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Application of the marketing mix as a career strategy to overcoming the “glass-ceiling” for South African female managers

Lorin Baxter

A research report submitted to the Faculty of Commerce, Law and Management, University of the Witwatersrand, in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Management by Research (MMR).

Johannesburg, October 2016

ABSTRACT

The plight of the female manager as a result of gender inequality has been thoroughly documented within academic research. A well-known metaphor of this inequality is the “glass-ceiling”, a phenomenon where a female manager’s career is stymied by an invisible barrier. While the barrier takes on the characteristics of glass by being subtle, women can observe positions, but are unable to attain them because of gender discrimination. The research objective was to examine career strategies to overcome the “glass-ceiling” challenges.

This empirical project contributes to the literature on gender in management by introducing a novel theory, marketing mix, when understanding the idea of a career strategy. A theoretical contribution has also been made to marketing theory in that it has been expanded by being applied to individuals, which is an unusual sample as the majority of studies on this theory have been largely conducted on organisations.

A qualitative research methodology was used. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with 21 female managers participating in a leadership development programme from a State Owned Company (SOC). Key results were consistent that strategies of overcoming the “glass-ceiling” were the importance of having a professional persona, negotiating remuneration, benefits of belonging to informal networks, and the benefits of having a mentor. The researcher found that female mangers apply career strategies in order to succeed; however, these tactics were applied in silos and not holistically. These behaviours then became ineffective.

DECLARATION

I, Lorin Elaine Baxter, declare that this research report is my own work except as indicated in the references and acknowledgements. It is submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Management by Research in the University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg. It has not been submitted before for any degree or examination in this or any other university.

_____

Lorin Elaine Baxter

Signed at Centurion

On the 7th day of October 2016

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First and foremost, I am grateful to God for the perseverance and ability to complete this study.

"I can do all things through Christ which strengthens me." Philippians 4:13

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

Traditional gender stereotypes have long existed within societies. The movement of women into the workplace has seen this thinking extended into organisational life, where men are able to achieve promotion more frequently than their female peers (Schwartz, 1989). This phenomenon has been described as the "glass-ceiling", where women can observe opportunity, but are held back by gender discrimination (Morgan, 2006). Cotter, Hermsen, Ovadia, and Vanneman (2001) propose four criteria that must be present in order for the "glass-ceiling" to exist: 1) inequality attributable to race or gender; 2) inequality is greater at higher levels of management than lower levels; 3) inequality in career advancement opportunities and 4) inequality accumulates over the course of the career.

Women may consciously or subconsciously apply strategies to manage and succeed in this climate, and research suggests that strategies of hard work and consistently exceeding expectations are, in fact, employed by female managers (Ragins, Townsend, & Mattis, 1998; Wrigley, 2002). This research aims to contribute to the literature on gender in management and to marketing theory by investigating the suitability of the marketing mix applied by female managers as a career strategy to overcome the "glass-ceiling". The marketing mix is defined as the strategic management and control of internal factors which are made up of the 4Ps: Product, Price, Place and Promotion (McCarthy & Perreault, 1960).

Kotler and Levy (1969) suggest that a marketing mix strategy, conventionally applied to organisations (McCole, 2004; Mintz & Currim, 2013; Shapiro, 1973; Shaw & Jones, 2005; Wooliscroft & Shaw, 2012), can be extended to persons. Kotler and Levy (1969) specifically point out 'persons' as a product to be marketed using 'personal' marketing which they defined as a pervasive human activity. They give an example of the employee impressing their superior or the political candidate preparing a campaign. Academic research and empirical investigation has not, however, been directed at female managers experiencing issues of the "glass-ceiling", which is the focus of this study.

1.1 Significance of the study

Employment is no longer a purely male endeavour. In South Africa, the number of women entering the labour market has seen a dramatic increase in recent years, with over one million additional women gaining employment in the formal sector between 2008 and 2014 (Department of Women, 2015; StatsSA, 2014). Whether entering the workforce out of economic necessity or as a means to apply their education (Geldenhuys, 2011), women are giving their work increased focus and importance in their lives. As a result, a woman's work becomes ingrained in her self-image and she may be forced to compromise her family responsibilities (Lewis, Gambles, & Rapoport, 2007), all of which contributes towards her drive to succeed. Thus, overcoming the "glass-ceiling" and ascending the management hierarchy is essential for working women.

While overcoming the "glass-ceiling" is of importance to all women, it is important to acknowledge that race poses an additional layer to the "glass-ceiling", and is faced by black women in the South African workplace. The far-reaching racial implications of the apartheid system, its demise and subsequent legacy issues were felt, not only in society and government, but also in organisations (Department of Women, 2015; Nkomo & Kriek, 2011). A black female employee within a South African organisation faces discrimination, not only related to gender, but also racial prejudice (Bell & Nkomo, 2003).

Inequality as a result of race continues to plague black South African females, evidenced by a poor employment rate of 34.4% when compared to their white counterparts at 54.4% (StatsSA, 2014). Unfortunately, very few studies exist which examine inequality as a result of both race and gender (Booysen & Nkomo, 2010). One such study by Booysen (1999) alludes to the position of black female managers as a result of patriarchy being more prevalent in black culture. She also makes mention of white females not being subject to racism and having the benefit of indirect power as a result of their association with white males.

Bell and Nkomo (2003) suggest that white female managers should utilise any available advantage to advocate for both gender and racial equality. They

propose that all female managers have the responsibility of forging relationships that cross racial lines in order to support the plight of women and to challenge perceptions. While race may not be the central focus of this study, it is acknowledged as a contributor to the inequitable treatment of South African female managers who are black.

1.2 The South African context

The South African context is made up of several role-players impacted by the effects of the "glass-ceiling", namely the South African nation, organisations and individuals.

1.2.1 The impact of the "glass-ceiling" on the South African nation

The "glass-ceiling" has had a negative influence on the South African nation, particularly for women overall. Equal representation of both men and women within the workforce is critical for the expansion of the labour force and economic improvement through effective use of national resources.

The South African labour force continues to lack gender equality as the rate of unemployment for women continued to climb by way of a 17.4% increase between 2001 and 2014 in spite of a 24% increase in the number of women joining the labour force during the same time period (StatsSA, 2014). Females aged 15 to 24 years old, of any demographic or educational background, were most likely to be unemployed, with an unemployment rate of 56.3% in 2014 (StatsSA, 2014).

A manner in which to redress the employment gender inequality would be a quota system. Internationally, there is growing acceptance of quota systems, according to the Women in Leadership Census performed by the Businesswomen's Association of South Africa (2015). The census revealed that the percentage of global business leaders who support quotas rose from 37.0% to 45.0% in 2014. While many countries have implemented gender quota policies (Burnet, 2011), Sweden has taken this one step further and deployed a Ministry of Gender Equality and Discrimination Act, which enforces both employment equity and

absolute fair treatment which has delivered positive results. In 2012, the majority of Swedish managers in municipal, county council and central government were women (64%) with females in parliament representing 45% (The Swedish Institute, 2013).

Rwanda has also enforced a quota system through the reserving of seats for women within parliament (Baldez, 2006). Although at a governmental level, the positive impact of this quota has had country wide implications for all women, many of whom find they now have more confidence to speak out in public, enjoy joint family decision-making, have found more respect overall, and have greater access to education (Burnet, 2011).

Correspondingly, a study of Australia (Poynton & Rolland, 2013) has brought to light the importance of investment in education, with Australian female graduates outnumbering their male counterparts. In South Africa, a similar strategy of education investment can reap national employment benefits. Figure one illustrates the unemployment rate increase over the last 13 years for young females with less than matric (StatsSA, 2014), whereas female graduates are more likely to be active in the workforce as a result of a very low unemployment rate, which decreased during the time period (StatsSA, 2014).

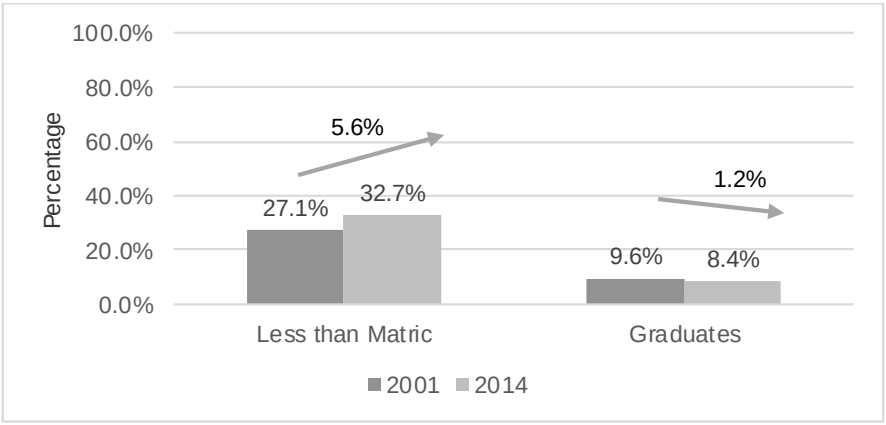

Figure 1: Unemployment rate by education level. Source: StatsSA (2014)

Psacharopoulos (1994) shows that, overall, investment in female education delivers a greater return than investment in male education. This helps to prove

that government investment in education and skills development programmes is critical to the improvement of female participation in the labour force.

The effect of female participation in the labour force also impacts the dependence of the population on government subsidies (Department of Women, 2015). Without an income, women may feel the need to have additional children to act as security in their old age (Lim, 2002). This puts pressure not only on the government budget, but also on the community and older children in the family, and may also prevent women from being able to participate in the workforce again due to high childcare costs (Lim, 2002; Schwartz, 1989).

The August 2015 Status of Women in South Africa report by the Department of Women (2015) shows that women are more likely to be poor than men. These are factors which may contribute to women making up 52.8% of discouraged work seekers in South Africa – those who want to work and are available to work but have not taken action to find work (StatsSA, 2014). Of those women who did find employment, 14% earn below two-thirds of median monthly earnings (StatsSA, 2014).

The negative effect of the "glass-ceiling" impacts the South African economy in that valuable female contributions are lost, in addition, the female population becomes increasingly reliant on government hand-outs in order to survive, prolonging the cycle of poverty among women.

1.2.2 The impact of the "glass-ceiling" on organisations

The motivation for organisations to hire more women is complex, although predominant themes from the literature suggest a legislative motivation and organisational effectiveness (Booysen, 1999; Oakley, 2000).

The South African government has introduced several legislative measures to address discrimination in the workplace. Subsequent to the demise of the apartheid system, dramatic changes in organisational management culture were required as 'think manager, think male', 'great man', 'west is best' and 'white is right' thinking were no longer acceptable or conducive to effective organisational

functioning (Booysen, 1999; Filley, House, & Kerr, 1976; Schein, 2001). In an effort to solidify and speed up racial and gender equality, the South African government promulgated critical legislature such as the Employment Equity (EE) Act of 1999 (amended 2004) and the Women Empowerment and Gender Equality Bill of 2014, among others.

The primary purpose of the EE Act is to foster equal opportunity through fair treatment of employment by eliminating unfair discrimination on the grounds of race or gender. Its secondary purpose is to redress the disadvantages experienced by designated groups through affirmative action. The Women Empowerment and Gender Equality Bill goes one step further, calling for 50:50 gender representation in all organisations and at all levels.

The legislation, although necessary, has not rendered the intended results as is evident in Figure two which illustrates managerial representation within South Africa in 2014 according to StatsSA (2014). In total, women make up 31% of all managers; this percentage has risen from 21% in 2001, showing a 10% increase. However, during the same period, the total female workforce increased by 24%.

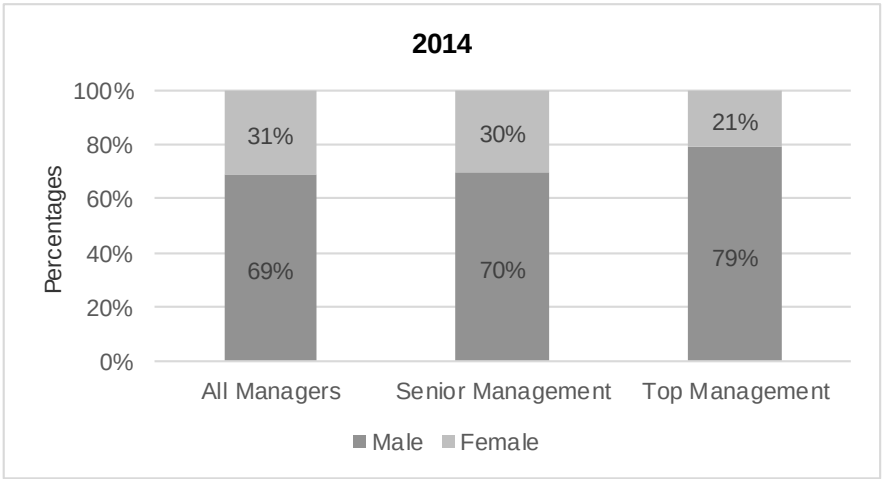

Figure 2: Managerial representation in South Africa. Source: Department of Labour (2014); StatsSA (2014)

Figure two also illustrates the percentage of women in senior management and top management across all industries and provinces of South Africa for the period to 2014 (Department of Labour, 2014). Women in senior management represent

30%, while only a quarter of those are black. In top management, 21% are female, while only a third are black (Department of Labour, 2014). Top managers are responsible for overall business strategy and direction plus functional integration of the entire business with a long-term focus. Senior managers have detailed understanding of their individual business unit and implement an operational strategy consisting of a business plan and output goals aligned to the overall business strategy. This signifies the hardening of the "glass-ceiling" towards top management, combined with racial prejudice.

Figure two clearly shows the lack of legislative compliance within South African organisations. It may be argued that South African institutions largely ignore their EE obligations as the fines imposed are not equal to the effort required to comply, and any reporting merely highlights non-compliance. However, amendments to the EE Act in 2013 have rendered positive results which are visible in the number of EE reports submitted; a number which has increased by almost 40% from 2009 to 2013 (Department of Labour, 2014).

Submission of an EE report ensures compliance with Section 21 of the EE Act and contains information such as current workforce profile and movements, future workforce goals and targets, barriers with associated affirmative action measures, and skills development. Amendments to the EE act include:

- More robust fines introduced for non-compliance (R1.5 million – R2.7 million). For more serious violations, the turnover threshold applies (2% - 10%).
- Failure to comply after 180 days can now result in a direct appeal to the Labour Court by the Director-General of the Department of Labour.
- Trebling of fines for breach of confidentiality, undue influence, obstruction, fraud.

From an organisational effectiveness perspective, Adler and Izraeli (1994) and Dezsö and Ross (2012) found that women in top management can be seen as a competitive advantage as they bring an alternative social and informational view to the organisation. A review of the literature shows that management teams of diverse backgrounds are better equipped to resolve complex issues, as differing

views aid debate and result in quicker resolution and improved performance (Dwyer, Richard, & Chadwick, 2003; Filley et al., 1976; Gregory-Smith, Main, & O'Reilly, 2014; Torchia, Calabro, & Huse, 2011).

An organisational trend is to adopt a more cost-effective, flat management structure that brings management closer to the customer. This type of organisational structure places emphasis on development and relationships, where successful managers empower and support their staff through collaboration, participation, motivation, and trust – qualities that are generally associated with women (Adler & Izraeli, 1994; Booysen, 1999; Morgan, 2006).

1.2.3 The impact of the "glass-ceiling" on individuals

The "glass-ceiling" impacts the career of the female manager and her choice to enter and progress in the workforce is based on many variables, such as access to education, family and society's perception of gender roles (Beja, 2014; Lewis et al., 2007).

In her study on comparative happiness of working women and housewives, Beja (2014) found that in regions such as Africa and the Middle East, where traditionally women are expected to take on the primary caregiving and housekeeping roles, it is difficult for women to participate and find happiness in employment. However, in North America and Western Europe, where women are open to choose their path without societal pressures, Beja (2014) found no difference in their level of happiness. This did not take into account the economic benefits derived by dual-income families, the increased female participation in family decision-making, or the improved self-worth a woman can derive from her work (Beja, 2014; Geldenhuys, 2011).

A female employee is confronted with difficult choices between family and career, as the most influential years of building a career overlap with her childbearing window (Albanesi, Olivetti, & Prados, 2015). As a result, proportionally more high-earning and professional career women than men are unmarried and do not have children (Albanesi et al., 2015). Schwartz (1989) categorises two types of working women, namely career-primary and career-and-family. Career-primary women

place their work first and are willing to make sacrifices for their careers. More women tend to fall into the career-and-family category, where work-life-balance is more important (Schwartz, 1989).

In each scenario, female employees are forced to compromise with additional societal pressures evident in certain cultures, and further gender discrimination in the workplace in the form of the "glass-ceiling" must be circumvented, possibly through the use of a marketing mix strategy.

1.3 What and where is the "glass-ceiling"?

Many researchers have described the "glass-ceiling" as an invisible barrier through which women can observe positions but are unable to attain them (Davies-Netzley, 1998; Oakley, 2000; Wright & Baxter, 2000). However, few have detailed exactly where these barriers exist and to what elements they pertain.

Wright and Baxter (2000) define the "glass-ceiling" as a barrier to promotion into higher positions, which becomes more difficult to break through as women ascend the management hierarchy. Britton and Williams (2000) challenged this and suggest that the "glass-ceiling" not only applies to promotion but also to remuneration and power. They believe that the "glass-ceiling" exists equally at all levels of the organisation. Further dispute was put forward by Ferree and Purkayastha (2000), who believe that the strength of the "glass-ceiling" is not proportional, but rather cumulative in nature.

Firstly, there is evidence in both literature (Cotter et al., 2001; Davies-Netzley, 1998; Oakley, 2000) and statistics (Bekhouch, Hausmann, Tyson, & Zahidi, 2013; StatsSA, 2014) to support the proposal by Britton and Williams (2000) that inequality exists between men and women with regard to remuneration and power. Secondly, the number of women within each layer of the organisation decreases the higher into the management structure one looks (Department of Labour, 2014; StatsSA, 2014), thereby illustrating the difficulty of women to advance into top positions.

However, as proposed by Ferree and Purkayastha (2000), and later supported by Wright and Baxter (2000) and Cotter et al. (2001), the whole is a sum of its parts. Firstly, the professional persona of a female employee who has experienced varying measures of discrimination throughout her career is an outward result of said discrimination. And secondly, a linear career path of sequential promotion experiences gender disadvantage that accumulates towards gender gaps in representation and remuneration that are higher at the top of the management hierarchy than at the bottom.

