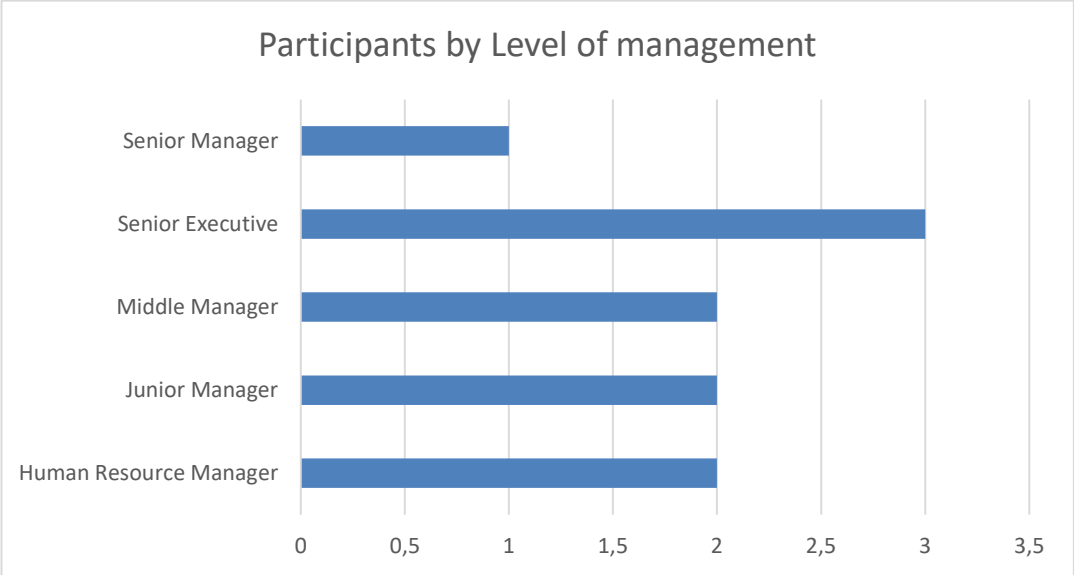



**Figure 4: Participants by Levels of Management**

## 4.3 FINDINGS PERTAINING TO "EFFORTS TO ENSURE PROGRESSION OF WOMEN IN THE PETROLEUM INDUSTRY CAN BE ENHANCED TO INCLUDE COACHING"

The first proposition was, "Efforts to ensure progression of women in the petroleum industry can be enhanced to include coaching." In responding to this proposition, questions that are posed as part of answering the first proposition are: What opportunities are in place to ensure career progression of women? What are the needs of women?

The following themes directed understanding currently available of efforts aimed at development and career progression for women. What was also derived from the participants in the research study were the perceptions of what could be considered as the needs of women.

### 4.3.1 Barriers to advancement

It is apparent that systems, practices and processes as well as the culture which has been built up over a period of time continues to favour men. Although legislation has attempted to address this historical barrier, women remain at a disadvantage in terms of joining the petroleum industry and attaining advancement in their careers. It is evident that men have always occupied such roles and thus they have progressed to higher roles over a period of time in the petroleum sector. They continue to occupy central roles and advance in leadership faster and further than their women counterparts. This continues to maintain the status quo and reinforces the notion that women are to negotiate themselves into the organisation as well as navigate to upper leadership echelons.

As explained by a participant: "*There is a perception that when women join the organisation they are coming into the men's world."*

Participants explained that men continue to be empowered and are able to progress more quickly than their women counterparts who find themselves having to “catch-up” with their male colleagues in the working environment. Both men and women refer to informal networks formulated by men in the organisation, which assist men who sustainably thrive in their careers. It was clear that women felt excluded from such networks which were historically designed for men. These networks enable the exchange of information, motivation, formulation of relationships with men who are well versed in career paths and ways of enhancing career progression. The networks, which are sometimes referred to as “old boys clubs” have a long history in the majority of male-dominated organisations which is the case with the petroleum organisation. The participants noted that such groupings resulted in women feeling like they are intruding into a men’s world:

> *“Women are often excluded from meetings, information sharing and significant decision-making sessions as a result of these ‘old boys clubs’”.*

The research revealed that men appeared to have an advantage within the culture which was established by men and favours them. Systems, practices and norms of the working environment were entrenched and many women still had to address this in order to define their own contribution to the working environment. Such a context was effectively a barrier to building networks, garnering support and overcoming the negative working conditions that may prevail in certain organisations. Where women failed to do so, this served to reinforce the perception that the petroleum industry is male-dominated. A Human Resources manager explained that:

> *“'Barriers in the current organisation is the brotherhood of people who have been in the working environment. The environment can be intimidating and some of the women are broken down by some of the occurrences. Some of the work is dirty and demands physical expectations are harsh. The culture can be abrasive, language,*

*insults and men culture. The response to the culture sometimes is that women find it unbearable to work under those conditions".'*

The challenges which emerge from the lack of information sharing, career path planning, mentoring opportunities and professional support is that women are not afforded the same opportunities as their male counterparts. Women are left with the task of finding various formats of coping mechanisms that will potentially contribute positively to their advancement.

The challenges for women in their advancement is closely linked to systemic deficits and processes associated with the sector. The overall number of women is limited in the oil industry and this limits the number of women who could progress or shift significantly within an organisation at senior executive level. This potentially has to do with intake through recruitment and placement initially and later efforts of retention and lack of support for women which translates into under-representation at successive levels of management.

One of the frustrations that women experience is the extent of the time spent in specific roles which results in slower progression to the next level or role. It would seem that although women do come through the entry levels, the level of experience required to move to supervisory levels first, before proceeding to subsequent managerial levels, takes much longer. By the time women become managers they could have easily been with the company over ten years.