To summarise, Cotter et al. (2001) propose four criteria that make up the "glass-ceiling":

1) Inequality attributable to race or gender – Minority groups are passed over for promotion opportunities due to their dissimilarity to the majority group.
2) Inequality is greater at higher levels of management than lower – Women in higher levels of management are not remunerated fairly when compared to their male counterparts.
3) Inequality in career advancement opportunities – Access to information or relationships that create career advancement opportunities are often denied to female employees.
4) Inequality accumulates over the course of the career – It becomes increasingly more difficult for women to be promoted as they ascend the management hierarchy.

From the above definition, it can be determined that the "glass-ceiling" does not exist when one or more of these elements is absent. For example, when a female employee is headhunted for a position, she has not experienced an inequality in career advancement and thus the "glass-ceiling" is not present in this scenario. To understand the effects of the "glass-ceiling", focus must be given to all four criteria, not only to promotion discrimination but also wage and power, bearing in mind the "glass-ceiling" has both increasing and cumulative effects.

1.4 Research question

From the discussion above, it is evident that the ability of the South African female manager to break through the “glass-ceiling” is essential. A positive outcome will not only bolster the South African economy and improve organisation compliance, but also enhance the female manager’s self-image and standing within her community.

Female managers that have broken through the “glass-ceiling” and achieved top managerial positions have been found to apply career strategies (Laud & Johnson, 2013). Krieshok, Black, and McKay (2009) propose that conscious and adaptive career strategies enrich the individual through continuous engagement of the organisational environment. In addition, they propose that an adaptive career strategy provides preparation for expected or unexpected career transitions.

This study investigates the suitability of the marketing mix as a career strategy for female managers encountering the “glass-ceiling”. The marketing mix has been proposed as a career strategy due to its highly customisable nature and flexibility in managing and controlling internal factors, within a framework of uncontrollable environmental elements (McCarthy & Perreault, 1960). The marketing mix provides a foundation which is able to satisfy the requirements of a holistic, purposeful career strategy which considers the female manager’s vocational reality.

It is from this understanding that a set of propositions emerges that describe the female manager for this study: a) she encounters several challenges as a result of engaging the “glass-ceiling”, b) a career strategy can enhance her ability to overcome the challenges associated with the “glass-ceiling”, c) her development of a career strategy must be conscious and adaptive to suit both the individual and the environment.

As such, the research question has been formulated as follows:
When can the marketing mix be applied by South African female managers as a career strategy to break through the "glass-ceiling"?

In answering the research question, this study contributes to the body of knowledge of gender in management literature and expands marketing theory by applying the marketing mix to an unusual sample, being individuals. On this basis the following research sub-questions were formed:

- RSQ1: To identify the career strategies employed by South African female managers to succeed in breaking through the "glass-ceiling".
- RSQ2: To determine the circumstances in which the marketing mix can be applied by South African female managers as a career strategy to break through the "glass-ceiling".

In the following chapter, Chapter Two: Review of the literature, this understanding of the "glass-ceiling" is utilised to examine the current conversations within gender in management literature and draw out key areas of interest. The constructs of marketing theory, particularly the marketing mix, are also discussed. The theoretical relationships between the key areas of interest and the constructs of the marketing mix are empirically tested in order to determine the fit of marketing theory as a lens through which to address the "glass-ceiling" and the research question is answered.

1.5 Definitions

Table one contains definitions which pertain to the relevant concepts and terms utilised repeatedly throughout this study and has been included for ease of reference.

Table 1: List of definitions

Term	Definition	Reference
Management level	Employee has either the responsibility for a staff complement or a strategic role with decision-making capability at this level. The organisation dictates a tertiary qualification and minimum of three years' experience to be appointed at this level	Author's definition

Professional persona	Made up of workplace quality in terms of job performance and management style, features being skill and level of education and style or packaging in terms of outward appearance	
Remuneration	Manner in which an employee is reimbursed for their output	
Seller	Female employee in a management role	
Career strategy	A course of action or guideline that is consciously and purposefully made in advance to aid career progression	Mintzberg (1987a)
Informal networks	Exchange of resources such as information, referrals and support between employees, colleagues and influential role players	Ibarra (1997)
Place	Activities employed by the organisation to make the product accessible and open to the buyer	Kotler (1984)
Product	Exterior visible features and packaging, plus the benefits and quality it brings to the buyer in order to best satisfy a need	
Promotion	Act of persuasive communication, where the target market is convinced to purchase based on the features and benefits of a product	
Marketing mix	The strategic management and control of the internal factors within a framework of uncontrollable environmental elements through the creation of a profitable pattern of available operations, activities and procedures	
Price	Amount of money the buyer must pay the seller to purchase the product	
Mentorship	Supportive professional relationship between a senior and less experienced employee, providing both parties career and psychological benefits	Kram (1983); Robbins and Judge (2011)
Marketing	The strategic management and control of internal factors within a framework of uncontrollable environmental elements resulting in *market transaction* underpinned by the making or receiving of payment under specified terms	Anderson and Taylor (1995); Luck (1969)
Competitive situation	Number and types of competitors the female employee must overcome in order to succeed	McCarthy and Perreault (1993)
Economic and technological	Basis of any economic environment through the application of technical skill and equipment to convert resources into profitable output	
Political and legislative	Impact of the government and implementation of laws that affect participants of the environment	
Resources and objectives	Resources are used to deliver the business objective, which is a socially and economically useful course of action or direction	
Society and culture	Societal and cultural thinking which affects the behaviour of its inhabitants	
"glass-ceiling"	The "glass-ceiling" exists where all four criteria are present:1) inequality attributable to race or gender; 2) inequality is greater at higher levels of management than lower; 3) inequality in career advancement opportunities and 4) inequality accumulates over the course of the career	Cotter et al. (2001)

CHAPTER 2: REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

In this chapter, the theoretical framework and contribution of the research is discussed. Thereafter, insight is provided into how the “glass-ceiling” behaves as a metaphor, its significance and influence in this study. This is followed by four predominant issues of gender discrimination; namely professional persona, access to informal networks, quality and role of mentorship, and remuneration discrimination. These issues are addressed using the 4Ps of the marketing mix, namely, product, price, place and promotion. Both these controllable variables, and the uncontrollable environmental elements of resources and objectives; competitive situation; society and culture; politics and legislature and economy and technology are described and discussed in the latter part of this chapter.

2.1 Theoretical framework

A theoretical framework provides a lens through which research is conceptualised, and in doing so, potentially discovers a new and exciting understanding of the phenomenon under study (Anfara & Mertz, 2014). For the purposes of this study, the “glass-ceiling” phenomenon is investigated using a lens of marketing theory in the form of the marketing mix strategy. In so doing, this research hopes to determine the suitability of the marketing mix as a novel strategy for female managers to apply when experiencing issues associated with the “glass-ceiling”.

The “glass-ceiling” is a metaphor for the phenomenon of women experiencing workplace inequality (Wright & Baxter, 2000). This phenomenon manifests in the working environment where women are denied equitable access to promotion and remuneration (Britton & Williams, 2000). While the female manager may have little control over the external environment, such as organisational policy or legislation (Stroh, Brett, & Reilly, 1996), she is able to trigger change through her own actions (Ragins et al., 1998). This research proposes that these actions be strategically planned and implemented, potentially in the form of a marketing mix strategy. The marketing mix is customarily applied by organisations (Shapiro, 1973; Shaw & Jones, 2005) to strategically manage and control their internal

capabilities within a framework of uncontrollable environmental elements, resulting in a market transaction (Anderson & Taylor, 1995; Luck, 1969; McCarthy & Perreault, 1960). In the context of this study, a transaction exists where the female manager enters into an exchange relationship with the organisation and is remunerated. While she is able to control internal factors such as her attitude, education and appearance, she exists in an uncontrollable, gendered environment influenced by society, organisational policy, legislation and technology. It is on this premise that this research investigates the suitability of the marketing mix as a strategy for female managers to guide them through the challenges presented by the "glass-ceiling".

In order to determine the fit of marketing theory as a lens through which to address the "glass-ceiling", the theoretical relationships between constructs of the theory and key terms of the phenomenon must be examined (Anfara & Mertz, 2014). Bacharach (1989) proposes theory as the relationship between constructs within predefined assumptions and limitations which can be tested and that provide explanation and expectation. Using this understanding, the constructs of marketing theory emerge as the internal or controllable factors which work together to create a marketing mix strategy (Borden, 1964). McCarthy and Perreault (1960) organised these elements into the 4Ps of the marketing mix, namely, product, price, place and promotion.

A review of gender in management literature and current conversations on the "glass-ceiling" highlighted four key areas of interest: professional persona (Beja, 2014; Doubell & Struwig, 2014), remuneration (Ñopo, Daza, & Ramos, 2012; Rosser & Mamiseishvili, 2014), informal networks (Brink & Benschop, 2014; Watts, Frame, Moffett, Van Hein, & Hein, 2015) and mentorship (Durbin & Tomlinson, 2014; Rhee & Sigler, 2015). The selection of these key concepts was also as a result of congruent relationships with the 4Ps of the marketing mix strategy, the theoretical framework of this research. As explanation, product comprises the features, benefit and quality of a female manager's professional persona; price is the amount and manner in which she is remunerated; place is the distribution channels to which she has access in the form of informal networks; and promotion is the number and quality of communication platforms

available to her as a result of mentorship relationships. Figure three provides a visual representation of this discussion.

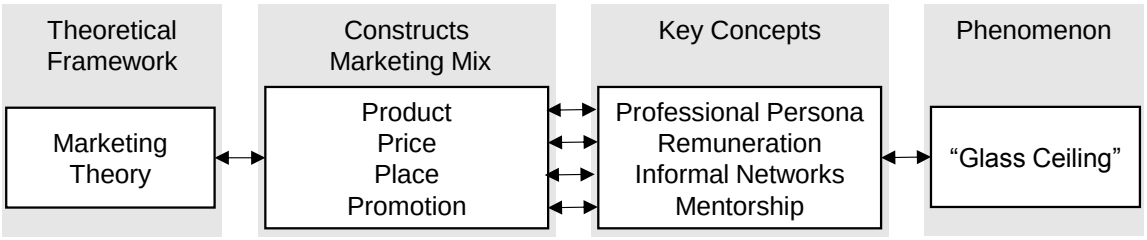

Figure 3: Relationship of concepts. Source: Bacharach (1989)

While the marketing mix has been successfully applied in several studies concerning organisations (Anderson & Taylor, 1995; McCole, 2004; Mintz & Currim, 2013; O'Cass & Heirati, 2015; Wooliscroft & Shaw, 2012; Zineldin & Philipson, 2007), there remains little academic research as to how effective or beneficial the marketing mix can be for female managers. The converse may also be true of marketing, application to non-commercial subjects may dilute the discipline (Luck, 1969). These shortcomings are explored in the following section, where marketing theory building and testing is discussed in relation to the theoretical contribution of this study.

2.2 Research contribution

Research is a process of theorisation, the significance of which is determined by a contribution to theory (Weick, 1995). Colquitt and Zapata-Phelan (2007) describe the level of contribution on an axis of theory building versus theory testing. A study must rank highly on each of these axes to be considered to expand theory and therefore have a high level of contribution. This research uses the marketing mix as a theoretical lens through which to analyse the phenomenon of the “glass-ceiling”. In so doing, this research hopes to contribute theoretically through the expansion of existing marketing theory to a non-commercial sample of female managers.

Using Colquitt and Zapata-Phelan (2007)'s first axis of theory building, this research examines a previously unexplored relationship between the marketing mix and the "glass-ceiling". Whetten (1989) described the importance of asking 'what is new' when building theory and how the study challenges current thinking. The existence of resistance against the marketing mix being utilised as a tool for individuals (Luck, 1969; Rothschild, 1979) illustrates the potential impact of this study. In addition, Shaw and Jones (2005) note that the marketing mix is mostly applied to businesses with little academic investigation available to prove otherwise. Colquitt and Zapata-Phelan (2007) suggest that the more original the approach, the greater the impact on the field of study.

This study aims to investigate to what extent a traditionally applied business strategy, the marketing mix, can be applied by female managers to overcome the "glass-ceiling". To the best of the author's knowledge, this approach has not been addressed previously. In so doing, this study hopes to contribute to the literature of gender in management through analysis of the unexplored relationship between the marketing mix and the "glass-ceiling" – the "glass-ceiling" being a metaphor of inequality that continues to prevail in the workplace (Albanesi et al., 2015; Rhee & Sigler, 2015; Watts et al., 2015). In terms of the female manager, by viewing her actions strategically (Riordan & Louw-Potgieter, 2011), she may benefit by develop coping mechanisms whereby she may no longer experience the "glass-ceiling" (Aycan, 2004; Carr, 2015). She may also gain long-term competitive advantage over her peers as a result of a well planned and executed marketing mix strategy (Wind & Robertson, 1983). Such a strategy may also provide guidance when navigating the ever-changing external environment (Mintzberg, 1987a). These are examples of a few clear benefits. Further substantiation is provided in the sections that follow.

The second Colquitt and Zapata-Phelan (2007) axis is concerned with theory testing. This research tests the suitability of marketing theory as a theoretical lens by applying existing conceptual arguments to explain why the above mentioned relationship should exist. Relevant are those arguments by Kotler, proposing the broadening of marketing to persons and other non-commercial applications. This was initially proposed in two combined papers with Levy in 1969, and in multiple

follow-up articles (Andreasen & Kotler, 2008; Kotler, 1979, 1987, 2005). They propose that marketing is a "pervasive societal activity" (Kotler & Levy, 1969, p. 10) resulting in an interesting application when transferred to the marketing of non-commercial activities. This transference is made possible by three core elements, a *product* for consideration by *consumers* facilitated by *tools*. In the context of this research, the female employee's product is her professional persona consumed by her employer or organisation, while her tools relate to mentorship, access to informal networks and pricing strategies.

It can be said that many users, without realising it, already make use of marketing principles. Non-commercial disciplines, such as church organisations and presidential candidates, have already benefitted from academic investigation (Andreasen & Kotler, 2008; Kotler, 1979, 1987, 2005; Shapiro, 1973; Wilkie & Moore, 2003). However, such academic research and investigation has not been directed at female managers experiencing the issues of the "glass-ceiling", which is the focus of this study.

In the sections that follow, the issues of the "glass-ceiling" is examined using the marketing mix. This research hopes to provide an account of rich detail in order to contribute to the body of knowledge of gender in management literature. It is also the objective of this research to empirically test the research question of this study by using an unusual sample in a seldom-used context, namely South Africa. In doing so, this study hopes to expand marketing theory, provide insight into the issues surrounding the "glass-ceiling", and potentially provide a career strategy for South African female managers to adopt when facing these issues.

2.3 The "glass-ceiling" as a metaphor

Metaphors are traditionally used as a literary device; however, their use can be extended into academia. Scholars and scientists use metaphors to describe one experience in terms of another, thereby moulding the thinking and actions of those that use them (Morgan, 2006).

The “glass-ceiling” was introduced by the *Wall Street Journal* to describe an invisible barrier preventing women from succeeding (Hymowitz & Schellhardt, 1986). This simple explanation does not, however, fully explore all facets of the metaphor. Metaphors are symbolic in nature, where an intangible concept is given physical characteristics resulting in a somewhat one-sided view of the original concept (Morgan, 1980). For example, the “glass-ceiling” is so named because, firstly, it is a ceiling or level above which women struggle to be promoted, and secondly, glass because women can observe and apply for the promotion opportunities available yet are not often considered, all as a result of gender discrimination.

However, applying the literal meaning of a “glass-ceiling” as an impenetrable limit renders the metaphor inadequate, because there are women who have ascended to the top-most levels of an organisation (Wright & Baxter, 2000). Adopting the one-sided nature of the metaphor, let us instead apply the physical characteristics of glass such that it can be broken with enough effort and can be of varying thickness, thereby becoming more difficult to break through as women ascend the management hierarchy, which is supported by the literature (Cotter et al., 2001).

The imagery of the “glass-ceiling” may provide a better understanding of the phenomenon, but how does the metaphor assist this study in contributing to theory? Bacharach (1989) proposes that a metaphor is a precursor to theory, providing imagery from which relationships can be developed that describe the phenomenon. The “glass-ceiling” is a metaphor for gender inequality whose imagery describes an invisible barrier to be overcome, which influences access to opportunity and equal remuneration (Wright & Baxter, 2000). In much the same way, businesses identify opportunities and address challenges in order to meet needs profitably (Kotler & Keller, 2009).

In both scenarios, the challenges or barriers are intangible and linked to monetary reward. For example, a business may enjoy an opportunity to capture a lucrative new market but lack knowledge of local distribution in that environment. A place strategy may dictate a distribution partner to provide access and expertise.

Similarly, a female employee is denied access to informal networks where opportunities for career and financial advancement are discussed. However, by applying a similar place strategy of key alliances, she may gain access to the informal network. Hence a relationship can be perceived between these challenges and the methods used to overcome them.

2.4 The marketing mix as a career strategy

Within the field of management, marketing is described as the organisation of products and services viewed from a seller's perspective (Shaw & Jones, 2005). In order to do this, the marketer is expected to strategically manage and control the internal factors within a framework of uncontrollable environmental elements (Anderson & Taylor, 1995). This process was first conceptualised by Neil Borden who, in 1949, began using the term "marketing mix" in his teachings and later, in his academic writing.

Borden (1964) described a marketer's function as the creation of a profitable pattern of available operations, activities and procedures. Borden found that the vivid term of marketing "mix" gained much momentum and acceptance due to its descriptive nature. Borden originally foresaw 12 elements of the marketing mix, namely, product planning, pricing, branding, channels of distribution, personal selling, advertising, promotions, packaging, display, servicing, physical handling and fact finding and analysis. McCarthy and Perreault (1960) are credited with consolidating the marketing mix into four simple and memorable elements, namely, product, price, place and promotion. While the 4Ps are within the control of the marketer, the uncontrollable environmental elements depict the climate in which the marketing mix is applied. These elements include resources and objectives; competitive situation; society and culture; politics and legislature; and economy and technology (McCarthy & Perreault, 1960).

2.4.1 4Ps of the marketing mix

Many academics have performed investigations into the continued suitability of the 4P marketing mix (Anderson & Taylor, 1995; Goi, 2009; Lynn, 2009; McCole, 2004; Mintz & Currim, 2013; O'Cass & Heirati, 2015), some of whom support

customisation of the mix in order to ensure its applicability. McCole (2004) recommends that, in practice, managers should customise the 4Ps mix to ensure suitability to the environment. Goi (2009) supports this approach and suggests that a firm adjusts its mix to match its resources, market conditions and the changing needs of its customers.

Overall consensus remains that the marketing mix in the form of the 4Ps is a useful tool that is easy to remember and which continues to be taught in classrooms across the world (Shaw & Jones, 2005) and implemented in current business practice (Mintz & Currim, 2013). Anderson and Taylor (1995) go so far as to suggest that successful non-commercial application of the 4Ps further illustrates robustness of the marketing mix in its current format. It is on this basis that the 4Ps have been chosen as the construct to test the suitability of the marketing mix as a strategy to assist female managers in overcoming the "glass-ceiling".

2.4.2 Evolution of the 4Ps

The evolution of the 4Ps since the original inception by McCarthy and Perreault (1960) has seen its extension to include People, Physical Evidence, Process and more recently, Productivity. This is collectively known as the 7/8Ps of service marketing (Baida, Akkermans, & Gordijn, 2003), where a service is defined as an intangible act or performance that is offered from one party to another (Kotler & Keller, 2009).

Indeed, the performance offered by the female manager to the organisation is intangible. The fit of the additional Ps to a career strategy is, however, unclear. Thus the original application of the 4Ps is relevant to the study. A review of the literature (Baida et al., 2003; Constantinides, 2006; Lovelock, Patterson, & Wirtz, 2014) provides the following debate.

People speaks to a direct interaction with the customer – the female manager not only interacts with the organisation but also with external role players and competitors who fall outside of the organisation. In addition, her interaction may be indirect, such as through her mentor or sponsor. Physical evidence is made

up of tangible cues such as layout of surroundings – for the female manager, her performance can be delivered in a multitude of locations where the physical cues may not be within her control. Process refers to a seamless manufacturing and delivery of a service, while productivity relates to efficiencies in this process – concepts which are not applicable to the creation of a professional persona of the female manager.

Constantinides (2006) suggests that service marketing speaks largely to the human element. In the case of the female manager, it can be proposed that the human element is largely dictated by her personal brand identity. Her brand identity speaks to the expectations of her consumers about her attributes and associations based on interaction or performance (Doyle, 2000). Within the marketing discipline, brand is a key aspect of value, which is the sum of perceived benefits and costs to customers (Kotler & Keller, 2009). This opens a potentially interesting perspective on the intersection of value and personal branding. However, as the focus of this study is to determine the suitability of career strategies, such as the marketing mix strategy for female managers to utilise in breaking through the "glass-ceiling", this new perspective could be a topic of future study.

In the sections that follow, the controllable elements of the marketing mix are discussed in relation to the associated issues stemming from gender inequality manifested in the "glass-ceiling" phenomenon. Thereafter, the uncontrollable environmental elements and their impact are discussed.

2.5 Creating a professional persona using product strategy

The first P of the marketing mix is the product. Potential buyers require the seller's product to satisfy a need and prefer a product that offers the best quality, features and style/packaging (Kotler & Keller, 2009). A product is a sum of these parts, strategically assembled by the marketing manager to best suit the target market. In much the same way, the female employee's professional persona is made up these three elements, namely, her workplace quality in terms of her job performance and management style; her features being her skill and level of

education; and finally, style or packaging in terms of her outward appearance. Her professional persona should be adjusted so that it best suits the opportunity available to break through the “glass-ceiling”.

What defines an effective professional persona for a female employee in a management role? Traditionally, research has looked to those who have achieved success in the field of management to describe the characteristics necessary to emulate such success. The danger lies in the fact that the sample is made up of predominantly male participants (Alimo-Metcalfe, 1995). Research by Schein (2001), adding to the evidence given by Paustian-Underdahl, Walker, and Woehr (2014), Oakley (2000) and Ibarra and Petriglieri (2016), shows that respondents associate preferred management qualities with men, with male respondents going so far as to label women as less competent when compared to men.

Within the South African context, the findings of the research of Booysen and Nkomo (2010) were very similar. Male respondents associate successful management qualities with men rather than women. Research has found male managers to be analytical, logical, independent, competitive and aggressive; while females are found to be intuitive, emotional, empathetic and cooperative (Alimo-Metcalfe, 1995; Morgan, 2006; Oakley, 2000; Rudman, Moss-Racusin, Phelan, & Nauts, 2012; Schein, 2001). In an environment where ‘think manager, think male’ is expected, a male employee appears better equipped based purely on gender (Eagly & Karau, 2002; Ross-Smith & Huppatz, 2010; Rudman et al., 2012; Schein, 2001). Managerial women are immediately disadvantaged because they are not inclined or able to authentically emulate masculine characteristics deemed necessary for successful managers.

As a result of this perception, when opportunities present themselves, women are left in a double bind or no-win situation. A double bind exists where, in order to fit the perception of a good manager, a female employee must take on masculine characteristics but, in so doing, risks being perceived as unfeminine and therefore rejected (Ibarra & Petriglieri, 2016; Kolb, 2009; Ragins et al., 1998). Alternatively, should a female employee display traditionally feminine characteristics, she may

be passed over for management opportunity because she does not fit the masculine management mould described above (Adler & Izraeli, 1994; Oakley, 2000). Ross-Smith and Huppatz (2010) suggest using femininity to their benefit, for example, superior social skills, attention to detail and sexuality. Social skills are not unique to women, yet due to their accommodating nature, women are able to quickly make people feel comfortable. In terms of sexuality, Ross-Smith and Huppatz (2010) found that women gain distinction by being well dressed and playing to their femininity, although it can be argued this advantage is superficial and short-lived.

In order to succeed, the female employee is required to meet unnatural expectations, and the task of developing an authentic professional persona may seem daunting. Using a tried and tested product strategy may, however, be a helpful aid. When crafting her product strategy, the female manager creates or adjusts the quality, features and style of her professional persona (Kotler, 1984). *Quality* refers to the ability of the product to perform its functions and is measured in terms of the buyer's perception (Kotler, 1984). In the same vein, a female employee must ensure that she is able to perform in the manner and at the level expected by the buyer/potential employer.

As the seller, the female employee is required to determine what the buyer/potential employer is looking for and then map her personal persona closely to those qualities. Male management styles are preferred, yet research shows women are capable of adopting masculine characteristics and vice versa (Schwartz, 1989). She can determine which elements the buyer is looking for specifically and which elements she, as the seller, is able to emulate while remaining authentic. For example, in a typically male dominated engineering environment where team work and logic are valued yet aggression and independence are frowned upon, it is the responsibility of the female employee to play to her strengths of collaboration and recall specific examples of where she displayed logic with a favourable outcome in her current role, or how she would handle a potential situation with logic in the proposed role.

Features are the competitive advantage or 'extras' that differentiate the product from its competitors (Kotler, 1984). For a female employee to do so, additional education or skills may be necessary. Higher qualifications act as a lever which women can use to outmanoeuvre their male counterparts for promotion, especially as women appear to be held to a higher standard (Booysen, 1999; Davies-Netzley, 1998; Wright & Baxter, 2000). Also applicable is a specialised skill or expertise that results in a competitive advantage for the female employee (Ragins et al., 1998).

Style is another way to be distinctive and offers several benefits, including a visual representation of personality, communication of value to the buyer and aid in selection (Kotler, 1984). A woman's style should be a reflection of herself, allowing potential employers to formulate an accurate opinion of her on first appearances, although misrepresenting through inappropriate dress may perpetuate stereotypical thinking (Ainsworth, 2014; Ross-Smith & Huppatz, 2010). Quality, features and style cannot stand alone and must be combined to present a professional persona that is reflective of the female manager and suitable to the employer.

While it is of utmost importance for the female manager to meet the expectations of her employer and organisation, she should be wary of falling prey to a "fix the woman" scenario. Organisations tend to blame women for the issues of inequality because they do not fit preconceived ideas of management (Meyerson & Fletcher, 2000). As a result, remedies are often aimed at equipping women to deal with inevitable inequality, rather than undertaking the arduous task of un-gendering organisational culture and policy (Acker, 1990; Kolb, 2009). The act of balancing the perceptions of the organisation while refusing to be "fixed" can only be guided by integrity. The female manager must be authentic and consistent in her portrayal of her professional persona.

2.6 Improving remuneration using pricing strategy

Price is essentially what buyers will pay for the seller's product (Kotler, 1984). Similarly, the way in which an employee is reimbursed for their output is a direct

reflection on their value to the organisation. In South Africa, men are higher paid than women (Department of Women, 2015), providing credence to the fact that organisations place greater emphasis on male characteristics than on female (Acker, 1990; Rosser & Mamiseishvili, 2014; Stroh et al., 1996). Figure four, adjusted from the Global Gender Gap Report (Bekhouch et al., 2013) shows how, between 2011 and 2013, South African women have consistently earned up to 35% less than their male counterparts for similar work.

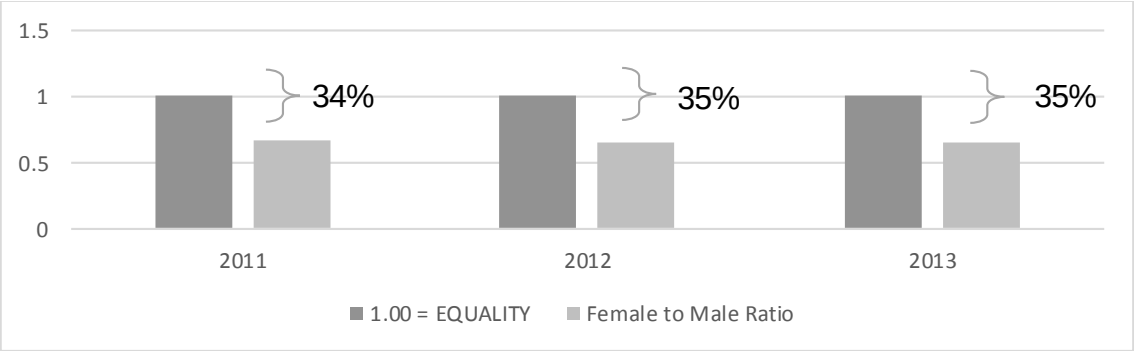

Figure 4: Wage equality for similar work. Source: Bekhouch et al. (2013)

Socially, women are seen as primarily family focused and secondarily career focused, a stereotype reinforced by their marital status, leave of absence to give birth or caregiving responsibilities (Corcoran & Duncan, 1979; Eagly & Karau, 2002). This leads organisations to undervalue their female employees because they perceive them to be less committed to their work obligations (Corcoran & Duncan, 1979; Stroh et al., 1996). Albanesi et al. (2015) suggest that the most influential years of building a career overlap with a women's most fertile childbearing window, making the choices of a working woman very difficult, with a high personal cost. They also found that proportionally more high-earning and professional career women than men are unmarried and do not have children.

Findings by Stroh, Brett, and Reilly (1992) show that even when women met all the masculine expectations of the organisation they still encountered pay and opportunity discrimination of the "glass-ceiling". A similar result was observed by Ñopo et al. (2012), who found that almost half of gender-earning disparities could not be explained by observable characteristics. This illustrates that women are

pushed to make personal or career sacrifices with very few able to have both successfully. Thus, those women who chose a career at great personal cost should be compensated, at least as fairly as their male equivalents.

Fortunately, the wheel is slowly turning, largely thanks to legislation such as the EE Act, which prohibits wage and benefit discrimination on the grounds of gender (Department of Labour, 2014). Aligned to the global trend (Eagly & Karau, 2002; Large & Saunders, 1995; Stroh et al., 1996), statistics show that as more and more South African women join the workforce, so the wage parity between the sexes is decreasing (Department of Women, 2015; StatsSA, 2014). An interesting correlation does, however, still remain between the small number of women in top management and the greater differential in salaries in top management (Eagly & Karau, 2002; Gregory-Smith et al., 2014; Rosser & Mamiseishvili, 2014), further supporting the notion that the "glass-ceiling" becomes more difficult to break through in terms of career advancement and pay the further one progresses up the management ladder. Considering the substantial challenges present further supports the need for a pricing strategy to be applied by the female employee.

Drawing from the many pricing principles available in marketing, perceived and psychological pricing are best suited to the pricing relationship between female employee and current/potential employer. Perceived pricing stems from the buyers' perceived value, which is built up from the remaining three Ps of the marketing mix (Kotler, 1984). For example, product, where having a tertiary qualification is associated with higher earnings (Ñopo et al., 2012; StatsSA, 2014) or place, whereby access to informal networks provides valuable insider information (Kanter, 1977), and finally, promotion, where a mentor's backing can increase a female employee's perceived value (Brink & Benschop, 2014; Ragins et al., 1998). Consolidated, these factors increase the perceived value of the female employee and, as a result, increase her potential remunerated value to the company.

Psychological pricing, which finds roots in perceived value, occurs when price equates to quality in the mind of the buyer. On this basis, a female employee

accepting a lower reimbursement is actually perpetuating gender stereotypes that women are not good managers when compared to men. Women tend to be more accepting of inferior wages or treatment, perhaps because they fear reprisal for remuneration increase requests or do not display the same offensive and entitled behaviour as men (Albanesi et al., 2015; Davies-Netzley, 1998; Kolb, 2009; Oakley, 2000). Women are also less inclined to negotiate. They do not display confidence and seem unsure in their ability to negotiate, leading to doubt and dissatisfaction (Burke & Collins, 2001; Kolb, 2009). Female employees must make use of negotiation tactics such as benchmarking, where comparative salary information is provided by market studies and informal networks (Kolb, 2009; Oakley, 2000). Female employees can also confidently request an increase using performance review sessions as evidence of their value to the organisation.

Reimbursement for output is not only monetary, however. It may be the case that women chose lower-paying jobs as they placed more value on other benefits on offer (Kolb, 2009), such as, for example, flexible working hours, greater job satisfaction, location and working environment. It is equally important that these benefits form part of the negotiation procedure to ensure overall equitable reimbursement. By focusing on improving her individual marketing mix and negotiating pay or benefits that are equivalent to her quality as a manager, a female employee can break through the remuneration "glass-ceiling".

2.7 Informal networks as a place strategy

Networks allow the exchange of resources such as information, referrals and support between participants; informal networks facilitate this unofficial exchange between employees, colleagues and influential role players (Ibarra, 1997). Informal networks and associated events are where the organisation and its players are discussed, such as bending the rules of policy, collusion and tips to impress superiors (Brink & Benschop, 2014; Kanter, 1977). Informal networks offer an opportunity for female lobbying, not only to garner personal support but also for gender policy change through the subtle use of feminine wiles and people skills (Ross-Smith & Huppatz, 2010). Informal networks can provide advance notice of developments, such as job opportunities, allowing a participant of the

network to use interpersonal ties to influence and proactively prepare for these opportunities (Morgan, 2006).

Findings by Brass (1985), supported by recent literature (Albanesi et al., 2015; Brink & Benschop, 2014; Davies-Netzley, 1998; Oakley, 2000) and within the South African context (April, Dreyer, & Blass, 2007), show that access to informal networks can result in career advancement for both men and women, particularly when influential role players participate in the informal network. Brass also found that men and women tended to build groups within their own gender, something which becomes a considerable disadvantage to women due to the limited number of females available in influential positions.

However, informal networks are not only built on gender similarity, they can also stem from job role, culture, management level or proximity (Brass, 1985). Therefore, a female employee must draw on her similarities to the group in order to assimilate and gain access to the information-sharing benefits and opportunities. A female employee can gain access to an informal network via a professional association, a sponsor or mentor (Brink & Benschop, 2014; Ragins et al., 1998). Such matters are discussed further in the following section. Regardless of method, participation in informal networks is a key distribution channel of the female employee.

Place describes the activities employed by the seller to make the product accessible and open to the buyer. When these activities are performed by a group of sellers, this is called a channel of distribution (Kotler, 1984). An informal network can be described as a channel of distribution as it is an activity performed by the female employee/seller to make potential buyers/employers aware of and perhaps experience her skills and abilities in an informal setting. An informal network is also an opportunity to make use of lobbying tactics and people skills to influence powerful role-players. The advantage of using informal networks as a distribution channel is predominantly the fact that the female employee would not have access to these opportunities or advantages through any formal means (Davies-Netzley, 1998; Oakley, 2000; Roomi, 2013). In addition, the members of

the network with whom she forms close bonds can also act as agents or spokespeople on her behalf when in formal settings.

As with traditional distribution channels, degrees of cooperation, conflict and competition are evident (Kotler, 1984). A female employee may find herself cooperating with other members of the informal network to prepare for an opportunity or project where all involved will derive benefit. The converse is also true, where a female employee may find herself competing with other members of the informal network for the same opportunity, resulting in conflict. Measures to minimise potential negative impact include creating superordinate goals that all members of the informal network can support, and administrative goals where, should individual conflicts arise, damage can be mitigated through mediation, perhaps performed by a mentor (Kotler, 1984). When correctly managed, an informal network can act as a crucial advantage for distribution of the female manager's product.

2.8 Utilising mentorship as a promotion strategy

Mentorship can be multifaceted and challenging, making it difficult to define. However, the benefits to both employee and organisation are clear. Within an organisation there are supportive professional relationships between employees, which, when successful, serve both parties in terms of *career* and *psychological* functions (Kram, 1983). When these relationships are between a senior and less experienced employee, it can be termed a mentor relationship (Robbins & Judge, 2011). Naturally, there are varying degrees or phases within the mentorship spectrum.

Kram (1983), and later, Tharenou (2005), describes *career* functions as those that aid in career advancement, such as sponsorship, exposure and visibility, coaching, protection and challenging assignments, while *psychological* functions predominantly improve self-confidence through role modelling, acceptance and confirmation, counselling and friendship. Important for this research is the role of mentoring in career advancement. A mentor is a key ambassador or agent of their protégé providing the benefit of visibility and exposure to influential role-

players, which can result in nomination for promotion and access to opportunities that would otherwise not have been possible (Broadbridge & Ehrich, 2008; Ragins et al., 1998; Robbins & Judge, 2011). These benefits are often grouped into “sponsorship-mentoring”, particularly where the power and position of the mentor directly results in career promotion for the protégé (Broadbridge & Ehrich, 2008). “Sponsorship-mentoring” exists almost exclusively between men. When women are involved, they tend to perpetuate stereotypes of male dominance and female subordination (Broadbridge & Ehrich, 2008).