A participants who is at junior management level indicated that: *"Women come through at entry level and they get stuck at supervisory levels"*

Some participants indicated that the essential criteria for career development in the petroleum industry were high mobility and field experience, an important concern for skilled women working in the

petroleum industry. High mobility may not be something which all women consider since they may have other personal dynamics in relation to roles they play outside of their work. Not all women aspire to move into higher positions due to the demands of such mobility, as explained by a woman manager:

> *"'Lack of exposure and there are few women at the pre-managerial levels, whilst there are no restrictions, some people don't have a drive to go up. The number of years required to be qualified for the next level is a barrier"'.*

Women alluded to being affected by social expectations and that they are likely to consider family and relationship aspirations and problems before beginning their careers. Although they comply with the expectations and hours of work within the sector, work-life balance is a concern for most women in the sector. While this could be considered strategic from a broader "life planning" perspective, the effect of this forethought is that, in anticipation of family considerations, women could limit their career options from the outset. This is evidenced by a senior executive who notes that:

> *"'Family is impacted because of the catch-up at work. Depression and stressful working environment. There is an instance of a right candidate, right position, but she demanded more resources for support."*

The demands that women have to engage with include balancing work and family commitments. This highlights the role of time and family commitments as a further obstacle. For instance, the need to adjust to being available outside of usual working hours results in substantial work-related effects, presenting an additional disadvantage in their involvement in the networks. Due to less time spent at work, as measured against that of their male counterparts, as a result of home and family commitments, women find themselves at a disadvantage.

> Although policies have been adjusted and changed to align with legislation which addresses imbalances of the past that may include gender discrimination, the organisational culture has not transformed. What appears to persist is gender discrimination which considers women on the basis of their traditional role expectations as mothers and therefore there may be some bias when considering women for their work roles, as Participant 1 explains:*"Liberate women not to feel guilty, just because by design we are homebuilders we are not less capable of being in careers. Men have an equal responsibility of nurturing and family builder."*

There seems to be little confidence in appointing women into key roles. In cases where they are afforded opportunities to occupy those roles, they are often not fully supported. A key concern is that for some of the roles competent candidates are overlooked in favour of weaker candidates who remain dependent on their male seniors. This behaviour is supported and sustained by the organisational culture and norms. Participant Two stated:

> *"Women are placed in roles which do not match their study background, not supported and left to fail".*

Furthermore, as explained by a participant:

> *"Leaders must create the path and space for the women to lead without making them feel guilty about their other responsibilities. Judgement must be suspended in how they are likely to perform".*

The gender bias continues to exist in that some of the roles are allocated or earmarked for men instead of women. As a result, even when opportunities may arise for skills transfer with the aim of advancing from one to another role, women are not necessarily the first choice. There is a perception that women are not sufficiently keen to advance in their careers as well as there being unfairness when women join the core segment of the petroleum industry.

### 4.3.2 Current efforts

The definition of what training is and the opportunities that impact on career progression are rigid as they restrict themselves to the employee's occupied functional role. It appears that the training provided is not targeted specifically to women and furthermore is only intended to build skills and provide the required tools. For example, in spite of being directly relevant to certain roles, specific training initiatives may be linked only to specific job definitions, such as graduates in training or those on internship programmes. Where the women's programme previously existed with the aim of progressing their skills, it appears that men also wanted to be part of the developmental programme. There is thus limited intentionality in progressing women through designated or acceralated development programmes.

One of the women managers stated that:

> *"More of the training which is implemented lately is to ensure there is compliance with statutory requirements as opposed to personal developmental training."*

On the other hand, one of the participants observed that:

> *"Training alone is not sufficient to enable progression of women to their next levels of management or career roles".*

The argument is that the organisation develops competencies for its own benefit and has limited interest in implementing transformational intent which includes development and progression of women to higher levels of the organisation. There is a view that if the organisation is determined to advance women, it has to be more intentional in its approach to developing and progressing women.

The legislation exists and continues to challenge organisations to enable access and entry of women into the organisation. However, that does not

guarantee advancement into senior positions. There is a need for additional efforts to be made to promote access for women to act in higher positions. However, this is not followed through with a formal succession plan to appoint women into those positions when the opportunity arises.

One participant explains:
*“Women are allowed to act for a short period, while the organisation looks for a male candidate to take over the job.”*

Another dimension which is overlooked is that of providing support for women acting in higher positions. Such support, for example, could be mentoring, as one participant suggests:

> *“The shadowing of higher roles for women should be accompanied by a mentorship programme”.*

There does not appear to be a discipline that ensures sustainability for the efforts of investing in those who have acted in senior roles. This suggests that acting in a position does not guarantee a permanent appointment into the role at a later stage. The organisation does not capitalise on those efforts to build the advancement of women, as evidenced by a women participant in middle management who states that:

> *“'There is allowance for one to act in a position as a way of preparing people who will be progressed”.*

It appears that women who have progressed through the higher levels of management came from outside organisations into managerial levels. Those who have come through theorganisation’s ranks have succeeded through assuming different roles across the organisation. There is a view that women need to drive themselves, yet there are cases of women who do qualify for specific posts or shifts and are not adequately supported. On the other hand, perceptions of stronger women candidate as threats can influence decisions concerning women’s qualities and performance. It would

seem that when women fail to confirm to prevailing perceptions or formed stereotypes of “women’s competence” and expectations of female gender, this generates negative views from colleagues and may result in negative assessments.

A senior executive who has been with the organisation for thirteen years indicates that:

> *“On top there were always men, problem is that women are placed in a position to fail. They get appointed and not trained and set up for success. They fail and are not supported, mostly the strong candidates are side-lined and the weaker ones are appointed so that they keep depending on the older managers”.*

There appeared to be broad acceptance that the nature of the industry is such that it demands hours outside of the usual working hours. This is because of the geographic nature of the upstream component of the industry as well as long hours and shift work in the refinery process component of the industry. Some women participants maintain that there should not be any special treatment for women in this regard yet some of the male responses regard this a factor to be considered when women are identified for senior levels of management. Where women are considered for acting in higher roles, there appears to be little consideration given to the duality of their careers and the work-life balance which is required given that the nature of a petroleum organisation demands extensive time away from home which women may not be able to do due to child-bearing and child rearing. However, a male human resources manager observed:

> *“With the opportunities provided for women, work-life balance concessions have to be considered”.*

From the perspective of women it appears that the working environment they find themselves in makes it difficult for them to confidently approach their roles. There is a perception that women do not approach their careers

in a confident way so as to succeed in their roles and progress but that where they fail in their roles this is due to their own self-sabotaging behaviours. The alternate view is that training is made available and opportunities are presented, but that women need to put themselves forward to benefit from these, and learn from their male and female colleagues who have advanced, as alluded to by a senior woman executive:

> *"Women should drive themselves and not wait for the organisation" ….. "we have to make use of the available training, we need to push ourselves".*

A female human resources manager observed that:

> *"Women are broken by the environment and working conditions which are not ideal".*

It appears that due to some of the women who join the managerial cohort and start behaving like men, conforming to the way things are done seems to be the norm. This perpetuates the perception that the norms and culture built around men is ideal and these therefore persist and are maintained in the working environment. What women appear to require, however, is more than being appointed into junior and senior management roles but to be equipped to cope with their environment.