A relationship of any nature between an older male and younger female employee draws attention from peers and spouses, where the speculation exists that the relationship is personal or physical (Blake-Beard, 2001; Fitt & Newton, 1981; Ragins & Scandura, 1994). If the relationship does become physical, it can lead to emotional turmoil and societal labelling (Broadbridge & Ehrich, 2008). A logical solution would be to find a female mentor or sponsor, although this may prove difficult due to the small number of suitable candidates available (Rhee & Sigler, 2015). In addition, women are less likely to offer themselves as mentors because they do not perceive the benefit to themselves (Blake-Beard, 2001; Broadbridge & Ehrich, 2008; Durbin & Tomlinson, 2014; Ragins & Scandura, 1994). To a degree, this is true as a female mentor and protégé relationship derives predominantly psychological benefits such as an empathetic ear or sounding board, as a result of common struggles (Broadbridge & Ehrich, 2008; Davies-Netzley, 1998; DeCastro, Sambuco, Ubel, Stewart, & Jagsi, 2013; Kram, 1983).

Organisations can encourage senior female employees to mentor through formalised mentorship programmes, which are more accessible and structured, although mentorships may take longer to develop as a result of forced participation or poor fit (Broadbridge & Ehrich, 2008; Holt, Markova, Dhaenens, Marler, & Heilmann, 2016). Ghosh and Reio (2013) suggest that organisations can encourage senior members to volunteer if they describe the benefits that they will receive, for example, improve their relational skills and competencies, which in turn, can manifest into career advancement and satisfaction. Hu, Wang, Yang, and Wu (2014) suggest that mentoring within an organisation will only be

successful if the mentor believes that the organisation truly supports and values its employees. Ultimately, a mentorship grants the protégé invaluable exposure that cannot be attained by any other means, making formal or informal mentoring an important promotional tool.

Promotion is the act of persuasive communication, where the target market is convinced to purchase based on the features and benefits of a product (Kotler, 1984). A female employee will use promotion to communicate her skills and abilities to the organisation in an effort to break through the "glass-ceiling" into higher level positions. An invaluable form of communication is available to those female employees who have a mentor. Through a mentor relationship, the female employee is not only provided exposure to influential members of the organisation and the opportunity to demonstrate her skills to them, but her mentor in some ways plays a sales role by speaking highly of her to their peers.

In the first scenario, the female employee performs the act of personal selling, where face-to-face interaction aids the cultivation of the buyer-seller relationship through the immediate adjustment of the communication based on the recipient's response (Kotler, 1984; Kotler & Keller, 2009). Through her mentor, the female employee is given the opportunity to inform the employer of her desire to ascend the management hierarchy and explain why she is a good fit for the opportunity.

In the second scenario, the mentor, in a sales role, focuses on the short-term goal of the protégé, which is achieving the available advancement opportunity by stimulating demand of the buyer. The mentor can do this by highlighting the protégé's skills, past accomplishments and aptitude for the position, while handling any objections that may stem from gender discrimination (Weitz & Bradford, 1999). A mentor relationship can play a key promotion role in the marketing mix of a female employee hoping to break through the "glass-ceiling".

2.9 Uncontrollable environmental variables

The contextual boundaries of a study determine the generalisability of a theory (Whetten, 1989). Relevant to this study are the uncontrollable environmental elements of the marketing mix: resources and objectives; competitive situation;

society and culture; politics and legislature and, finally, economy and technology (McCarthy & Perreault, 1960). These five factors make up the external elements of the environment in which the marketing mix strategy is executed (Anderson & Taylor, 1995; McCarthy & Perreault, 1993). Mintzberg (1987b) suggests that a successfully executed strategy is one that considers the environment of its subject and changes accordingly (Mintzberg, 1987b). The same applies to a marketing mix strategy (Helm & Gritsch, 2014; Westwood, 2013). In terms of this study, the female manager must consider the climate in which she operates and adjust the elements of her marketing mix strategy accordingly in order to maximise her chances of success. Each of these variables has been touched on in earlier paragraphs of this research, though a consolidated summary of the discussion follows:

2.9.1 Resources and objectives

In the 11th edition of the influential book by McCarthy and Perreault (1993) *Basic Marketing*, an objective is described as a socially and economically useful course of action or direction, while resources are used to deliver the business objectives. A female employee's objective is to overcome the "glass-ceiling" by ascending the management hierarchy. She derives social benefit from peer relationships within informal networks and mentor relationships, and economic benefit through remuneration increases associated with career advancement. Although both her social and economic benefit may be affected by gender discrimination associated with the "glass-ceiling", the female employee uses her available resources, such as management and people skills, to achieve her objectives. It is of utmost importance that the female employee sets her objective clearly and utilises all her resources in a manner that contributes to the achievement of her objective.

2.9.2 Competitive situation

The competitive situation is the number and types of competitors the female employee must overcome in order to succeed. Competitive advantage is a method for overcoming competition (McCarthy & Perreault, 1993). Product features can make up the competitive advantage that differentiates a product from its competitors (Kotler, 1984). For the female employee, she can achieve higher qualifications which can be used to outmanoeuvre male counterparts for

promotion, especially as women appear to be held to a higher standard (Booysen, 1999; Davies-Netzley, 1998; Wright & Baxter, 2000). Also applicable is a specialised skill or expertise that results in a competitive advantage for the female employee (Ragins et al., 1998). Once again, the female employee must utilise her available resources to improve her competitive advantage in order to achieve her overall objective of breaking through the “glass-ceiling”.

2.9.3 Society and culture

Arguably the most influential environmental variable is the impact of societal and cultural thinking, which affects the behaviour of its inhabitants (McCarthy & Perreault, 1993). In societies with traditional gender perception, women who chose to enter the workplace may face criticism of family neglect due to the challenges of the work-life-balance (Lewis et al., 2007). Similarly, in cultures where women are expected to take on the primary caregiving and housekeeping role, it is difficult for women to participate and find happiness in employment (Beja, 2014). Within the South African society, women who chose to work face similar challenges of balancing work and family responsibilities, with those women in top management positions forced to make use of support structures (April et al., 2007). However, South African women face the additional challenge of a patriarchal culture, where men find it difficult to take instruction from or be managed by women (Booysen & Nkomo, 2010).

McCarthy and Perreault (1993) advise that radical change in societal and cultural thinking takes much time to solidify, and successful marketing managers should work within their immediate constraints while continuing to seek new and better opportunities. Women who find themselves working within these traditional environments facing potential criticism can be encouraged and motivated by career success and breaking through the “glass-ceiling”.

2.9.4 Politics and legislature

Political influence and legislation plays an important role in the workplace environment and intrepid female employees can derive benefit by taking advantage of the legislation (McCarthy & Perreault, 1993). In South Africa, organisational compliance is measured according to the Employment Equity (EE)

Act of 1999 (amended 2004), the primary purpose of which is to foster equal opportunity through fair treatment of employment via affirmative action. Organisations can improve their EE scorecard through training and development programmes for designated groups (Department of Labour, 2014). The Female Leadership Development Programme (FLDP) is an example of such a programme that has been designed, as one of the long term strategies, to improve the EE scorecard of the SOC. As female employment forms part of affirmative action, female employees should take advantage of these training and development programmes, which aid in exposure and possibly career fast tracking.

These programmes can also facilitate change of organisational policy and practices (Kalev, Dobbin, & Kelly, 2006). As greater focus and attention is given to female employees, so too, do their workplace needs come to light. Organisations can implement practices such as flexible working hours or family-responsive policies. Research by Scandura and Lankau (1997) shows that female employees experience greater organisational loyalty and job satisfaction when working in this climate. It is of great importance that female employees take every advantage of these legislated programmes.

2.9.5 Economy and technology

Technology forms the basis of any economic environment through the application of technical skill and equipment to convert resources into profitable output (McCarthy & Perreault, 1993). Each technological advancement brings new market opportunities for process or product improvement, as well as execution challenges (McCarthy & Perreault, 1993). Statistics show that female graduates often specialise in social sciences, with few venturing into technical fields such as engineering or physical sciences (Department of Women, 2015; StatsSA, 2014). The technical environment may, however, open up unique opportunities not available in traditionally female employment sectors.

Other technological advances have come in the form of social media, with social media forming a part of the communication strategy of female employees. Mangold and Faulds (2009) describe social media as having a hybrid role due to

the fact that it forms part of both the formalised communications plan as well as having a networking aspect. This allows the female manager to make use of professional social media platforms, such as LinkedIn, as an element of her promotion strategy where she is able to control the content and align it to her professional persona. Moreover, the forums and interactions of social media act as an informal network, offering the same benefits, albeit via a digital platform.

2.10 Critics of individual career strategies

Whilst individual strategies applied by women may not work in isolation, organisations and governments need to create support systems and policies that support holistic career strategy development.

2.10.1 Strategies do not work for women

In her study, Wrigley (2002) found that many respondents rationalised their position beneath the "glass-ceiling" by employing a strategy of hard work and patience, which was found to generally not be enough to guarantee success; a finding also evident in the research of Davies-Netzley (1998). In addition, it was found that female employees have a submissive stance in the workplace, not wanting to voice their unhappiness or aspirations for fear of losing their jobs or being seen as trouble makers.

Many women would prefer to wait until organisations are more conducive to female promotion through culture and policy change (Tomlinson, Muzio, Sommerlad, Webley, & Duff, 2013). While this may happen in time, the trigger for change lies in the hands of female employee (Ragins et al., 1998). A South African study by Riordan and Louw-Potgieter (2011) on the success of female academics echoes this sentiment. Their research proposes that the individual is responsible for their own success. Their findings suggest that women in the early stages of their careers should focus on career planning by consciously developing and applying career-management strategies. Their conclusion is that by implementing career strategies to the opportunities created through the supporting EE legislature, female managers can advance.

By maintaining a strategy throughout her career, a female manager may develop coping mechanisms and therefore not perceive barriers such as the "glass-ceiling". This was a finding of Aycan (2004) in her study of 52 Turkish women in middle to top management positions within large private organisations. Only five women indicated that they had encountered the "glass-ceiling". Aycan proposed that although the "glass-ceiling" still exists, these successful women did not perceive it as a result of strategies developed early on in their careers. It may also be possible that top-performing women prefer to attribute their success to internal capability. Punnett et al. (2007) found that successful women with a high sense of self-efficacy, need for achievement, and internal locus of control, found greater satisfaction in their success.

It is evident from the above that strategies may be successful in overcoming challenges facing female employees. This study aims to determine if female managers utilise strategies during their careers, whether the marketing mix could be one such strategy and if so, in which manner it could be implemented by female managers to overcome the "glass-ceiling".

2.10.2 Strategy changes through career advancement

In the above paragraphs, the suitability of the marketing mix as a strategy for female employees to overcome the "glass-ceiling" has been established. Through the application of a strategy, the female employee is provided with direction, a guide through challenging circumstances and a path towards success (Mintzberg, 1987b). A strategy provides her with a way of thinking and reacting to the "glass-ceiling", which she is able to learn and repeat throughout her career. Strategy is rooted in stability, yet situations rarely remain the same indefinitely, hence the importance of strategic change (Mintzberg, 1987b).

For the purposes of this research, the marketing manager implementing a career strategy is the female employee in a management role. In order to satisfy her need to break through the "glass-ceiling" into a higher position, she may strategically apply a marketing mix. This understanding may be true for a buyer's market where the buyer is dominant and the seller works diligently to satisfy their customers (Kotler, 1984). How does the strategy of the female employee change

when she enters into a seller's market and now finds herself in a position of power above the "glass-ceiling"?

It can be argued that in certain stages of her career, the female employee should give greater focus to one area, while only maintaining the other three. For example, in the introductory phase of her career, the female employee may focus her energy on product by achieving higher education and specialised skills. In the growth phase, she may focus on distribution or place and look for access to informal networks to grow her career. Moving into the maturity phase of her career, she may give attention to price as she can leverage her past achievements as motivation for increased remuneration. Finally, at the peak of her career, she may enter a seller's market where she is potentially above the "glass-ceiling". In this scenario, it may be useful to liken the female employee to a luxury good.

Luxury goods are qualified as such due to their brand awareness, perceived quality and status (Atwal & Williams, 2009). Advantages that are shared by a female employee who has, for example, been headhunted by an organisation due to her high visibility and perceived skill, which is not only her management ability but also her negotiation and relationship-building skills. Vickers and Renand (2003) suggest that manipulation of the marketing mix, especially the promotion or communication aspect, should be considered when dealing with luxury goods. The female employee uses her mentor relationship to communicate her advantages to an elite audience and to be offered employment opportunities such as invitations to participate on advisory boards or exclusive committees. Regardless of level, the female employee remains the marketing manager of her career, although she continually applies strategic change in accordance with the external environment and expectations.

2.10.3 Organisations must change, not individuals

The benefits to the organisation of hiring female managers can be summarised from the previous paragraphs as compliance and performance. Kalev et al. (2006), Booysen (1999) and Ragins et al. (1998) suggest implementing policy changes to establish organisational responsibility that are enforced by top

management throughout the organisation. In doing so, organisations create an environment in which female talent is allowed to thrive (Oakley, 2000; Ragins et al., 1998).

Stroh et al. (1996) argue that changing organisational policy alone is not enough; female employees desire equal opportunity for promotion. While the research of Acker (1990) is a combination of this thinking, she puts forward that organisations are not, as theorists suggest, gender neutral but are very much male gendered not only in their appointments and promotions but right through to policy, job descriptions and culture. She put forward that 'radical' change is required to introduce the female gender into organisations where the practices within the organisation are aligned to those of society.

In order to give credence to change, the Presidency of South Africa established the Department of Women in July 2014. The role of this department is to ensure that all public and private sector programmes focus on issues of gender in the hopes of aiding in the removal of persistent barriers to the advancement of women, many of which relate to systemic and structural organisational inequalities (Department of Women, 2015). The Department of Labour supports this initiative through the inaugural EE awards of 2015 to recognise public and private sector, state-owned, educational and non-profit organisations that embrace the spirit of employment equity. The state-owned telecommunications arm is of importance to this study. Figure five below illustrates female representation within top management and in total, within the state-owned telecommunications and transportation entities. These figures were drawn from the respective 2015 integrated reports.

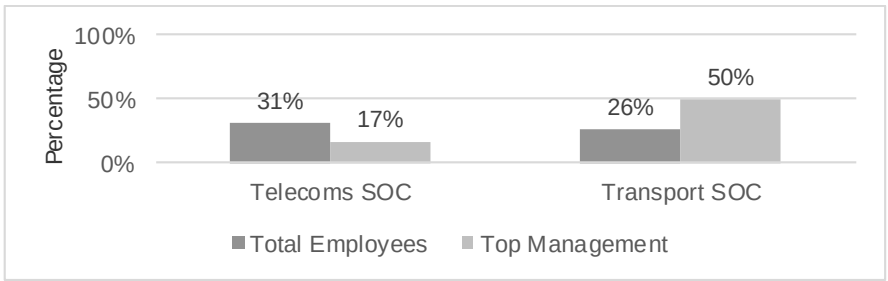

Figure 5: Female representation. Source: 2015 Integrated Report

Both of these state-owned entities have instituted development programmes to foster female talent in order to meet gender equality objectives. The state-owned telecommunications organisation has inaugurated the Female Leadership Development Programme (FLDP), where 49 women have been selected to participate in a two-year training and leadership development programme. The state-owned transportation arm has also embarked on a two-year Women Development Programme, where a total of 10 women across the organisation have been chosen to be educated in port logistics and developed to lead in this traditionally male-dominated environment.

2.11 Conclusion

In summary, marketing theory has been utilised as a lens through which to examine the "glass-ceiling". The theoretical relationships between constructs of the theory, the 4Ps, and key concepts of the phenomenon, being professional persona, remuneration, networking and mentorship, were examined and found to be congruent. A review of the uncontrollable environmental elements has also been provided. To follow is an empirical analysis to determine the suitability of the marketing mix as a career strategy for female managers encountering the "glass-ceiling".

Whilst criticism against the necessity or use of career strategies exists, sufficient evidence is present to support the conscious and adaptive use of individual career strategies (Krieshok et al., 2009; Laud & Johnson, 2013; Ragins et al., 1998; Riordan & Louw-Potgieter, 2011). This approach prepares the female manager for the vocational encounters she may face as a result of the issues stemming from the "glass-ceiling". Thus illustrating the need to answer the research question of: *When can the marketing mix be applied by South African female managers as a career strategy to break through the "glass-ceiling"?*

CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

In this chapter, the philosophical assumptions, research methodology, design and method implemented for this study is discussed. This research aims to determine the applicability of career strategies, specifically, the suitability of the constructs of the marketing mix as a strategy for female managers to overcome the key issues associated with the "glass-ceiling". The sections that follow discuss in detail the research process followed to obtain, analyse, interpret and present data collected from the respondents regarding their experiences with the phenomenon of the "glass-ceiling", within the confines of the philosophical assumptions made for this research.

3.1 Philosophical assumptions

Creswell (2013) proposes that all researchers begin a study with preconceived assumptions as to how and what they will learn during their investigation. This preconception or basic belief system can be described as a paradigm (Kuhn, 2012). First pioneered in the work of Thomas Kuhn in *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions* in 1962 with subsequent revisions in 2012, Kuhn formalised thinking around paradigms. He describes a paradigm as a worldview or framework which governs thought and approach. Tuli (2011) suggests that a paradigm also guides the ontology and epistemology of the research as well as the research methods. These are discussed in the sections that follow.

3.1.1 Paradigm

For the purposes of this study, an interpretivist paradigm was employed. Denscombe (2014) suggests that interpretivist research views reality as subjective, influenced by thoughts and actions. As the researcher, I was responsible for interpreting the phenomenon of the "glass-ceiling" in order to provide insight into the professional life of female managers. It is important to note that as an interpretivist researcher, I too view reality in terms of my own experiences. This resulted in a level of subjectivity as a result of being part of the social reality being investigated (Denscombe, 2014). Hence, I recognise that my thinking was shaped, to some extent, by this subjectivity.

Adopting an interpretivist perspective gives focus to the individual reality of the female manager and should allow them to speak freely (Tuli, 2011). This allowed me to examine patterns in behaviour, motivation and beliefs stemming from this reality (Lin, 1998) and generated an understanding of the phenomenon (Tuli, 2011), in this case, the "glass-ceiling". This research aims to investigate the proposed relationship between the constructs of the marketing mix and the key issues of the "glass-ceiling" phenomenon. Lin (1998) proposes that an interpretivist paradigm can provide an appropriate lens to examine these relationships and provide an explanation as to why they exist.

3.1.2 Ontology

Tuli (2011) describes ontology as the intrinsic nature of things, where the ontological question is around the nature of reality for the study. He suggests that interpretivist studies view reality as socially constructed, making each individual's reality unique to their social interaction. Thus, "truth" or nature of reality for this study was derived from the workplace interactions of the female managers.