One participant explained that, in their environment, *"Women are unable to respond to their environment".*

It is evident that women also find themselves competing for fewer roles. There are not enough roles or positions becoming available because incumbents who happen to be male occupy these for longer periods. With fewer roles and longer turnover periods, opportunities for women to move into higher roles are limited.

## 4.4 FINDINGS PERTAINING TO "COACHING AS A TRANSFORMATIVE TOOL TO USE FOR ENABLING CAREER PROGRESSION OF WOMEN MANAGERS

The second proposition is "Coaching as a transformative tool which can be used for enabling career progression of women managers". Questions used to explore this proposition include: "What are the likely benefits of using coaching as an additional transformative intervention?" and "What are the perceptions of coaching and its contribution towards developing careers?"

Themes which emerged include understanding of what coaching is from the participants, current gaps identified in terms of development as well as perceived benefits of coaching for individuals and the organisation.

### 4.4.1 Understanding of coaching and associated benefits

There is a need to improve the awareness and understanding of the purpose of coaching in the organisation. Where there has been performance coaching offered some participants have benefited in their functional roles. As a result, some of the participants expressed that they have experienced coaching while others have not. Some confused mentoring and coaching and to a certain extent. There is also a need to clarify the difference between mentoring and coaching. Below are statements made by participants about coaching:

> *"Coaching is not different from mentoring since both are about a relationship where the aim is to help the coachee or mentee to achieve goals".*
>
> *"Coaching is teaching, guiding and showing how to do".*
>
> *"Coaching could be considered for women where they get stuck".*

The participants' perceived understanding of the benefits of coaching is linked or confused with mentoring. The view of the researcher is that there is a need to clarify and create an understanding of the various interventions,

namely coaching versus mentoring and clarifying the associated benefits. This would be beneficial for all employees so that they have a common understanding of how the organisation operates as well as the petroleum sector. Participant One explained that:

> "*For the workplace we take time off to see what is needed, we take time off to do strategy, to plan etc. But we don't take time to reflect at the individual level."* Furthermore,
> *"Coaching is a much needed intervention for any corporate person, not only when climbing up the ladder."*

In addition, it was noted that: two of the participants senior male and female executive respectivelysuggest that

> *"Coaching is not different from mentoring in that both suggest having someone that has a relationship which helps them achieve their goals".*
> *"Coaching should be applied at all levels from when they come into the working environment and be deliberately considered".*
>
> Even with an inadequate understanding or experience of coaching, there is a view that coaching could be considered over and above the training which is provided and should be at all levels of career for women. To a certain extent there is an understanding of what coaching is and what it is intended to achieve. It should be a programme where there is deliberate planning of what should be achieved. One participant explained:*"Coaching is about self-growth and is sadly not afforded time".*

### 4.4.2 Current gaps in development

The research identified that there does not seem to be any intervention that addresses the challenges associated with the demanding nature of the petroleum industry where women are specifically concerned. The orientation for women may be different for men and therefore necessitates

some degree of support given the norms and practices which have been alluded to as being favourable to men. These aspects have worked well for men and as such women coming into these environments have to consider what it means for their life in its entirety.

Participant observed that:

> *"Organisational culture must be reset to integrate women." "The organisation has to take a chance with women and not wait for them to be ready but make them ready".*
>
> *"Options which could be formally considered include enabling women to work in different projects across the entity and sister companies to enable their progression".*

The findings from the study revealed that while career progression could be considered strategic from a broader "life planning" perspective, the effect of this forethought is that, in anticipation of family considerations, women could limit their career options from the outset. This could provide an opportunity to deal with such limitations and to approach careers in this way may help to strategise for any eventuality and still enable progression. It appeared that since women are more likely to be affected by social expectations and are likely to prioritise family and relationship aspirations and problems which may impede their careers, this gave rise to the question of whether women need to choose either career or work and compromise one or another. This is evidenced by the senior male executive who stated that:

> *"'Family is impacted because of the catch-up at work and depression and stressful working environment. In the case where there was a right candidate in a right position, she demanded more resources for support".*

Whether it is the family impact or simply changes in the life stages of women who are eager to pursue their career and progress, there is a need to factor in transitional support. Support provided through training is viable for

functional excellence, training on-the-job remains valid for productivity in the technical aspect but the “doing life” and possibly personal development of leadership efficacy requires a dedicated intervention in the form of support. From observation, it appeared that life stages for women require additional support through coaching which considers personal aspects resulting from dual career responsibilities.

## 4.5 SUMMARY OF THE RESULTS/FINDINGS

There were divergent views of what women need for them to progress to higher roles within the organisation. It was suggested that women need to be correctly placed, supported and promoted while another view was that they need no special or specific treatment aimed at their progression. Some of the women who have made it to senior levels of management suggested that all efforts that are required are at an individual level. The researcher, however, was of the view that inequality cannot be overlooked as a problem which women have to resolve by themselves in the workplace.

Current efforts which include training and acting in senior roles are available to all employees. While these opportunities or initiatives exist, they do not necessarily translate into progression of women’s careers for a range of reasons. Amongst reasons cited were historical barriers and the organisational culture which perpetuates gender stereotyping, gender bias as well as limited exposure at senior level. The organisational culture has served men for as long as the sector has existed and the expectation has been that women should be assimilated rather than integrated, and to conform to the dominant culture that favours male counterparts.

Participants indicated in the research process that even though women may feel unsupported, they are confident enough to tackle senior roles. Coaching and mentoring are suggested as supportive interventions which are likely to help women deal with some of the challenges from their

individual perspectives. Furthermore, whenever women act in a higher position, it does not always result in them being appointed in the same roles. Where they are able to take up senior roles, some feel unsupported and feel they are set up to fail. Due to the modelling experienced, it follows that those who are succeeding them consider themselves inadequate to assume senior roles.

Despite the challenges identified, there are some women who have progressed and they attribute their progression to personal motivation. Some of their advancement is based on merit. Some are appointed to senior management as external appointments, and certain women attest to the fact that they received enough training and all they need is personal motivation to push themselves to progress to the next levels of management and leadership. Their entrance into those levels has not shifted the environment in their favour and some have indeed assimilated the status quo. The systemic challenge of longer tenure before managerial promotion seems to be a challenge which exists for women who are already in the system. It does not, however, appear to be a challenge for women who enter the organisation already at managerial level.

While there may be pockets of support and efforts for women to be trained and exposed in senior roles, there is a view or perception of additional intervention being required to support women so that they advance in their careers. With the varied understanding of coaching, there is a belief that it is a solution over and above existing efforts which are aimed at developing women. The perception is that coaching is required throughout all the stages of women's careers and will assist in balancing out all aspects which entail personal growth and functional development. There is also a view that having an organisational culture which embraces coaching will help the organisation to transform and thus be more conducive for the growth of women's careers.

# CHAPTER FIVE: DISCUSSION OF THE FINDINGS

## 5.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents a discussion of the findings which relate to the research objective and will analyse the findings in relation to the literature review. Literature review, according to Connor and Hearn (as cited in McMillan & Schumacher, 2014:85) establishes important links between existing knowledge and the research problem being explored, which enhances significance, and provides helpful information about methodology that can be incorporated into a new study. This is also elaborated by De Vos, Strydom, Fouche and Delport (2012:133), who state that “literature is an excellent source for selecting an irrelevant or outdated topic/focus by investigating what has been done in a particular problem area.”

The primary research objective was to explore the possibility of having coaching as an intervention which could enhance development with the ultimate result being progress in the careers of women managers. The focus was on understanding current efforts that may be in place to enable progression of women managers and also assess their impact.

The conceptual framework used made assumptions that there are processes which have to be followed for individuals to be promoted. Entry level into the organisation or any level is through recruitment, followed by training and development which is focused on developing the skills required for the role, and thereafter mentoring and succession planning where applicable. It was assumed that these may not necessarily be sequential but are considered as part of developmental interventions.

Subsequent to these processes, the assumption is that training and development of individuals is effected according to what is expected of the

role and future career requirements. Where succession and mentoring processes exist, individuals would then be subjected to relevant processes based on their career trajectory and choice. By defining processes, such coaching is able to form part of the framework, suggesting that over and above the presumed processes which lead up to promotion or progression, coaching will enable and enhance the progression of women managers.

Interpretation of the findings drew on the literature review to provide insight into the perceptions of the impact coaching would likely have on enhancing development and ultimately the career progression of women in the petroleum sector.

## 5.2 DISCUSSION: "EFFORTS TO ENSURE PROGRESSION OF WOMEN IN THE PETROLEUM INDUSTRY CAN BE ENHANCED TO INCLUDE COACHING"

The barriers which manifest as women being impeded at particular stages of their careers, spending longer periods in specific role levels before progressing, as well as issues of balancing work and life can be understood through the literature to be historical and organisation-wide as well as having direct impact on women at their individual level. Miller (2004) and Nefdt (2017) alluded to the core petroleum roles being traditionally male-dominated as well as leadership roles being predominantly held by males in the petroleum sector. While the dominant or contemporary organisational theory seeks to explain the encumbrances to women's career progress and advancement in terms of how women as individual employees are (un)able to balance their work and life domains, there needs to be further interrogation of the issues and challenges that women may encounter in advancing their careers.

Gayani Fernando, Amaratunga and Haigh (2014) suggest that a transformational shift that is required within the petroleum sector has to

enable systemic redress which takes into consideration progression of women's careers without a need to assimilate or take on the ideas, or absorb what already exists as the dominant culture but rather be incorporated and integrated and valued for the diversity that they present.

While the systemic challenges, gender disparity and bias remain key hindrances, other challenges at the individual level equally demand attention. Either way, their experiences are subjective and would require a response from the individual level just as organisational response is also required. Women face common barriers when exploring notions of gender equity in the workplace such as salary, career progression and seniority, together with similarities of gender barriers and divides as reported in the petroleum field (Associated Press, 2010).

Bélanger (2011) and Kolb (2007) observe that learning is an outcome which emanates from an individual's interaction with their environment and can be said to be a creation of transformation of that which has been experienced. Moalusi and Jones (2019) argue that it is not enough to claim that women struggle, as one of the challenges with balancing work and life, but organisations have to immerse themselves in the reasons why gender inequality continues to exist when legislation prescribes eradication of such in the workplace. Literature on experiential learning and approach confirms that for change to take place integrative learning should be personal and holistic, taking into account context, cognition and applying analytical detachment. There should be intentionality to confront and enact changes from all aspects at both organisational level but also at individual level for development and advancement of women to occur.

### 5.2.1 Current efforts and impact

Current efforts constitute training and enabling women to function in higher roles. The question of acquisition of skills is addressed in that training programmes are available and the programme of acting in higher roles answers the question of exposure for women to gain more experience. However, Starling and Robertson (2004) and Abramson et al (2019) suggest that the petroleum industry is not responsive enough to challenges experienced overall and is not fully leveraging the value and worth women are likely to bring to the work environment.

While there are efforts in enabling women to act in higher positions there is no support or follow-through to ensure that the efforts translate into promotion. Some of the women who have succeeded in progressing in the oil industry have typically opted to conform to the existing rules and patterns of conduct and are hesitant to propose innovations that would be seen as too distinct, but which could help the organisation. According to Maskell-Pretz and Hopkins (cited in Gertzen, 2006), style and experience were two factors that restricted female advancement in the engineering fraternity. Aggression and rivalry rates were very poor in terms of women's management styles. Many women have opted for "softer style" approaches in which they have been socialized. Contrary to how internationally competitive markets work, this is considered by some to be and the appropriate way in which culture mandates women to conduct themselves. However, the dynamic world in which corporations work suggests that to remain ahead requires managed hostility and a competitive streak.