This study looks to the female manager to articulate her experiences with the "glass-ceiling" phenomenon, which are subjective due to their social construction (Collis & Hussey, 2013). Due to this subjectivity, it was assumed that each respondent enjoys her own sense of reality (Collis & Hussey, 2013). Understanding and describing this perception of reality was of importance to this study. It is proposed that the reality of the female manager is influenced by her experience at management levels and the external, uncontrollable factors of the marketing mix, namely, resources and objectives; competitive situation; society and culture; politics and legislature and, finally, economy and technology (McCarthy & Perreault, 1960; McCarthy & Perreault, 1993). These factors were assumed to influence "truth" or the nature of reality for this study. "Truth" in this study is the subjective experiences of the participants based on their realities.

3.1.3 Epistemology

Epistemology relates to how knowledge is constructed and what relationship exists between the researcher and the research (Collis & Hussey, 2013; Guba & Lincoln, 1994). Interpretivists believe meaning or knowledge stems from patterns

that evolve during social interaction (Tuli, 2011). Therefore, this study extracted meaning or knowledge that was embedded in the female manager's workplace interaction with the "glass-ceiling".

The relationship between the researcher and the research was influenced by the interpretivist paradigm adopted for this research. As such, it was assumed that the reality of the researcher was influenced by personal experiences. It is common for interpretivist researchers to minimise the distance to the research subject and potentially experience subjectivity (Collis & Hussey, 2013). It was required for me to bracket any subjectivity, be aware that it existed and make note of it, while constructing knowledge during the research process. The method of bracketing utilised in this study was journaling and note taking. This allowed for acknowledgement and foregrounding of preconceptions (Tufford & Newman, 2012).

3.2 Research methodology

A qualitative research methodology has been selected for this study. While a quantitative approach provides numbers and statistics, which are valuable in the measurement of a study, such an approach is limited in its ability to understand and describe human motivation and behaviour; something better suited to a qualitative approach (Kothari, 2011; Merriam, 1998).

Cognisance was taken of the subject matter and philosophical assumptions of this study and, on this basis, a qualitative approach was deemed most suitable (Kothari, 2011). Firstly, qualitative research provides an approach which is concerned with human behaviour and understanding a respondent's meaning (Merriam, 1998). This was an ideal approach for this research as the emphasis was on the respondents' personal interpretation and subjective reality of the phenomenon of the "glass-ceiling" – the "glass-ceiling" being a metaphor of workplace inequality (Cotter et al., 2001).

Secondly, the effect of workplace gender inequality can be deeply personal, affecting a female employee's home life and personal worth (Beja, 2014;

Geldenhuys, 2011). It is the sensitive nature of this effect that makes qualitative research suitable, as the researcher is able to assimilate into the world of the respondent and thereby gain deeper insight and understanding of the phenomenon (Britten & Fisher, 1993; Denscombe, 2014). Finally, qualitative research can give greater focus to the individual in a certain context rather than the population as a whole (Britten & Fisher, 1993). This focus becomes relevant as the context of this research, South Africa, is seldom utilised.

The benefits of qualitative methods are apparent from the discussion above, yet criticism remains within the academic community; the dominant claim being that qualitative research lacks rigour, due to researcher bias, and generalisability, due to small sample sizes (Denscombe, 2014; Mays & Pope, 1995; Merriam, 1998). In order to overcome these perceptions, techniques such as awareness and systematic execution of research design, data collection, interpretation, and communication (Mays & Pope, 1995) was applied in this research. Each step taken has been adequately described to ensure the reader is aware of the process followed (Britten & Fisher, 1993). In so doing, an account of the methods used has been provided, which can stand independently and be replicated with similar conclusions (Denscombe, 2014; Mays & Pope, 1995). The results of this research hope to provide a plausible and articulate explanation of the phenomenon of the “glass-ceiling” and associated marketing mix constructs.

3.3 Research design

Research design is selecting the type of scientific research to be performed; scientific because it must be rigorous and replicable (Bhattacherjee, 2012). The research design type is usually informed by the nature of the research question (Creswell, Hanson, Plano, & Morales, 2007). This research aims to determine the application of career strategies, particularly the suitability of the marketing mix as a strategy for female managers to overcome the key issues associated with the “glass-ceiling”. As such, a descriptive research design was selected.

As this research is concerned with the experiences of female managers resulting from the key issues of the “glass-ceiling”, a descriptive research approach was

applied as it allowed for observation and documentation of the phenomenon of interest (Bhattacherjee, 2012). Descriptive research allowed this study to focus on interpretation and explanation of the experience of the respondent (Kothari, 2011). Through understanding the experience, descriptive research can provoke action (De Vaus & de Vaus, 2001), such as the proposed application of a marketing mix strategy.

By using a descriptive research design, this research has observed and gained an understanding of the behaviour of female managers experiencing the "glass-ceiling" phenomenon. These experiences have been described and compared to the key concepts of the "glass-ceiling" identified in the literature as professional persona, remuneration, informal networks and mentorship; the similarity and coherence of which aided in determining the suitability of the marketing mix as a strategy to overcome these key issues associated with the "glass-celling".

3.4 Sampling

The 'population' of a study consists of all the elements under consideration (Kothari, 2011). This study took place within a South African context, on a meso-level of analysis, this being the organisational level. The unit of analysis was a group of individuals participating in a leadership development program within the organisation. The sampling strategy applied was purposive, homogeneous sampling.

3.4.1 Population

A population within the South African context provided an interesting backdrop for the study due to the fact that it is infrequently used in academic research. In addition, the historic plight of female employees as a result of apartheid (Booysen, 1999; Booysen & Nkomo, 2010; Nkomo & Kriek, 2011) highlights the importance of research on prevailing inequality in the workplace.

On a meso-level, the organisation under study is a state-owned company (SOC) operating in the telecommunications industry within South Africa. This organisation has placed priority on developing a female management pipeline in

light of the current inadequate female representation within the highest levels of management. Great emphasis is also placed on aligning with government initiatives and legislation, such as the EE Act and Women Empowerment and Gender Equality Bill, both of which call for fair treatment and equal representation of female employees on all employment levels.

In order to meet their gender equality objectives, the organisation established the Female Leadership Development Programme (FLDP). The organisation will receive benefit in the form of legislative compliance and ensure a viable internal female leadership pipeline.

3.4.2 The Female Leadership Development Programme (FLDP)

The unit of analysis for the study was a group of individuals participating in the FLDP. Participants were nominated by their promoters to participate in the programme as they have displayed aptitude and a desire to progress within the organisation. They were also required to meet the following minimum criteria:

- A minimum three years of service in the organisation
- A three year degree/diploma
- Existing part time bursary students were not eligible for participation in the program
- Performance evaluations of “average” for the preceding two years
- Age below 50 years of age (49 and younger)

From the candidates, a group of 49 were selected to participate in the programme. In keeping with the epistemological assumption discussed above, it should be noted that I, the researcher, was a participant in the programme.

Figure six below illustrates that all participants were on various levels of management. Management employees have either the responsibility for a staff complement, a strategic role with decision-making capability, or both, at this level. The organisation dictates a tertiary qualification and minimum of two to three years of occupation in order to be appointed at this level. Thus, the participants

have been promoted on at least one occasion in order to attain this level within the organisation.

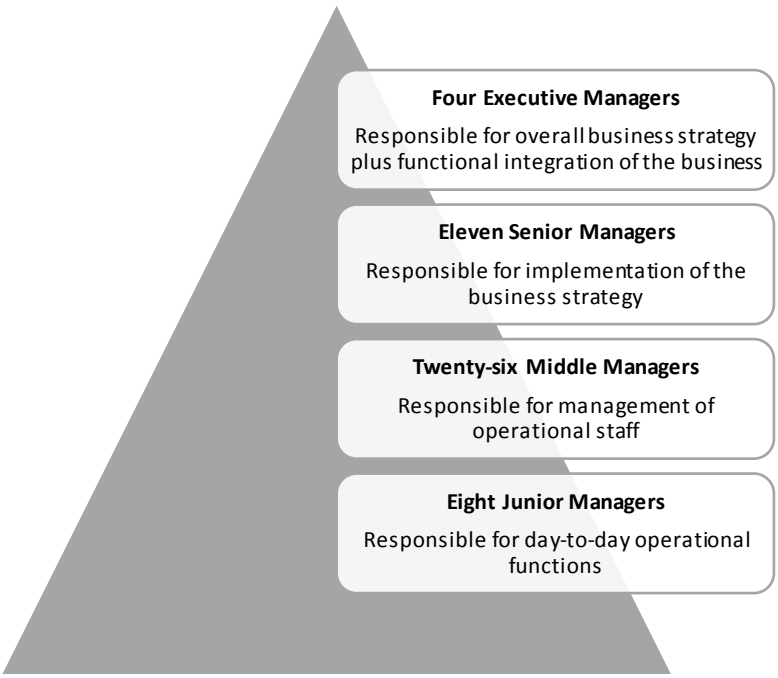

Figure 6: Employment grade of participants

The programme consisted of various initiatives which were chosen to develop the participants into adaptable and dynamic female leaders. The initiatives were focused on individual, functional and organisational development. It is evident that the initiatives of the programme align closely with the key concepts of the "glass-ceiling", as illustrated in Table two. The parallels drawn between the FLDP initiatives and the marketing mix strategies, proposed in Chapter Two: Review of the literature, to overcome the key issues of the "glass-ceiling", infer that the "glass-ceiling" was prevalent in the organisation. From these parallels, interview questions were developed in Table two and are discussed further in the following section (3.5 Instrument).

Table 2: FLDP Initiatives versus Marketing Mix (Instrument)

Career Strategies	
Propositions describing the female manager: a) she encounters several challenges as a result of engaging the "glass-ceiling", b) a career strategy can enhance her ability to	1. What actions or strategies have you implemented, if any, to help you succeed? a. How did you formulate this strategy?

overcome the challenges associated with the "glass-ceiling", c) her development of a career strategy must be conscious and adaptive to suit both the individual and the environment.	2. Would you say that applying this strategy has aided your career advancement? a. In which ways?

Marketing Mix Strategy	FLDP Initiative	Interview Questions
Product / Professional persona		
A product strategy can be used to enhance her professional persona, which is made up of workplace quality in terms of job performance and management style, features being skill and level of education and style or packaging in terms of outward appearance.	The participants of the programme will be provided with skills training such as people management and problem solving. They will also receive professional assistance with dress code/outward appearance and how to conduct themselves in an office environment.	1. How would you describe your management style? 2. How would you describe your outward appearance at work? 3. Please describe your academic history.
Price / Remuneration		
A pricing strategy of perceived value and psychological pricing can be used to enhance the manner in which she is reimbursed for their output.	Participants will not receive a direct increase in salary but be enabled to negotiate from a position of improved self-worth.	1. How would you compare your salary to your male counterparts? 2. Do you consider yourself fairly remunerated? Why? 3. How would you go about improving your salary or benefits? 4. Do you feel that participation in the FLDP has changed your value to the organisation in any way?
Place / Informal Networks		
A place strategy can be used to create and manage a new channel of distribution in order to exchange resources such as information, referrals and support of employees, colleagues and influential role players.	The programme itself acts as an informal network to the participants. In addition, subgroups have been formed, which allow for closer networking and relationship development. Access to work-based networks will also be facilitated by the programme.	1. Have you enjoyed being part of the FLDP thus far? 2. How would you describe the benefit of being part of the FLDP network? 3. How has your experience been with the subgroup/pod? 4. Are you part of any other groups or professional associations with work/industry colleagues?
Promotion / Mentorship		
A promotion strategy can enhance exposure and communication of benefits through the use of a mentor, while providing both parties with career and psychological benefits.	Formal mentoring opportunities within the organisation will be provided to the participants as well as specialised coaching for identified development areas.	1. Do you have a mentor? 2. Have you made use of coaching? 3. Have you had any 'chat and learn' sessions?
<u>Additional probing sub-questions:</u> 1. How has / would this have affected your career?		

	2. How did this benefit you as a person / as an employee? 3. How has the programme affected this? 4. Please describe how you felt. 5. Would you consider changing? 6. Would you ask your promoter?

It was assumed that the "glass-ceiling" existed, to some degree, within the organisation and, as such, the participants of the programme had a level of interaction with the "glass-ceiling" phenomenon. This assumption was made due to several reasons. The first being the necessity of the organisation to institute a female leadership development programme, which suggested that sustainable female advancement required intervention in order to be realised. The initiatives of the programme aligned to the key concepts of the "glass-ceiling", discussed in Chapter Two: Review of the literature. All of the participants had been successfully promoted, at least once during their career, indicating engagement with the "glass-ceiling" in order to gain advancement, and the participants of the programme desired further promotion, yet had been unsuccessful in their attempts to progress further in their careers at the time of the study.

As a result, the participants were in a position to comment on the effectiveness of the proposed marketing mix strategy to improve their experience with the issues of the "glass-ceiling". It is on this basis that the participants of the FLDP formed the unit of analysis for the study from which respondents were purposively selected to form the homogeneous sample of this study.

3.4.3 Sampling strategy

A purposive sampling strategy was applied in this study. Purposive sampling occurs when the researcher exercises judgement when selecting the sample (Whitley, Kite, & Adams, 2012). When judgement dictates that respondents share similar experiences, this is called an homogeneous sampling strategy (Onwuegbuzie & Leech, 2007). It is designed to describe the experience of the collective (Polkinghorne, 2005). As this is an interpretivist study, respondents were selected based on the premise that they were familiar with the key concepts of the "glass-ceiling" phenomenon and shared similar experiences (Polkinghorne, 1989; Starks & Trinidad, 2007).

3.4.4 Sample size

There is little consensus as to the number of interviews required to reach saturation in a study of this nature, with Creswell (1998) suggesting 12 to 18; Guest, Bunce, and Johnson (2006) proposing 12, and Starks and Trinidad (2007) indicating one to 10. As there are 49 participants in the programme, the researcher attempted to interview as many as possible, though certain participants of the programme were unavailable due to work commitments, voluntary retrenchments, location or lack of interest in the study.

A total of 21 interviews were completed. The 49 participants consisted of four executive managers, of which two were interviewed; 11 senior managers, of which seven were interviewed; 26 middle managers, of which eight were interviewed and eight junior managers, of which four were interviewed. Figure six illustrates the employment grade and description of the FLDP participants

The researcher completed 21 interviews in the hopes of achieving saturation. Saturation is evidence of sampling adequacy insofar as sufficient data has been collected to account for all facets of the phenomenon (Morse, Barrett, Mayan, Olson, & Spiers, 2008) and continued investigation does not provide further insight (Bhattacherjee, 2012). Morse (1991) suggests researchers performing interviews can recognise saturation by using indicators such as 'not hearing anything new' during interviews. Thus, it is anticipated a sample size of 21 has delivered saturation due to the localised context of the study (Onwuegbuzie & Leech, 2007), homogeneity of the sample and concentrated nature of the research objectives (Guest et al., 2006).

3.5 Instrument

The instrument selected for this study was a one hour, semi-structured interview. In order to capture the experiential descriptions from the respondents, an instrument was required that could derive a detailed account of the experience. Polkinghorne (2005) suggests an interview can meet this requirement as it provides a first-hand, detailed verbal reaction from the respondent. As the interviewer, I presented myself as the listener and asked the respondent to account her experiences with the key issues of the "glass-ceiling" and initiatives

of the programme. It was also necessary to probe and encourage the respondent to provide more detail to achieve clarity (Starks & Trinidad, 2007).

On this basis and due to the homogeneity of the sample and concentrated nature of the research sub-questions, a semi-structured interview format was utilised (Guest et al., 2006). A semi-structured interview allowed for the same set of core questions to be asked of each respondent, but also offered the flexibility to change the order or insert probing questions when necessary (Whitley et al., 2012). The interview schedule (Appendix D) consisted of open-ended questions which related to the propositions laid out in Chapter One: Introduction, key concepts of the "glass-ceiling" and the programme initiatives that have been identified as corresponding to the marketing mix strategy (see Table two). A set of probing sub-questions was available for prompting on key responses.

3.6 Data collection

The purpose of data collection in this study was to make evident the key issues surrounding the "glass-ceiling" phenomenon and related experience (Polkinghorne, 2005) in order to determine suitability of the marketing mix strategy. The data collection process delivered a set of experiential descriptions of the "glass-ceiling" phenomenon (Polkinghorne, 1989). By personally gathering this data, the researcher drew closer to the research and gained deeper understanding of the "glass-ceiling" phenomenon. The involved nature of data collection in this research offered a precise way of assessing the relationship between the constructs of the marketing mix and the key issues of the "glass-ceiling" in an organisational environment (Miles, 1979).

A request to participate in the study was facilitated by the programme coordinator via email (Appendix A). Thereafter, personalised follow up emails were sent to each respondent to request participation. Interested respondents were asked to contact the researcher directly. Thereafter, a convenient time and place was scheduled for the interview. As anticipated, a workplace environment was the most convenient as both the respondents and researcher work for the organisation. A quiet meeting room was booked for the duration of the interview

to allow for focused conversation between the respondent and researcher without interruptions.

Generally, the interview lasted for a period of one hour or less. Respondents were asked to give written consent (Appendix B) to participate in the research and for the interview to be recorded. Participants were given a participant information sheet, which provided details of the procedure to be followed (Appendix C). The recordings were later transcribed for data analysis purposes (Polkinghorne, 2005).

3.7 Data analysis

The method of data analysis chosen for this study was thematic content analysis. Thematic content analysis allows for "identifying, analysing and reporting patterns (themes) within the data" and has the ability to interpret different facets of the research topic (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p. 80). This approach was suitable for this study as emergent themes indicated the relevance of career strategies to the respondents and the suitability of the marketing mix as one such strategy.

Thematic content analysis is compatible with the nature of reality (ontology) and construction of knowledge (epistemology) of this study. Reality or "truth" for this study was a product of social experience, while meaning or knowledge was drawn from patterns that evolved during social interaction of the respondent. Braun and Clarke (2006) suggest that thematic content analysis can acknowledge the meaning of an individual's experience while noting the impact of society on this meaning.

3.7.1 Steps to be followed for data analysis

The process of thematic content analysis is defined by Hsieh and Shannon (2005) as the systematic classification of data through a process of coding, categorisation and theme identification, resulting in subjective interpretation.

Once the researcher had organised and prepared the data, it was coded. The codes were subsequently classified into categories. Dey (2003) describes

classification into categories as an enabler to analysis in order to make meaningful comparisons of the data. The emergent relationships between categories generated themes. Themes organise recurrent experiences and variations in order to capture the very nature of the phenomenon (DeSantis & Ugarriza, 2000), which for this study, was the "glass-ceiling". Figure seven illustrates the relationship between codes, categories and themes.