Women with stronger competencies may be viewed as a threat to the current gender hierarchy and intimidating males who occupy significant roles. Sephoti (2010) asserts in earlier research that women are impeded from advancing to senior levels by such challenges. Recent research indicates that working for a woman who has more prestige and/or authority may create a feeling of danger and assertive actions on the part of male

subordinates. Effects are reduced when women emphasize their administrative agency (e.g. an emphasis on getting the job done) versus ambition (e.g. the aspiration to climb the corporate ladder). Ambitious attitudes are often seen as an emasculation of men. The concept of “turf protection” has also been evident in recent econometric studies. Beyond the issues being systemic and organisational, the findings suggest that women could potentially make significant shifts by learning how to respond to the environment at an individual level in order to advance in their careers.

Researchers Cristian Dezsö (2012) and colleagues examined data from 1,500 Standard & Poor rated firms from 1991 to 2011.They noticed that after an organisation had promoted a woman to an executive role, the chances of hiring a second woman had fallen by around 50%. Abramson et al (2019) suggest that the petroleum industry should take into account that representation of both male and female candidates considered for early promotion in their employment pool may mitigate unintended bias and that in companies that have adopted these practices, more women get promoted.

The efforts of human resource development should go beyond merely the functional training but extend to personal development which may entail self-leadership. Jones, Woods and Guillaume (2016) suggests that coaching forms part of a process which can enable further development as an intervention. Intentional targeted development which is aimed at progression or promotion is not addressed by the current training approach or type of coaching that has been afforded employees. The focus may be forward-looking in terms of skilling and coaching for current and future performance, yet there is uncertainty on its aims regarding promotion of employees in general as well as women as a specific target group.

The faith and ability of young women to compete for early career opportunities is important, considering that early promotion and

development have resulted in long-term career attainment. Career-based tournament theory studies suggest that individuals who have early career success earn special advantages (e.g. high-level mentoring sponsorship; participation in high-potential growth programmes) that offer a cumulative benefit over time in subsequent tournament rounds.

## 5.3 DISCUSSION: "COACHING IS A TRANSFORMATIVE TOOL AND CAN BE USED FOR ENABLING CAREER PROGRESSION OF WOMEN MANAGERS"

### 5.3.1 Coaching and associated benefits

In order to improve their careers, women have made strides in enhancing their qualifications. However, the data also suggests reduced women's representation in executive roles and board participation. O'Neil et al. (2015) refers to challenges of development ranging from organisational and systemic barriers as well as capacity gaps which arise from organisational norms and practices. Some of the gaps may be closed by training interventions but some may not necessarily be closed through existing development efforts.

The confusion of mentoring and coaching presents an opportunity for creating understanding and purpose of both interventions. Joo, Sushko and McLean (2012) suggest that coaching has become significant and is seen as part of all processes linked to human development which include leadership where coaching has existed as a performance management tool to support deliverables in the functional or technical context.

There is an increasing interest in the setting of goals and a need for a role which provides assistance in achieving career progression goals. Bond and Naughton (2011) suggests that there is a need for coaching employees through transitions and Deiorio, Carney, Kahl, Bonura, and Juve (2016) support the view that coaching is key in development of specific

competencies. Whether this “sounding board” role is understood as mentoring or coaching, there is an acknowledgement that there is social reality, own experiences and other factors which influence learning and which are required for change and transformation to take place.

Feeder process to managerial levels is either impeded or not carefully considered at even the earlier stages of transition in careers; systemically there are no checks and balances which ensure that those who are acting are progressed and not replaced by men at a later stage after acting in higher roles.

Catalyst research shows that women are more likely to receive mentoring relative to the type of mentoring that men receive, suggesting that they are less qualified. Ibarra, Carter and Silva (2010 ) address how females seem to be over-mentored and under-sponsored in the Harvard Business Review. A sponsor advocates the promotion of the mentee with senior managers and lobbies for their mentees. Ibarra et al (2010) found that women are more likely to be offered seemingly benevolent advice on knowing themselves than guidance on going ahead with their careers, while men are more likely to be involved in strategic planning to take on new positions.

The format of existing coaching may seemingly be addressing the functional aspect as alluded to by Brochbank (2008 ) as opposed to closing of the gaps, which points to a key understanding required to be able to address the relevant capacity gap with the ultimate result of career progression.

### 5.3.2 Case for coaching women

Capacity gaps which have to be addressed go beyond individual functional considerations. The issue seems to be whether or not women can be both high-profile leaders and also loving mothers. Leimon, Moscovici and Goodier (2011) reiterate a case for coaching women in Table 4 below.

**Table 4: Case for coaching women**

| Individual Level | Systemic & Organisational | Historical Barriers |
|---|---|---|
| Manage life stages which include child-bearing and child-rearing | Diversification of the workforce addresses leadership gaps | Empowers women on how to lead in the absence of mentoring from men |
| Builds managerial and leadership qualities thus empowering women to lead | Breaks down the absence of women and builds women mentors and examples | Builds women-friendly environment |
| | | Meets the transformational goals in terms of legislative requirement (South Africa) |

In a review of media comments made when Marissa Mayer was named chief executive officer of Yahoo when pregnant, Mayer was also judged on her success as a mother in both the United States and non-United States news sources. Bloggers and blog comments suggested that women could not "have it all" and regarded Mayer mainly as a workaholic, absentee mother who would abdicate her child care responsibilities by hiring nannies.

Life stages may be broad to be also inclusive or entry level into the career at an early age, potentially in a specialist role, mid-life where considerations are made regarding solidifying career choices and/or family building, and the prevalent one of transition of the dual role of women as mothers and career builders, a core aspect of the identity of a woman. The unrealistic expectation of parenting set out in the "motherhood mandate" sends an implicit message that it is difficult for women to excel both at home and at work. On the other hand, social standards are less severe and often beneficial to fathers, as their stereotypical primary function as caregivers is

associated with success in the family. The key aspect of life-stages is that they occur at different stages for women and the coping or response is unique to each woman, hence the subjective approach to learning and the reflective nature and processing of coaching.

Society has high expectations of women, but particularly of mothers. Despite the legislative policies to improve women's advancement, technical and psychological obstacles continue to prevail which hinder women's development in the workplace. Work-life balance, inadequate networking opportunities and the absence of role models are the major challenges facing women in this regard.

When females become mothers, identical job patterns are discovered. In part, these sacrifices may be due to views on the primacy of the role of a woman in caregiving, especially raising children. Society still largely considers marriage and motherhood as the main goal of women. Mark (DATE) states in Forbes magazine, "Why Most Women Will Never Become CEO", that, "…as much as women have achieved in earning their equality, there are still some age-old cultural habits that won't die. Children need their mommies. And most moms I know, whether they have a full-time job or not, want to be there for their child. I know plenty of women who admit they struggle with this instinctual tug on their gut." This reflects the idea that if they do not feel guilty for working, women are not normal. They may, however, be less likely to feel this guilt when men re-frame their primary position within the family as breadwinners.

## 5.4 CONCLUSION

Although women are entering the sector, they remain under-represented in the petroleum sector's core technical roles which are traditionally occupied by men. The nature of the sector is said to be challenging for women with geographical challenges associated with most of the roles, i.e. geology.

Over and above systemic and overarching organisational culture which has been built over a period of years and which favours men, policies have reformed to guide and enable an environment to drive the transformation and advancement of women. Provision of training and acting in higher roles constitutes efforts of the organisation to equip all employees. There has been little or limited focus on women as a target group with the aim of promoting or progressing them to higher levels of leadership.

Coaching and mentoring programmes are suggested as mechanisms of advancing the progress of women's careers. Despite the prevailing varied understanding of the purpose of each intervention, there is a belief that these both have a catalytic impact which is likely to help women achieve their career advancement goals.

Experiential learning is embodied in learning styles and there is mostly emphasis on transformation which results from the interaction of individuals with their context. Learning styles and the subjective experience are critical in the reflection process which enables change and transformation at an individual level. Not only does it consider learning styles at the personal level but is a holistic process which takes in account context, cognition and considers all aspects to constitute learning.

With identified gaps and efforts which have been explored in the study, it is clear there exists an opportunity for considering a case of coaching women specifically throughout the stages of their careers. With integration of coaching and mentoring to the current efforts, these may translate into progression of women in the sector.

# CHAPTER SIX: CONCLUSIONS & RECOMMENDATIONS

## 6.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter integrates findings about perceptions and experiences of women managers on coaching for career progression in the petroleum organisation. The focus was on understanding perceptions of current efforts to enable progression of women managers and also to understand their impact. The primary research objective was to explore the possibility of having coaching as an intervention which could enhance development with the ultimate result of progress in the careers of the women managers.

The first chapter provided an introduction to the research study which was covered by framing the context, research problem, objectives and its significance. The context of the petroleum industry within which the research is conducted is outlined as well as the focus on the research problem. The research objectives scope and range is explained and the research objectives are tabled as well as delimitations of the research. The significance of the study is also explained. In conclusion, this chapter provides an overview of the structure of the research report.

The second chapter provided a literature review on the experiences and efforts of women development in the petroleum sector as well as exploration of coaching as an enabler of career progression for women in the petroleum sector. There was some elaboration of literature on the progression of women managers in the petroleum industry. The literature review focused on the current developmental needs of women against efforts aimed at the development of women in the petroleum sector. The study explored the possibility of integrative development with the aim of advancing women in their careers. The transformative nature of coaching was explored as an additional enabler through the lens of the experiential learning theory.

In the same chapter, a conceptual framework was developed for the purposes of understanding and explaining the research study. The framework depicts the development continuum that underpins the promotion of employees. The framework articulates the process of entry into roles and the organisation through recruitment, followed by training and development which is concerned with the development of skills and requisite competencies, followed by the mentoring and succession planning which presupposes that these are all aimed at equipping employees for promotion.

The third chapter described the qualitative methodology which was followed to understand the phenomenon of women's career progression in the petroleum industry. The research approach, the design of the study, sampling, limitations of the study, data collection and interpretation were explained to address the "what" question of the research. A portion of the chapter elaborated on "how" the study was carried out in the form of ethical considerations and building trustworthiness.

The fourth chapter presented the research findings from the qualitative study conducted with ten participants. The profile of the participants in gender, years of service and their management levels was provided. The research findings were presented in the form of themes and quotes from participants which were derived from transcribed interviews. These were aligned according to their relevance in response to either the first proposition:

> *"Efforts to ensure progression of women in the petroleum industry can be enhanced to include coaching"* or the second proposition; *"Coaching is a transformative tool and can be used for enabling career progression of women managers".*

The chapter then summarised the findings.

The fifth chapter presented a discussion of the findings examined in chapter four as they relate to the research objective and substantiated them with literature review. The chapter brings the relevance, significance and necessity of the research topic to the fore through the lens of existing literature and ignites interest in adding to existing theory. The chapter focused on what may need further research with regard to current efforts of advancing women and the validity of focusing on coaching as an additional enabler which leads to the advancement of careers.

Chapter six provides recommendations and practical implications. This chapter draws conclusions on the “efforts to ensure progression of women in the industry being enhanced to include coaching” as well as “coaching as a transformational tool to enable progression of women managers”. This chapter offers recommendations and practical considerations for the various beneficiaries of the research as well as possible future research opportunities.

## 6.2 CONCLUSIONS: “EFFORTS TO ENSURE PROGRESSION OF WOMEN IN THE PETROLEUM INDUSTRY CAN BE ENHANCED TO INCLUDE COACHING”

Some academics argue that oil and gas professionals must have adequate experience in the field and a complete understanding of the technical components across the value chain in order to gain respect and earn promotion. Due to the dynamics and historical inequalities of the petroleum industry, women continue to be at a disadvantage in terms of advancing to senior levels of management and leadership.

As a result of the historic barriers, specific gender bias and stereotyping continues to prevail and this dilutes training and women acting in higher roles in seeking to advance the cause of women’s career progression. For

some women who manage to breakthrough the barriers, their coping mechanism has largely been through conformance to the status quo and adopting similar behaviours as men.

For some women, it has been about either facing the challenge of barriers and hindrances and redefining their engagement while on the other hand some have given up on pursuing meaningful progress due to the unfavourable environment.