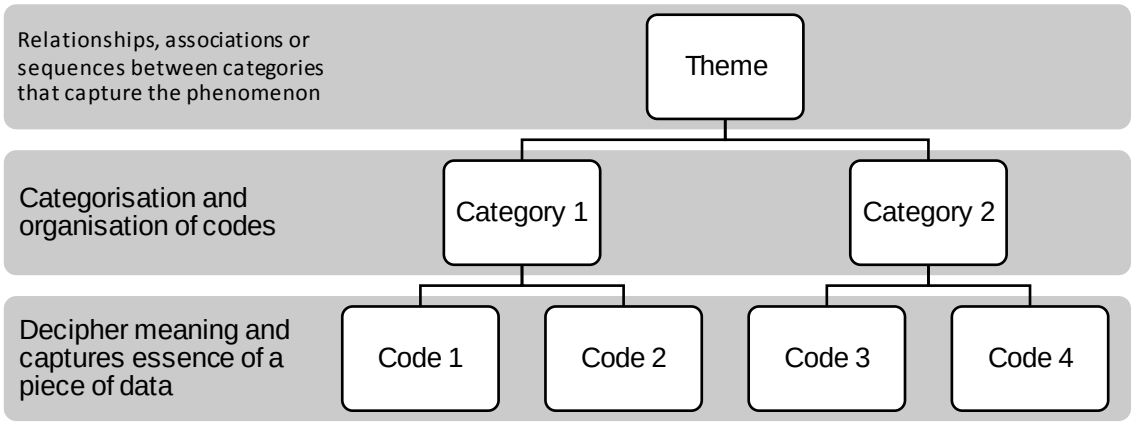

Figure 7: Data analysis relationships. Source: Creswell (2013)

While there are numerous processes available, the researcher chose to adapt the procedure laid out by Fereday and Muir-Cochrane (2008). Application of this procedure was suited to this study as it allowed analysis to be performed from both a theoretical and data perspective. The theoretical framework of this study is the marketing mix. Overriding themes were drawn from the marketing mix strategy. The themes were broken down into categories. For this research, the categories encompassed the four Ps, namely, Product; Price, Place and Promotion. From the categories, a code book was generated upon which the data was analysed. This approach is suitable for use when testing theory in a new context or sample (Elo & Kyngäs, 2008), as was the case in this study. Table three provides an outline of the steps to be followed:

Table 3: Steps. Source: Fereday and Muir-Cochrane (2008, pp. 89-90)

Step 1 (Chapter Four: Research results)	Code the data and identify categories • Raw data was coded • Codes were classified/grouped into categories • Categories will be clustered into themes and assigned phrases to describe the underlying meaning of the theme

Step 2 (Chapter Five: Discussion)	Develop the code book • Categories were derived from marketing theory specifically the marketing mix • Codes were developed from each category and given a code label and definition
Step 3 (Chapter Five: Discussion)	Corroborating and legitimating themes • Similarities and differences between the categories and themes will begin to emerge, indicating areas of support and disagreements with the research question and sub-questions • Emergent themes from the data will be corroborated with the themes derived from theory to confirm findings • Overarching or core themes will be identified that capture the phenomenon

The use of this approach, as in Table three, complemented the research question and sub-questions by generating themes of the "glass-ceiling" directly from the data, while allowing the theoretical framework of this study, the marketing mix, to be integral to the process of thematic content analysis. The similarity and congruence of the categories and themes provided evidence as to the suitability of career strategies, particularly the marketing mix as a strategy to overcome the key issues associated with the "glass-ceiling".

3.8 Validity and reliability

Morse et al. (2008) describe research without rigour as fiction. They prescribe validity and reliability as tools to attain rigour in qualitative research.

As interpreted from the work of Maxwell (1992), validity reflects the accuracy of the research as a reflection of the research subject. In order to attain a valid interpretation of the data for this study, the following types of validity proposed by Maxwell (1992) are discussed. Firstly, descriptive validity – the factual accuracy of the account – was attained by recording and transcribing all the interviews performed. Pertinent verbatim quotes have been included in the discussion of the research findings. Secondly, interpretive validity – the ability of the researcher to accurately interpret the data – was improved by the interviewer confirming understanding of jargon, colloquialism and technical terms used by the respondent. Theoretical validity refers to the validity of the constructs chosen and the validity of the expected relationship between them in terms of the theory. The

approach to data analysis demonstrates the validity by abstracting the constructs of the marketing mix to the key concepts of the “glass-ceiling” and subsequent relationships.

A pilot study was performed as a pre-test of the research instrument (Appendix D) prior to data collection. This provided an indication of internal validity of the interview schedule. van Teijlingen and Hundley (2001) suggest that a pilot study can identify potential practical issues in the data collection as well as instruments (interview schedule) that are unsuitable or too complex. Preforming a pilot study allowed the researcher to make the necessary changes to the instrument (interview schedule) to better suit the respondents and overall research process. Changes included timing and structure of questions, as well as adjusting certain terms used to better suit the respondents’ understanding.

Reliability is determined by the stability of the instrument and methods insofar that the results delivered are repeatable (Golafshani, 2003). To gain this stability, the researcher documented all steps taken with a high level of detail throughout the research process, as suggested by Mays and Pope (1995). This allows a reader to interpret and repeat the steps taken in order to derive similar results. Patton (1999) puts forward that in qualitative research, the researcher is actually the instrument and therefore it was the researcher’s responsibility to prove credibility and reduce bias as far as possible.

3.9 Ethical considerations

Written authorisation from the organisation was received to perform the research, and ethics approval was obtained from the Human Research Ethics Committee of the University of the Witwatersrand (Appendix E). In order for the participants to provide informed consent, the following considerations were included in the consent form (Appendix B), which was signed by each participant.

A full and complete introduction was provided, which covered an introduction and an explanation of the researcher’s role; a brief description of the research, its aims and potential benefits; an invitation to the participant to become involved in

the study; a brief explanation of why they were invited; and an explanation of the procedure to be followed, including what was expected of each participant. Clarification was also given that the research did not involve payment.

Participation was voluntary and refusal to participate resulted in no penalty or loss of benefits to which the participant was otherwise entitled. The participant was able to refuse to answer questions about which they felt uncomfortable, and could withdraw from the study at any time without penalty or loss of benefits. As the participants and researcher are employed by the same organisation, reassurance was provided that they would not risk institutional sanctions through participation in this research.

Confidentiality was assured. The name and identifying information of the participant was coded and available only to the researcher, who stored this information electronically under password protection. Risks were explained in terms of discomforts, side effects and benefits. It may be the case that participation in this research procedure awakened feelings of past trauma. Arrangements, via the organisational employee assistance programme, were made for counselling, and details of a counselling service were provided on the participant information sheet.

Contact details of the researcher were made available, as well as an invitation to contact the researcher should the participant have questions. The participant was also able to request a copy of the finalised research.

3.10 Conclusion

This concludes the methodology chapter of this research. Appendix F provides details of the implementation plan followed by this study. An interpretivist paradigm, qualitative research methodology, descriptive design and thematic content analysis method was utilised for this study. This approach was chosen in order to determine the suitability of the constructs of the marketing mix as a strategy for female managers to overcome the key issues associated with the “glass-ceiling”.

CHAPTER 4: RESEARCH RESULTS

The results achieved from the research are presented in this chapter. The results reflected the respondent's use of career strategies and perceptions of the initiatives of the programme. As discussed in Table two of Chapter Three: Research and Methodology, the initiatives of the FLDP align closely with the key concepts of the "glass-ceiling". The key concepts of the "glass-ceiling" being professional persona, remuneration, informal networks and mentorship correspond to a marketing mix strategy, the 4Ps, as presented in Chapter Two: Review of the Literature. Thus, empirical analysis of these findings determines the suitability of the marketing mix as a career strategy.

The discussion of the research data and interviews is presented in the following sequence. Insights from semi-structured interviews grouped into headings of Theme one: Career functions as strategic actions, Theme two: Managing perceptions through strategic action and Theme three: Strategic relationships to deliver career objectives. The chapter is then summarised and concluded.

4.1 Insights from the semi-structured interviews

This section follows Step one of Table three (Chapter Three: Research design and methodology), whereby the results of the semi-structured interviews and the observations made during the research process are discussed.

Firstly, the raw data, which comprised the interview transcripts from a total of 21 interviews completed, was coded. The interview schedule (Appendix D) included five subsets of questions. The initial subset questioned the actions which respondents had put in place to help them succeed in their careers. The remaining four subsets explored the respondents' experiences with the four key concepts of the "glass-ceiling" derived from the literature, namely, professional persona, remuneration, informal networks and mentorship. Secondly, the codes were grouped into categories. Finally, the relationship between the categories resulted in themes.

4.1.1 Theme one: Career actions as strategic actions

The first subset of questions asked respondents to describe actions taken to succeed in their careers. The responses were tabulated into codes of hard work, networking, specialised skill, higher qualification and intuitive action. These codes were grouped into the categories of Competitive advantage and Intuitive action. The foundation of the relationship between these categories speaks to strategic action, which formed a theme: *Career actions as strategic actions.*

4.1.1.1 Competitive advantage

All participants noted that they were required to show exceptional skill, effort or qualification in order to be recognised and compete with their male counterparts. This resulted in the category of competitive advantage. Competitive advantage is the strategic application of resources which enables a female manger to outperform her competition in terms of skill, effort or qualifications (Kotler & Keller, 2009) and break through the "glass-ceiling". Table four and the discussion below explain the codes making up the category of competitive advantage.

Table 4: Competitive advantage

Code	Definition	Respondents	Extract
Hard work	Applying a strategy of working harder or giving more in order to be recognised.	X031, X010, X038, X007, X026	X007: "As a woman you are expected to work twice as hard; prove yourself more. You are challenged at every opportunity just because you're a female and sometimes you're doing more than the guys."
Networking	Recognition as a result of networking provides a strategy to succeed.	X035, X020,	X020: "I have [a strategy]. The most important thing was networking. It is about networking and getting your name out there."
Specialised skill	Having a unique or specialised skill in order to stand out.	X026; X003, X022, X002, X033	X003: "What is [the organisation] getting from you that they can't get from someone else?"
Higher qualification	Qualifications serve as a basic requirement in order to progress in a career.	X021, X016, X015, X003, X045, X040, X039, X027, X023, X022	X003: "So my strategy is first of all to develop myself in terms of education."

Four respondents indicated that their strategies to succeed centred on hard work. X038 indicated that her strategy was to work an extra 20% over and above her capacity in order to advance in her career. Female managers are expected to

contribute more than their maximum capacity in order to succeed. From an organisational perspective, their contributions appear less valuable than their male colleagues and are often overlooked. This highlights a deficit of female managers are constantly trying to fill in order to be recognised in the workplace.

The following code, networking, also highlighted recognition as important to career advancement. Two respondents named networking as an element of their career strategy which aided in career advancement. Through the exposure provided by networking, X20 stated that her name and achievements were recognised.

Five respondents used a unique or specialised skill as a career strategy. Respondent X033 applied a strategy of pushing herself to the point of feeling out of her depth in order to gain experience and develop her skill set. X003 recognised that she had to provide a unique set of skills in order succeed in her career. Similarly, 10 respondents focussed their attention on a strategy of self-development through qualifications which they deemed to be essential to success. Of these 10 respondents, six were over-qualified for the position they currently held. Respondents were deemed to be overqualified based on the minimum academic qualifications required for their employment grade specified within the organisation. Four of these respondents have completed or are currently completing their postgraduate Master's degrees. Respondent X017 acknowledged academic qualifications as the starting point to being considered for a promotion.

It is clear that female managers are required to work harder, network, display a specialised skill or be highly qualified in order to be on par with their male counterparts and be recognised. These four codes have been organised into a category of competitive advantage.

4.1.1.2 Intuitive action

The following code, intuitive action, did not form part of the competitive advantage category but rather, was found to be a precursor to a career strategy. Hence intuitive action forms a second category within the subset of questions.

Table 5: Intuitive action

Code	Definition	Respondents	Extract
Intuitive action	No predefined strategy executed, however, on reflection a trend in behaviour emerged.	X017, X039, X038, X029, X010	X010: "Strategies, I think [in] hindsight it's '20-20' vision but when you're in it, not really."

As per Table five above, five respondents stated that while they had not deliberately or knowingly applied a career strategy, upon reflection they could recognise a pattern of behaviour which acted as a career strategy. This highlights a potential gap or shortcoming of female development and advancement. Female managers face challenging encounters throughout their careers as a result of the "glass-ceiling". Without a strategy they may lack critical preparation, which can guide their reactions. This may negatively impede their career progress.

Respondent X033 recognised the need for conscious career decisions to be taken in order to progress within the organisation. Through the application of a strategy, the female employee is provided with direction, a guide through challenging circumstances and a path towards success (Mintzberg, 1987b). A strategy provides a way of thinking and reacting to opportunities which the female manager is able to learn and repeat throughout her career.

A female manager can derive maximum benefit from the opportunities available by deliberately applying a career strategy. A career strategy can act as a competitive advantage for the female manager over her peers, thus enabling her to break through the "glass-ceiling" and gain promotion.

4.1.2 Theme two: Managing perceptions through strategic actions

Theme two is based on the relationship between the categories of Professional image and Value perception. The relationship between these categories is attributed to utilising strategic actions to manage internal and external perceptions.

4.1.2.1 Professional image

The second subset of questions asked respondents questions concerning their management or leadership style, academic history and dress code. These elements comprise a professional persona – the first key concept of the "glass-ceiling". Responses resonated with managing the perceptions of their colleagues and peers, which resulted in a category of professional image see Table six below. Most important to the respondents was to portray a professional image that was conservative, capable and people-centred.

Table 6: Professional image

Code	Definition	Respondents	Extract
Continuous improvement of capabilities	Continuously improving capabilities through formal learning programmes such as academic qualification and professional certification.	X002, X003, X007, X010, X015, X016, X017, X020, X021, X022, X027, X029, X033, X040, X045	X020: "Absolutely, you can never stop learning. As a leader now we can deal with the different types of people who have a different perspective of life, and so the training for them, or training your mind to deal with them."
Formal attire	Dressing in a manner which is conservative and fitting to the corporate environment.	X016; X020, X039, X027, X045, X023, X027	X020: "I definitely watch what I wear, it mustn't be too short, it mustn't be too revealing, I don't want to send a message that you're doing me a favour for the way I look but more for what you believe in me, and what you think of me."
People-centred leadership	Motivational leadership by ensuring the team are included or consulted during the decision-making process through collaboration and empowerment.	X002, X003, X007, X010, X015, X016, X017, X020, X021, X022, X023, X026, X027, X029, X031, X033, X035, X038, X039, X040, X045	X017: "I'm generally a participative leader, and I also try to make sure that people who report to me don't dread mornings, they've got to want to come to work." X035: "I would do a lot of analysis, get different people's viewpoints and then I would try to bridge all those viewpoints into one single strategy and communicate it to everyone."
Misconception	Fear of being incorrectly perceived as micromanaging through demanding, controlling or	X035, X003, X015, X033, X031, X020, X017, X003, X040	X003: "I'm not an aggressive type of person but there comes a time you have to be decisive, you have got to be assertive."

	aggressive behaviour.		

Once again, respondents highlighted the importance of being qualified for a position. Fifteen respondents expressed an interest in continually improving on their capabilities through additional academic qualifications or professional certifications relevant to their field. The remaining six respondents largely attributed their lack of desire to enhance their qualifications as a result of insufficient time due to family commitments. Thus, the code of continuous improvement of capabilities is closely tied to the previous code of higher qualification. Higher qualification emerged as a career strategy element under the category of competitive advantage. As a result of emerging within two categories, the concept of formal qualification is important to this study.

The second code that emerged was that of formal attire. Seven respondents made mention of portraying a formal or presentable image enhanced by their clothing options. They gave examples of formal attire as high-heeled shoes, pencil skirts below the knee and matching suit sets. Respondent X020, X039, X027 and X045 related their dress code directly to the perceptions of others. They had a palpable fear of misrepresentation. Misrepresentation can manifest into gender-based stereotypes, such as using femininity to gain favour among male colleagues. They found it highly important that their dress code be conservative by avoiding sexually suggestive or revealing items of clothing.

Respondent X023 and X027 both mentioned being tempted to use a “weekend wardrobe” at work in order to save money. They explained that while certain clothing items were able to transition between work and home life, it was important that they dressed appropriately for the audience and organisational environment. Female managers have a strong desire to be viewed as peers within the workplace and overlapping home and work wardrobes may result in them being stereotyped as home-makers and not taken seriously within the workplace. Appropriate dress allows them equitable footing when working and competing with male peers or subordinates.

The third code is people-centred leadership. Respondents described this leadership or management style as collaborative, motivational, empowering and consultative – all qualities typically associated with female managers. Respondents explained that this style of management created a feeling of inclusion among subordinates, acted as a motivator and nurtured an environment of trust within the team. For respondent X007, this leadership style drove performance of the team, which reflected favourably on her as a manager. All respondents identified with this style, highlighting this code as significant to their overall professional image.

Nine respondents' remarks identified a fear of misconception. Respondents were insistent that they should not be perceived as micromanaging, controlling, aggressive or demanding – characteristics typically associated with a masculine management style. The anxiety displayed by the nine respondents highlights the negativity surrounding female managers who portray masculine traits. Clearly within the organisation this behaviour was discouraged among female managers and the respondents of this study were eager to meet the needs of the organisation in terms of people-centred leadership.

The connection between the codes of continuous improvement of capabilities, formal attire, people-centred leadership and misconception is that they contribute to the overarching professional image of the female manager. Respondents often referred to this as their brand or how they were perceived.

4.1.2.2 Value perception

The third subset of questions emanating from the key concepts of the "glass-ceiling" was remuneration; remuneration being the manner in which an employee is reimbursed for their output. Questions were posed to respondents on perceptions of current pay and thereafter the factors they would apply to increase their pay. Codes emerging from these questions formed a category of value perception; value perception being two-fold, firstly in terms of value to the organisation, as reflected in the remuneration amount, and secondly, value perception reflected in self-value of the female employee and her confidence in

her ability to deliver according to the organisation's expectations. Table seven below, refers.