## 6.3 CONCLUSIONS: "COACHING IS A TRANSFORMATIVE TOOL AND CAN BE USED FOR ENABLING CAREER PROGRESSION OF WOMEN MANAGERS"

As a result of women entering into a terrain that was previously male-dominated, there is a need to enact redress in the environment and allow for integration of women into the working environment. The challenges mentioned around networking, cracking the "old boys club" and dealing with norms and practices which have been entrenched over a period of time, are some of the organisational challenges.

At the individual level some women may carry major responsibilities for child and domestic care which have to be addressed against the demands of the nature of the industry. Coaching and mentoring are seen as important and necessary in helping women to navigate the industry, starting at an individual level and proceeding to integrating their academics, their cognition, the behavioural and various aspects which contribute towards change. Both coaching and mentoring have been alluded to as potential interventions which could help women to navigate the industry through having external support and assist them not to merely conform if they choose to pursue their careers within the industry.

## 6.4 RECOMMENDATIONS AND PRACTICAL IMPLICATIONS

The problem which continues to exist in the sector is that women are under-represented at senior management and leadership levels despite existing efforts. Stakeholders who will benefit from this research include organisations, executives, talent and human resource practitioners, women at their individual level, and researchers. Recommendations and practical implications are aimed at ensuring the problem is addressed in a multi-faceted manner.

### 6.4.1 Organisations

When organisations have a good strategy and a clear, visible and communicated coaching framework, they will have the commitment and support of all managers and leadership of the organisation which will then enable them to achieve their goal of either effecting change or achieving the objectives of the organisation. Based on perceptions of women in this field, there has to be consideration of the impact of women-averse operational environments on women and the organisation.

International petroleum organisations will have to be intentional about building a culture which is conducive to the career advancement of women. It requires going beyond legislation and having policies which proactively advance women while ensuring that there is a follow-through with the strategic intent and implementation. To achieve this, it is imperative to build agility into the system so as to flag points of blockage as a result of the barriers and hindrances in the system in relation to the advancement of women.

### 6.4.2 Executives

Efforts to include women acting in higher positions as well as training on-the-job come at minimal cost to the organisation. These build and bolster

the strength of the organisation. Women present a diversity of leadership which can be harnessed to unleash new dimensions of individuals, teams, or levels of leadership. Central to this is the re-definition of rules of engagement of women, integration and nonconformity with the status quo.

### 6.4.3 Talent and Human Resources managers

For talent managers and human resource developers, there is enough information to consider intentional and comprehensive development, not only for women but for all employees. There is a need to strengthen the framework of development so that this yields greater return on the already positive efforts presently being made.

For internal coaches as well as coaching buyers internally, there has to be mindfulness of the business case for coaching women.

### 6.4.4. Women in their individual capacity

Gender bias limits the chances of women being considered for senior managerial roles but at the individual level it is about women equipping themselves to be able to respond to the nuances and different levels of managing and leadership.

Openness to exposure to other projects, networking, accessing more than functional training which is provided by the organisation are some of the informal recommended activities. Over and above these, the individual development plan must be driven from the individual level and women need to insist where possible on formal coaching and mentoring.

## 6.5 SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

This study of women's career advancement in petroleum is not conclusive and definitive but describes the phenomenon from the perspective of one

petroleum organisation. Further research can be done to assess and explore the phenomenon of career advancement and attributable progressive factors of coaching to women in other petroleum organisations in both South Africa and internationally. Similar research can be undertaken in other environments such as mining which were previously male-dominated.

Specific suggestions for follow up research are the following:

a. A follow-up study could be considered in the same organisation and use a quantitative and/or mixed methods study which can provide statistical results on the phenomenon of how effective the current efforts are in the petroleum sector and validate the need to add coaching as a developmental intervention.
b. Consideration of action research which will provide a comprehensive experience of being coached for all employees and set a clear goal on measuring the effects of coaching.
c. Exploring a longitudinal study which tracks contribution and results of either mentorship or coaching to the promotion of individuals to the next levels of leadership.

There is evidence that there is a gap to be filled through formalised coaching in the petroleum sector to enhance the current strategy of advancing employees' careers in general. Existing efforts of training and exposure of women alongside their male counterparts is already a step in the correct direction. The study is to an extent encumbered by the historical background of the petroleum industry despite the utilisation of a gendered lens.

Over and above acknowledging these aspects, there is a need to examine further opportunities from the perspective of coaching and using coaching as an enabler. What the study has further revealed is that there is a need to not only formalise coaching to enhance current efforts but that gendered

coaching due to the subjective experiences which are women-specific is likely to contribute to improved business outcomes.

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# APPENDICES

## APPENDIX A - PARTICIPANT INFORMATION SHEET

| Participant | Gender | Role | Tenure |
|---|---|---|---|
| Participant 1 | F | Senior Executive – Bio Chemics | 10 years |
| Participant 2 | M | Senior Executive – Process Engineer | 13 years |
| Participant 3 | M | Middle Management-Human Resources Manager | 10 years |
| Participant 4 | F | Middle Management - Contracts and Services department | 13 years |
| Participant 5 | M | Middle Manager – Process Engineer | 7 years |
| Participant 6 | M | Senior Executive - Operations | 30 years |
| Participant 7 | F | Middle Management- Human Resources Manager | 10 years |
| Participant 8 | F | Junior Management - Senior Process Controller Blending and Storage | 8 years |
| Participant 9 | F | Junior Management – Senior Process Controller | 8 years |
| Participant 10 | F | Senior Manager Blending and storage in the Department of Operations. | 13 years |

## APPENDIX B - PARTICIPANT AGREEMENT FORM

# Consent Form

**Coaching for career progression of women managers in the petroleum sector**

**Name of researcher: Khanyisile Sibeko**

I, ……., agree to participate in this research study. The research has been explained to me and I understand what my participation will involve. I agree to the following:

(Please circle the relevant options below).

| | |
|---|---|
| I agree that my participation will remain anonymous | YES NO |
| I agree that the researcher may use anonymous quotes in his / her research report | YES NO |
| I agree that I've been advised that I have a right to opt out at any stage of the research should I not be comfortable | YES NO |
| I agree that the information I provide may be used anonymously after this project has ended, for academic purposes by other researchers, subject to their own ethics clearance being obtained. | YES NO |

…… **(signature)**
…… **(name of participant)**
…… **(date)**
…… **(signature)**
…… **(name of person seeking consent)**
…… **(date)**

## APPENDIX C - ETHICS APPROVAL NOTIFICATION




**SCHOOL OF GRADUATE SCHOOL OF BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION ETHICS COMMITTEE**
**CONSTITUTED UNDER THE UNIVERSITY HUMAN RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE (NON-MEDICAL)**

**CLEARANCE CERTIFICATE** **PROTOCOL NUMBER:** **WBS/BA1429598/640**

**PROJECT TITLE** Coaching for career progression of women managers in the petroleum sector.

**INVESTIGATOR** Mrs Khanyisile Sibeko

**SCHOOL/DEPARTMENT OF INVESTIGATOR** MM (Business & Executive Coaching)

**DATE CONSIDERED** 20 July 2020

**DECISION OF THE COMMITTEE** Approved unconditionally

**RISK LEVEL** MINIMAL RISK

**EXPIRY DATE** 30 JUNE 2021

Matshabaphala

**ISSUE DATE OF CERTIFICATE** 4 August 2020 **CHAIRPERSON** __

(Dr MDJ Matshabaphala)

cc: Supervisor: Dr Matshabaphala

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**DECLARATION OF INVESTIGATOR**

To be completed in duplicate and **ONE COPY** returned to the Chairperson of the School/Department ethicscommittee.

I fully understand the conditions under which I am are authorized to carry out the abovementioned research and I guarantee to ensure compliance with these conditions. Should any departure to be contemplated from the research procedure as approved I/we undertake to resubmit the protocol to the Committee.



__04

/

August

/_2020

**Date**

**PLEASE QUOTE THE PROTOCOL NUMBER ON ALL ENQUIRIES**

## APPENDIX D - PERMISSION EMAIL

**From:** Khanyisile Sibeko
**To:** "Mohapanele OMPHILE"
**Subject:** RE: Research Permission
**Date:** Friday, 18 September 2020 09:46:00

Thanks Omphile.

**From:** Mohapanele OMPHILE <OMPHILE.Mohapanele@petrosa.co.za>
**Sent:** Friday, 18 September 2020 08:53
**To:** Khanyisile Sibeko <KhanyisileS@cefgroup.co.za>
**Subject:** RE: Research Permission

Hi Khanyi
I am well and hope you are too Madam.
I do not think this should be a problem.
Regards
Omphile

**From:** Khanyisile Sibeko <KhanyisileS@cefgroup.co.za>
**Sent:** Thursday, 17 September 2020 12:57 PM
**To:** Mohapanele OMPHILE <OMPHILE.Mohapanele@petrosa.co.za>
**Cc:** Nameka NOMTHANDAZO (Thandi) <NOMTHANDAZO.Nameka@petrosa.co.za>
**Subject:** Research Permission

Good day, Omphile
Hope this email finds you well. I know it's a hectic season for you in particular, closest to all
the deliberations. My heart is with you.
Please find attached request letter to conduct research with some of our colleagues for my
studies.
Kind regards
Khanyisile
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The Petroleum Oil and Gas Corporation
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Directors:
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Mr Pragasen Naidoo - Group CEO,
Mr Llewellyn Delport, Mr Leon Haywood,
Dr Deenadayalen Konar, Ms Sibongile Masinga,
Ms Liziwe Mda, Ms Nomagcisa Tsipa-Sipoyo,

Mr Solomzi Tshiki, Mr Mthozami Xiphu

## APPENDIX E - INTERVIEW GUIDE

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| **Date of interview:** | **Name:** | **Surname:** |
| **Level of management:** | **Employment tenure:** | |
| **Gender:** | **Department of Operations:** | |
| 1. What do you believe contributes to women being underrepresented in the upper managerial level organisation? | | |
| 2. Please share what are the current practices or efforts aimed at career progression? | | |
| 3. What do you believe are the needs of women in relation to career development? | | |
| 4. What do you believe are the hindrances or barriers to career progression for women in your specific environment? | | |
| 5. Share your views and understanding of coaching? | | |
| 6. at what stage of the women's careers would coaching be applicable? | | |
| 7. How is training helping all managers to advance in their careers? | | |
| 8. What other efforts are in place to shape careers and progress employee to senior levels of management and leadership? | | |
| 9. How effective are the current efforts in advancing women from one level of management to the next? | | |
| 10. If you have been coached before, what have you've experienced in the process of being coached? | | |
| 11. What are some of the organisational benefits that you believe coaching will yield for the organisation? | | |

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|---|
| 12. Please share your views on what else could be done to enhance or advance careers for women managers in the petroleum industry |
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## APPENDIX F:CONSISTENCY MATRIX

| The qualitative research study explored perceptions and experiences of women managers on coaching for career progression in the petroleum organisation. | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Objectives** | **Literature Review** | **Propositions** | **Research questions** | **Variables(Independent & Dependent)** | **Source of data** | **Type of data** | **Analysis** |
| Understanding what current efforts are in place to enable progression of women managers and also understand their impact. | Miller (2004)<br>Botha et al (2010)<br>Sephoti (2010)<br>Nefdt (2017)<br>Kolb and Kolb(2007)<br>Kolb and Kolb(2009) | Efforts to ensure progression of women in the petroleum industry can be enhanced to include coaching | 2. What are the experiences of women and men on the women development in the organisation? | IV1=<br><br>DV1= | Q1 ,Q2,Q3,Q4,Q8 | Qualitative data | The themes that emerged from the categories which were derived from coded from the responses of the participants. These were transcribed together with the storylines and/or quotations to form part of the findings |
| Exploring the possibility of having coaching as an intervention which could enhance development with the ultimate result of progress in careers of the women managers. | Kolb and Kolb (2009)<br>Belanger (2011)<br>Cox(2015)<br>Kolb (2014)<br>Rogers (2012)<br>Leaonard-Cross (2010)<br>Grant (2017)<br>Abramson et al (2019)<br>Leimon et al (2011) | Coaching is transformative tool and which can be used for enabling career progression of women managers | 3. How is coaching perceived as a career development tool?<br><br>1.How do women and men perceive the progression of women in the organisation? | IV2=<br><br>DV2= | Q4,Q5,Q6,Q7,Q9,Q10,Q11,Q12 | | |