Table 7: Value perception

Code	Definition	Respondents	Extract
Dissatisfied with remuneration	Dissatisfaction as a result of pay differential when compared to male colleagues performing a similar function.	X003, X007, X016, X017, X020, X021, X026, X027, X031, X035	X035: "I am being paid 18% less, so I'm being underpaid by R100 000 and more." X039: "The perception is that if you're female you're getting less."
Failure to negotiate	Lack of self-value and confidence in abilities; prefer to be obedient and accepting of wages.	X002, X010, X015, X023, X027, X029, X045	X016: "No, not as this stage, I'm not confident enough yet."
Unawarenes s of pay scales	No insight or lack of interest into the pay scales of peers.	X002, X010, X015, X021, X022, X023, X033, X038, X039, X040	X002: "I don't know because in [the organisation] salaries are like hush-hush. It's an inherent thing, we just don't talk about salaries." X021: "It's difficult because we [are] not supposed to be aware of what our colleagues earn."

Ten respondents indicated that they were dissatisfied with their remuneration, particularly when compared to their male counterparts. Respondent X027 and X035 both stated that they were earning up to R100 000 less than their male counterparts. Respondent X020 said that men earned higher salaries as a result of being in management positions for longer and therefore due to their experience deserved to earn more. Respondent X007 stated that women had to work twice as hard to prove themselves worthy of their pay and were challenged at every opportunity, purely as a result of their gender. Clearly, gender discrimination remained relevant within the organisation with regard to remuneration.

Pay is a direct reflection of the value the organisation places on an employee. Remuneration is a sensitive topic for employees as it directly affects their economic existence. The effects of gender pay discrimination can have negative side effects on female employees and on organisational performance. Respondent X017 described pay as a representation of her value to the organisation, and therefore the imbalance created a perception that male employees were valued higher than female. This perception can create unhappiness and demotivation within the female workforce. It can also break

down working relationships and limit cohesion between male and female employees. This can negatively impact organisational performance due to misplaced focus and conflict. Respondent X003 tells of her experience with gender pay discrepancies. She faced resistance from the organisation and was ostracised by her male peers:

> "I wrote to my executive and I said equal pay for equal work. She was not impressed with the fact that I had the audacity to raise this issue. She asked this person who was doing remuneration in our department and they tried to tear me apart. I was almost in tears. Eventually it got out and the male colleagues were not impressed, and these are people I didn't know and they took offence."

The solution to pay equality may seem obvious; female employees should demand fair pay. However, female managers appear to lack self-value and confidence in their capabilities, resulting in a failure to ask for an increase. Thus, the code emerges as a failure to negotiate. Seven respondents preferred to be obedient and accept their wages. They attributed a lack of belief in their ability as a reason for not negotiating pay. They also perceived their output as insufficient to request a pay increase. Respondent X016 stated even though she was doing the same job with the same number of subordinates, she did not have the confidence to request an increase. Female managers are expected to contribute more than their male colleagues in order to be recognised as equals.

A follow-up question was posed to imagine a scenario in which they would feel comfortable requesting a pay increase. Respondents were asked to describe the factors they would use to motivate for an increase. Once more a diminished self-value was reflected by respondents, who stated that they would need to exceed expectations in terms of deliverables and working hours. Respondent X010 explained that she was already working 25% harder just to earn her current salary. In order to prove she was worth more money she would need to push herself an additional 10%. The overriding sentiment displayed by respondents is that obtaining an increase was almost impossible due to the high expectations of the organisation. This ties back to the code of hard work under the category of

competitive advantage. Female employees must work harder and deliver more in order to be remunerated equally or else be perceived as less valuable than their male counterparts.

Female managers would usually prefer to stay silent rather than cause turmoil and potentially create an unpleasant working environment. This may also be a result of stereotypical gender roles in society manifesting within the workplace. Women are not traditionally primary financial contributors in their households and therefore may have limited input into household or family decision-making. This can result in a submissive stance where decisions are accepted and not easily challenged. Should these stereotypical gender roles extend into the workplace, it may be detrimental to remuneration equality.

This reasoning extends into the code of unawareness of pay scales. Ten respondents displayed no insight and/or a lack of interest into the pay scales of their peers. Respondent X033 stated that she cannot compare her pay as she had no interest in what her male colleagues earned. Respondents X022, X033 and X035 noted that salary was not a topic openly discussed, and any discussion thereof was highly discouraged. The organisation stands to gain from this culture of secretiveness through reduced human resource costs. However, the risk remains of a disengaged female workforce as a result of unequal pay. There is also no benefit to the female employee in remaining knowingly ignorant. She further cements her position of submission and reduces the possibility of overcoming stereotypical gender roles in society and the workplace. This reluctance to question the salaries of peers stands to disempower women.

A benchmarking exercise can serve as a negotiation tool when discussing annual increases. Respondents X021 and X023 noted that the organisation had attempted to reduce the pay gap by aligning salaries toward industry norms. The organisation arranged employees into a norm group according to their performance assessments. Their current salary was then compared to that of the norm group and this guided their annual increases. Respondent X021 and X023 both made reference to the benchmarking exercise performed by the organisation, but noted that the gap still remained. While the information provided

by the organisation had value, it is imperative that the female employee perform her own benchmarking investigation to ensure she has an independent view.

The three codes described above, namely, dissatisfied with remuneration, failure to negotiate and unawareness of pay scales, make up the category of value perception; value perception being firstly, in terms of value to the organisation reflected in remuneration amount and secondly, value perception as reflected in self-value of the female employee and her confidence in her ability to deliver according to organisation expectations.

4.1.3 Theme three: Strategic relationships to deliver career objectives

Theme three is based on the relationship between the categories of Exchange relationships and Positive influence. The relationship between these categories is attributed to utilising strategic relationships to achieve career objectives, such as promotion and access to information.

4.1.3.1 Exchange relationships

In the fourth subset, informal networks, a key concept of the "glass-ceiling", was discussed. Informal networks are the exchange of resources such as information, referrals and support between employees, colleagues and influential role players. Respondents were asked to describe the benefits derived from participating in informal networks, such as industry or FLDP events. Codes of sharing experiences, organisation assistance, career advancement and distribution grouped into a category of exchange relationships, see Table eight. Female managers exchange resources through relationships developed within the informal network in order to meet their need in overcoming the "glass-ceiling".

Table 8: Exchange relationships

Code	Definition	Respondents	Extract
Sharing experiences	Opportunity to learn through exchange of past experiences.	X002, X007, X017, X020, X023, X027, X029, X031, X033, X038, X039, X045, X021	X020: "The one thing was learning from each other. The other is just learning from the experience of each other as well."

Organisation assistance	Quicker execution of tasks as a result of inside information or strategic relationships.	X002, X003, X010, X015, X016, X022, X026, X027, X035, X039, X040	X016: "I have got to know or understand a few ladies that can be instrumental in ensuring that the value chain performance, that when I need something done there quicker I can speak to that person."
Career advancement	Advance notice of opportunities through relationships with influential role players.	X007, X010, X020, X021, X027	X010: "[If] I had an opportunity within my area to look for people I would then call one of my fellow FLDP members and say do you know of anybody, whether it's someone in their area if they would suit the role."
Distribution	Exposure of professional image through relationships with influential role players.	X038, X045	X038: "It's about your brand and it's about distributing yourself so that networking, and making sure that the right people know what value you add."

While all of the respondents acknowledged the importance of networks, none of them admitted to actively engaging in networking activities outside of the organisation. Respondent X045, although being part of a professional association, stated that she hardly ever attended formal events hosted by the association due to the inconvenient locations thereof. Respondents complained about a lack of time and resources available to dedicate to networking. Were it not for the FLDP network and events, the respondents would have little or no exposure to the benefits of networking, thus, highlighting a further development area for female managers.

Thirteen respondents described the opportunity to share experiences as a benefit of participating in the FLDP network. Respondents exchanged accounts of workplace experiences and developed a support system. This support system allowed for skills to be transferred between respondents. They were able to discuss common challenges facing women within the organisation and how to overcome them. Respondent X033 stated that she planned to use the FLDP as a platform to mentor junior FLDP participants. This psycho-social support provided a sense of camaraderie, acceptance and affirmation. Respondents were provided with information on how to deal with situations unique to female managers and how to succeed in the corporate climate. Respondent X002 describes one such experience:

> "It was very insightful to see experiences from [junior management] all the way to an executive and you can ask them how they deal with this or what you would do if this happened, and how they deal with coming up the ranks, and how men used to bully women and make them cry."

Participating in the FLDP network provided respondents with an opportunity to engage with strategic role players within the organisation and form relationships. Eleven respondents noted that assistance gained from these relationships helped them execute difficult tasks quicker and more efficiently. Respondent X016 explained that she was able to improve her job performance as a result of inside information provided by networking relationships. In forming these relationships, female employees will have access to exclusive organisational information in terms of business strategy and execution. Respondent X027 stated that only through networking could she gain exposure to what was happening within the organisation. The female manager can use this knowledge to her advantage when performing her job function and interacting with colleagues.

Five respondents noted that the relationships formed from networks could provide career benefits. Respondents X027 and X007 were able to prepare for future roles in terms of how to conduct themselves. They also gained a view as to what was happening in the industry job market. X010 made mention of considering members of the FLDP network as potential candidates for future job openings in her environment. As a result of the "glass-ceiling", promotions are limited, therefore, any aid provided is valuable. Female managers should focus attention on cultivating relationships with influential role players present in the network. They must take opportunities to display their skills and make the most of learning and skills development. Clearly, participants of the FLDP network have done this to their advantage.

Tying into this are the responses of X045 and X038, who made mention of distributing their professional image within the informal network. They explained that networking provided a platform for them to make others aware of their skills and influence role players. In turn, these role players were exposed to fresh ways of thinking that could potentially aid them in business strategy development. The

concept of distribution ties back to a previous code of networking under the category of competitive advantage, whereby the respondent's name and achievements were recognised. Similarly in the code of distribution, respondents' were able to make others aware of their professional image and be recognised.

The categories of shared experiences, organisation assistance, career advancement and distribution, all centre around exchange relationships. Female managers exchange resources through relationships developed within the informal network in order to meet their need to overcome the "glass-ceiling".

4.1.3.2 Positive influence

The final subset of questions related to mentorship, which is the final key concept of the "glass-ceiling". Mentorship is a supportive professional relationship between a senior and a less experienced employee, providing both parties with career and psychological benefits. Respondents were asked if they had a mentor, and to describe the actual or perceived benefits derived from mentorship. The codes resulting from this set of questions are formal mentorship programme, female mentor and career benefit, see Table nine. These codes have been grouped into a category of positive influence. A male or female mentor, potentially from the formal mentorship programme, has a positive influence on the protégé. This influence can result in guidance, skills transfer and other career or psychological benefits.

Table 9: Mentorship

Code	Definition	Respondents	Extract
Formal mentorship programme	A useful tool yet an administrative and time-consuming process, which deters protégés and mentors.	X002, X003, X010, X023, X020, X022, X027, X033, X039	X003: "Previously I identified somebody, and when I spoke to her she said she's not in the formal mentorship programme. So that kind of deterred her."
Female mentor	Protégés identified female mentors as a result of the leadership qualities displayed as well as dealing with similar challenges.	X003, X016, X021, X038, X045, X007, X023, X010	X045: "There was a specific lady that I admired in the way she conducts herself, talks, her writing and emotional intelligence."
Career benefit	Mentors acted as advisors, providing specialised training as well as hands-on experience for the protégé to	X007, X015, X020, X022, X026, X027, X029, X033, X035, X040	X007: "I must admit, I even give him credit for getting me this job, because he was again my saving grace, I could go to him after so many years and

	prepare them for the next stage in their careers.		say I'm applying for a higher position."

Only six of the respondents stated that they had a mentor. Thirteen respondents did not have a mentor but hoped to have a mentor in the future. X031 and X017 stated they were too busy to consider a mentor at that stage.

Nine respondents made mention of the formal mentorship programme offered by the organisation. Respondents X020 and X022 stated that finding a mentor was challenging, despite the formal mentorship programme. Respondent X016 said she would find a mentor outside of the formal mentorship programme. Only respondent X039 had successfully located a mentor via the programme. She explained that she dedicated much time and effort to finding a suitable candidate that was both willing and able to mentor her.

Formal mentoring programmes are valuable in matching up willing mentors with protégés. These relationships can result in a positive experience, exemplified by respondent X033, who described participation in the programme as having had a "big impact". However, due to the formal nature of the relationship it can lack organic growth and sustainability. The paperwork and administration requirements can also be daunting for both parties. Mentors and protégés are required to sign a mentorship agreement which documents the expectations and objectives of both parties. They are also expected to deliver a final report which details their experiences and provides a measure of the expectations and objectives achieved. Respondent X003 stated that while she had identified a potential mentor, the potential mentor had been put off by this intensive administration.

Eight respondents indicated that they preferred a female mentor. X045, X023, X016 and X010 had female mentors, the remaining four respondents desired female mentors. Female mentors were preferred because they shared similar experiences to the protégé. This is an echo of a similar code derived from the category of exchange relationships. Shared experiences under the exchange relationship category provided an opportunity for the female manager to learn

through the exchange of past experiences. Respondent X016 stated that she preferred a female mentor because she would follow a similar career path. A female mentor has broken through the “glass-ceiling” and is able to share insights and guidance with their protégé on how to overcome the unique challenges facing women. These challenges are not limited to the workplace but also extend to work-life-balance. Respondents were eager to understand how to balance their work and family commitments. One such method would be the use of support structures, such as au pairs for childcare or helpers to assist with home making. Respondent X033 explains:

> “There’s other women that struggle with the same things that you do, which are unique to being a woman.”

Respondents said that female mentors displayed characteristics which they found desirable. Once again, this is similar to the code of people-centred leadership of the professional image category. In the people-centred leadership code, all respondents identified with typically female leadership traits, such as being empowering and collaborative. Respondent X003 identified with these female leadership characteristics, while X007 said female mentors are generally more direct, which was her preference. Unfortunately, female mentors are uncommon due to the small number of candidates available. Female candidates may be less inclined to volunteer. Firstly, they may feel the same assistance was not provided to them, hence it is not necessary to succeed, and secondly, they may see the up-and-coming protégé as a form of competition. However, there is value in the relationship for the mentor through exposure to fresh thinking or self-learning opportunities. Respondent X033 had acted as a female mentor in the past. She describes the experience as mutually beneficial as she learnt much about herself through the process.

Ten respondents told of career benefits associated with having a mentor. Respondent X007 had made use of her long-term mentor at each step in her career. He reviewed her curriculum vitae and prepped her for interviews. Respondent X015 said she had gained technical skills – mentors have usually garnered much experience and expertise throughout their career, which they are

able to impart on their protégés. Their tenure in the industry may also result in a wide network of role players upon which they are able to call for favours or introductions. Respondent X029 described her mentor as “highly connected” as he was able to put her in touch with influential role players. Similarly, respondent X026 had been introduced to prominent members of the organisation and had the opportunity to demonstrate her skills. From this experience she gained confidence in her ability, which she deemed highly beneficial.

The codes resulting from this set of questions are formal mentorship programme, female mentor and career benefit. These codes have been grouped into a category of positive influence. A mentorship has the potential to positively influence the career of a female manager.

4.2 Conclusion

The objective of the research was to assess the suitability of the marketing mix as a career strategy for female managers to break through the “glass-ceiling”. This was achieved by exploring the respondent’s vocational reality, specifically in terms of their career strategy implementation and interaction with the “glass-ceiling”.

The research results from the semi-structured interviews have been discussed in this section. The research results can be grouped into three predominant themes. Firstly, respondents acknowledged strategic actions employed throughout their career. Whilst these actions were largely intuitive, respondents recognised the advantage of organising these tools and resources. This illustrates the necessity for conscious decision making in terms of career decisions in the format of a career strategy.

Secondly, respondents spoke of the importance of managing perceptions of peers, colleagues and the organisation as perceptions directly affected their professional image and value to the organisation. This was performed via the strategic actions described previously. Chapter Two: Literature Review has already established the use of product and pricing strategies to manage

professional persona and remuneration, this is further explored in the Chapter Five: Discussion.

Thirdly, respondents recognised strategic relationships as a driver of career goal achievement. They cited mutually beneficial exchange and positive influence as cornerstones of these relationships and thus used tools such as networking and mentorship to progress in their careers. Place and promotion strategies have been explored in relation to these tools in Chapter Two: Literature Review and set the stage for further discussion.

The following chapter, Chapter Five: Discussion, examines the research questions posed by the study using an analysis and interpretation of the research results in the context of the literature review and theoretical framework.

CHAPTER 5: DISCUSSION

In this chapter, the research question and associated sub-questions are answered through an interrogation of the literature, theory and research results. The research results of this study have shown that female managers consciously or subconsciously apply strategic actions to manage and succeed in this climate. While necessary, the actions highlighted by respondents were found to be incomplete. This research established the suitability of the marketing mix as a holistic strategy to counter the four key concepts. The research question and sub-questions are as follows:

Research question:
When can the marketing mix be applied by South African female managers as a career strategy to break through the "glass-ceiling"?

Research sub-questions:

- RSQ1: To identify the career strategies employed by South African female managers to succeed in breaking through the "glass-ceiling".
- RSQ2: To determine the circumstances in which the marketing mix can be applied by South African female managers as a career strategy to break through the "glass-ceiling".

The discussion is structured in the following sequence. The marketing mix codebook is developed, followed by a discussion of the findings after which the chapter is concluded.

5.1 Marketing mix codebook

The steps in the data analysis process were outlined in Chapter Three: Research design and methodology. This data analysis method was chosen to approach the research question and sub-questions through qualitative and theoretical lenses.

Step one was to code and categorise the raw data through thematic content analysis and was completed in Chapter Four: Research results, 4.2 Insights from

the semi-structured interviews. Step two is the development of the codebook through the analysis of the findings utilising marketing theory. A codebook is derived by applying a template to existing theory as a means of organising content for later interpretation (Fereday & Muir-Cochrane, 2008).

The development of the codebook utilised a template based on the research question and the theoretical framework of this study. In applying the template to marketing theory, a theme emerged as the marketing mix. The marketing mix theme was then further broken down into categories. The four categories are the internal factors which work together to create a marketing mix strategy, namely, product, price, place and promotion. Table 10 provides definitions of the theme and associated categories.

Table 10: Theme and categories

Theme	**Definition**
Marketing Mix	The strategic management and control of internal factors within a framework of uncontrollable environmental elements.
Category	**Definition**
Product	Exterior visible features and packaging, plus the benefits and quality this brings to the buyer in order to best satisfy a need.
Price	Amount of money the buyer must pay the seller to purchase the product.
Place	Activities employed by the organisation to make the product accessible and open to the buyer.
Promotion	Act of persuasive communication, where the target market is convinced to purchase based on the features and benefits of a product.

The definitions, described in Table 10, formed the basis upon which the codes were identified and the result was the developed codebook, Table 11. The relationship between codes, categories and themes has been illustrated in Figure seven of Chapter Three: Research design and methodology.

Table 11: The developed codebook

Theme	**Category**	**Code**	**Definition**
Marketing Mix	*Product*	*Quality*	Quality refers to the ability of the product to perform its functions and is measured in terms of the buyer's perception.
		Features	Features are the competitive advantage or 'extras' that differentiate the product from its competitors.
		Style	Style is a manner in which to be distinctive offers several benefits, including a visual representation,

			communication of value to the buyer and aid in selection.
	Price	*Perceived pricing*	Perceived pricing stems from the buyer's perceived value, which is built up from the remaining three Ps of the marketing mix.
		Psychological pricing	Psychological pricing, which finds root in perceived value, occurs when price equates to quality in the mind of the buyer.
	Place	*Distribution*	Distribution makes the product accessible and open to the buyer. When these activities are performed by a group of sellers it is called a channel of distribution.
		Channel relationships	Interests of the channel members do not coincide resulting in competition, conflict and cooperation.
	Promotion	*Sales role*	A sales role focuses on the short-term goal of selling a product by stimulating demand of the buyer.
		Personal selling	Personal selling is where face-to-face interaction aids the cultivation of the buyer-seller relationship through the immediate adjustment of the communication based on the recipient's response.

With the completion of step one and two, step three of the data analysis process is now followed to corroborate and legitimating themes. The codebook, developed and described above, is discussed in conjunction with the literature and research results in the following section.

5.2 Discussion of findings

The four themes that emerged from the research results of Chapter Four: Research results and the developed codebook (Table 11 above) assisted in answering the research question and research sub-questions. Theme one comprised the career functions which acted as strategic actions. Theme two described the management of perceptions through strategic actions. Theme three consisted of the strategic relationships developed to deliver career objectives. Finally, theme four, the marketing mix, was defined as the strategic management and control of internal factors within a framework of uncontrollable environmental elements.

Step three of the data analysis method is to corroborate and legitimise the themes. These processes assisted in exploring and analysing the marketing mix as a career strategy for female managers to utilise in breaking through the "glass-ceiling". Emergent themes from the data have been corroborated with the themes

derived from theory to confirm findings – see Figure eight and the discussion that follows.

The similarities and differences between the categories and themes indicated areas of support with the research question and sub-questions, represented by the connections (C1, C2 and C3) below. Connection one (C1) is the management of perceptions through product and pricing strategies. Connection two (C2) is the development of relationships through promotion and place strategies. Connection three (C3) is the application of the marketing mix as a career strategy.

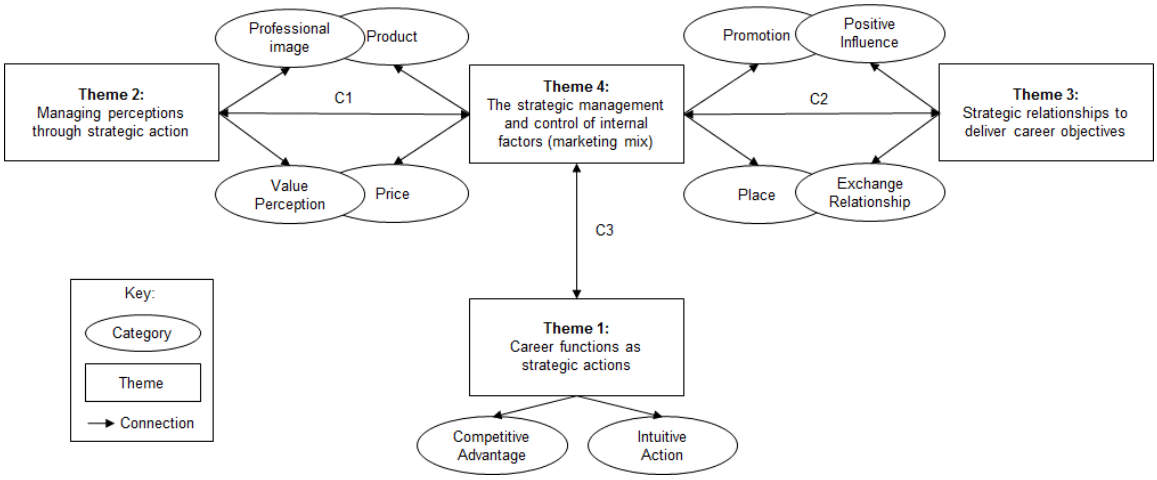

Figure 8: Relationship of concepts. Source: Bacharach (1989)

On this basis, the research question and sub-questions, formulated in Chapter One, are revisited.

5.2.1 Research sub-question one (RSQ1)

RSQ1: To identify the career strategies employed by South African female managers to succeed in breaking through the "glass-ceiling".

In defining the research question, certain propositions emerged which described the female manager: a) she encounters several challenges as a result of engaging the "glass-ceiling", b) a career strategy can enhance her ability to overcome the challenges associated with the "glass-ceiling", c) her development

of a career strategy must be conscious and adaptive to suit both the individual and the environment.

In order to identify the career strategies employed by female managers, respondents were asked to describe actions or strategies they had put in place to help them succeed in their careers. All of the respondents attributed their career success to an approach of delivering exceptional skill, effort or qualification. Five respondents described their approach as intuitive, while the remainder considered it to be a deliberate strategy. This resulted in a theme and associated categories.

Theme One comprised the career functions which acted as strategic actions. The categories of theme one included competitive advantage and intuitive action. Competitive advantage is the strategic application of resources which enables a female manager to outperform her competition in terms of skill, effort or qualifications. Intuitive Action was described as no predefined strategy executed, however, on reflection, a trend in behaviour emerged.

The respondents identifying with intuitive action were able to recognise a pattern of behaviour upon reflection. Their past experiences shaped their actions and resulted in coping mechanisms which they had repeatedly used throughout their careers. Mintzberg (1987b) describes this behaviour as strategic in that it acted as a guide through challenging circumstances and provided a path towards success. Therefore, while intuitive, their approach can be considered to be strategic.

The literature suggests that female managers employ strategies in order to adapt and succeed in the organisational climate (Aycan, 2004; Carr, 2015; Laud & Johnson, 2013; Ragins et al., 1998; Tomlinson et al., 2013; Wrigley, 2002). The strategies described by respondents aligned to those appearing in the literature:

- Qualifications or specialised skills were highlighted by respondents as their strategy to succeed. The literature describes specialised skills or higher qualifications as tools which women can use to outmanoeuvre their

male counterparts for promotion (Booysen, 1999; Davies-Netzley, 1998; Ragins et al., 1998; Wright & Baxter, 2000).

- Hard work and consistently exceeding expectations in terms of output was mentioned. Female employees may rationalise their position beneath the "glass-ceiling" by employing a strategy of hard work and patience, though this was found to generally not be enough to guarantee success (Wrigley, 2002).
- Networking was noted as a career strategy as it provided recognition and exposure, which is aligned to findings within the literature (Albanesi et al., 2015; April et al., 2007; Davies-Netzley, 1998; Oakley, 2000).

Research shows us that the strategies described above are not sufficient (Davies-Netzley, 1998) or adaptive (Krieshok et al., 2009) in order to guarantee career success. Individually, these strategies may address a single facet of the "glass-ceiling", although they are not able to prepare the female manager for all scenarios stemming from the four key concepts, namely, professional persona, remuneration, informal networks and mentorship.

Chapter Two: Review of the literature, explains the different scenarios resulting from the "glass-ceiling". In order to break through this, all potential eventualities should be addressed. For example, a qualification or specialised skill may aid the female manager to stand out when compared to male peers, although it does not equip her with a guide to follow during salary negotiations. While networking may provide exposure, it will not address a skill or qualification requirement shortfall.

A holistic career strategy is required, which provides a female manager with a way of thinking and reacting to scenarios resulting from the four key concepts of the "glass-ceiling" which she is able to learn and repeat throughout her career as a blueprint for success. Through the answering of the research questions, this study aims to determine if the marketing mix can act as a holistic career strategy for female managers to employ in order to break through the "glass-ceiling".

5.2.2 Research sub-question two (RSQ2)

RSQ2: To determine the circumstances in which the marketing mix can be applied by South African female managers as a career strategy to break through the “glass-ceiling”.

In order to answer research sub-question two, respondents were questioned on their experiences or perceptions of their professional persona, remuneration, informal networks and mentorship, making up the four key concepts of the “glass-ceiling”. In this regard, the research results, discussed in the research results chapter (Chapter Four: Research results), rendered two themes with associated categories

The first of which is Theme Two which describes the management of perceptions through strategic actions. The categories of theme two included professional image and value perception. Professional image is described as the proactive management of the perceptions. Value perception is the value of the female manager to the organisation reflected in remuneration amount and self-value of the female manager.

The second is Theme Three which consists of the strategic relationships developed to deliver career objectives. The categories of theme three are exchange relationships and positive influence. Exchange relationships involve the exchange of resources through relationships developed within informal networks. Positive influence is when a mentor relationship has a positive influence in terms of career or psychological benefits.

An additional theme was deduced from marketing theory as per the developed codebook described in section 5.1. Theme Four is the marketing mix defined as the strategic management and control of internal factors within a framework of uncontrollable environmental elements. The categories included product, price, place and promotion and have been defined as follows:

- Product: Exterior visible features and packaging, plus the benefits and quality it brings to the buyer in order to best satisfy a need

- Price: Amount of money the buyer must pay the seller to purchase the product
- Place: Activities employed by the organisation to make the product accessible and open to the buyer
- Promotion: Act of persuasive communication, where the target market is convinced to purchase based on the features and benefits of a product.

The categories of Theme Two corresponded with two categories of Theme Four, being product and price. The same is true of the categories of Theme Three, with two categories of Theme Four being place and promotion. In the sections that follow, these connections (C1 and C2, Figure eight) are discussed.

5.2.2.1 Managing of perceptions through product and pricing strategies

The relationship between Theme Two and Theme Four is illustrated by C1 of Figure eight, described as the management of perceptions through product and pricing strategies.

In response to questions regarding professional persona and remuneration, respondents spoke of the importance of managing perceptions of peers, colleagues and the organisation. These perceptions directly affected their professional image and value to the organisation. Female managers apply a career strategy of managing perceptions through strategic actions. These actions can be aligned to a product and pricing strategy of the marketing mix. Appendix G and Table 12 show the similarity between the categories derived from the research results, the literature and theory.

Table 12: Interpretation of Connection (C1)

Marketing Construct	*Key Concept of "Glass-Ceiling"*	*Research Results*
Product	**Professional Persona**	**Professional Image**
Exterior visible style and packaging, plus the features and quality it brings to the buyer in order to best satisfy a need.	Professional persona is made up of workplace quality in terms of job performance and management style; features being skill and level of education; and style in terms of outward appearance.	Proactive management of the perceptions of colleagues and peers in order to portray a professional image that was conservative, capable and people-centred.

Price	Remuneration	Value Perception
Amount of money the buyer must pay the seller to purchase the product.	Remuneration is the manner in which an employee is reimbursed for their output.	Value perception in terms of value to the organisation reflected in remuneration amount. In addition, value perception is reflected in self-value of the female employee and her confidence in her ability to deliver according to organisation expectations.

Respondents highlighted that perceptions within the workplace influenced gender stereotyping as well as gender discriminatory remuneration. In order to break through the "glass-ceiling", the female manager must attempt to challenge stereotypes and ensure equal pay.

The stereotypes raised by respondents concerned their professional image made up of their management style, dress code and ability. These are concepts echoed in the literature. The management style of the female manager is considered by organisations to be less effective as male characteristics are preferred (Booysen & Nkomo, 2010; Ibarra & Petriglieri, 2016; Oakley, 2000; Rudman et al., 2012; Schein, 2001). The dress code of the female manager should be conservative and appropriate to the corporate environment. Failing this, she risks misrepresentation, as inappropriate dress may perpetuate stereotypical thinking (Ainsworth, 2014; Carr, 2015; Ibarra & Petriglieri, 2016; Ross-Smith & Huppatz, 2010). The ability of the female manager is questioned by organisations. As a result, women are typically held to a higher standard than their male colleagues. Having an additional qualification or specialised skill can act as a differentiator (Booysen, 1999; Davies-Netzley, 1998; Ñopo et al., 2012; Ragins et al., 1998; Sabharwal, 2013; Wright & Baxter, 2000).

The existence of stereotypical thinking in the workplace may have resulted in female employees lacking ambition. They assume traditional traits of subservience and may look for fulfilment outside of the workplace, within their family or charity work, for example. Alternatively, women who display ambitious behaviour in terms of career growth are, at times marginalised by their colleagues or accused of neglecting their families. These women face the difficult choice of

being respected or being liked; this can undermine their career success (Rudman et al., 2012).

The literature describes this experience as a double bind where, regardless of behaviour, an adverse perception remains (Carr, 2015; Oakley, 2000). For example, should the female manager take on masculine characteristics in order to meet the perception of a good manager, she risks being perceived as unfeminine and possibly rejected (Ibarra & Petriglieri, 2016; Kolb, 2009; Ragins et al., 1998; Rudman et al., 2012). However, if the female manager portrays stereotypical behaviour of femininity she may be denied promotion because she does not fit the masculine management mould required by the organisation (Adler & Izraeli, 1994; Oakley, 2000; Rudman et al., 2012).

In order to transcend the limitations imposed by stereotypical thinking, a product strategy can act as a guide to creating a professional persona that improves self-confidence and is respected within the workplace environment. This is done through strategic actions, which is explained in the following paragraph.

A product strategy was proposed in Chapter Two: Review of the literature to organise the actions of the female manager in order to create a professional persona that could aid her in breaking through the “glass-ceiling”. Traditionally, potential buyers require the seller’s product to satisfy a need and prefer a product that offers the best quality, features and style/packaging (Kotler & Keller, 2009). Using these three actions, as mentioned in Table 12, the female manager is able to apply a product strategy to these scenarios.

The first action, product quality, is the ability of the product to perform its functions and is measured in terms of the buyer’s perception (Kotler & Keller, 2009). This can be likened to the management style of the female manager. She is required to reflect the benefit of her management style to the organisation. Research suggests a female management style can be highly effective in flat organisational structures, which bring management closer to the customer (Adler & Izraeli, 1994; Booysen, 1999; Morgan, 2006).

The second action, product style or packing, is a visual representation of the product which is able to communicate value to the buyer, aid in selection and allow the product to be distinctive (Kotler & Keller, 2009). The female manager should employ a dress code that is suited to her working environment. Ross-Smith and Huppatz (2010) and Ibarra and Petriglieri (2016) found that women gain distinction by being well dressed and playing to their femininity.

The third action, product features, are the 'extras' that differentiate the product from its competitors (Kotler & Keller, 2009). Female managers are required to 'stand out' when compared to male competitors, and having a specialised skill or qualification is a manner in which to enhance her product features. Research shows that an additional qualification can act as a way to differentiate the female employee when competing with male counterparts, especially as women appear to be held to a higher standard (Booysen, 1999; Davies-Netzley, 1998; Ñopo et al., 2012; Ragins et al., 1998; Wright & Baxter, 2000).

Equal pay was an issue raised by 10 respondents, all of whom indicated they were dissatisfied with their remuneration. This is aligned to research performed by Department of Women (2015); StatsSA (2014), which shows that a wage disparity between the sexes remains. The research results suggest that the differential remains due to value perception of both the organisation and the female manager – both concepts echoed in the literature. Organisations do not value female managers as they are perceived to be less committed to their work obligations (Cech & Blair-Loy, 2014; Corcoran & Duncan, 1979; Stroh et al., 1996). Female managers are also unsure of their self-value as they are less inclined to negotiate, do not display confidence and seem unsure in their abilities, leading to doubt and dissatisfaction (Burke & Collins, 2001; Ibarra & Petriglieri, 2016; Kolb, 2009; Paustian-Underdahl et al., 2014).

The literature suggests that women fear reprisal for remuneration increase requests and do not display the same offensive and entitled behaviour as men (Albanesi et al., 2015; Davies-Netzley, 1998; Kolb, 2009; Oakley, 2000). The findings of Paustian-Underdahl et al. (2014) support this view. Male employees tend to overestimate their effectiveness when compared to peer-reviews,

whereas female self-reviews were more consistent. Women tend to attribute their success to multiple factors, which may result in them underrating their performance (Bushell, 2015). The key to improving value perception of the female manager is a foundation of self-confidence created by a pricing strategy.

Chapter Two: Review of the literature described a pricing strategy to improve the remuneration of the female manager in order to break through the "glass-ceiling" and ensure equal pay. Two pricing principles, Table 12, are proposed to address the scenarios raised above.

The first principle, psychological pricing, is when price equates to value or quality in the mind of the buyer (Kotler, 1984). The female manager is able to improve her value to the organisation through lobbying tactics, such a benchmarking (Kolb, 2009; Oakley, 2000). Benchmarking can also be performed during a performance review session where evidence can be provided of her value to the organisation. Psychological pricing is able to address the scenario whereby the organisation does not see value in the female manager.

The second principle, perceived value pricing, is when the overall value of the product is built up from the remaining three Ps of the marketing mix (Kotler, 1984). For example, product, where having a tertiary qualification is associated with higher earnings (StatsSA, 2014), or place, where access to informal networks provides valuable insider information (Kanter, 1977), and finally, promotion, where a mentor's backing can increase a female employee's self-value (Ragins et al., 1998). When consolidated, these factors increase the self-value of the female employee and, as a result, ensure equal pay.

The female manager faces stereotypical thinking within the working environment – she attempts to fit a masculine mould in order to gain respect and status, although this can lead to her being disliked. While this may seem to be a no-win situation, it can be managed through the employment of a product strategy. In so doing, the female manager is able to create a professional persona that is acceptable within the workplace and overcome stereotypes. Secondly, she is able to improve her value-perception through the use of a pricing strategy. This

will provide her with a position of confidence when requesting fair remuneration. Thus, she is able to overcome two scenarios resulting from the “glass-ceiling”. The two key concepts are now discussed in the following section.

5.2.2.2 Developing relationships through promotion and place strategies

Connection two (C2) of Figure eight illustrates the relationship between Theme Three and Theme Four and is described as the development of relationships through promotion and place strategies.

In response to questions regarding informal networks and mentorship, respondents recognised that strategic relationships were developed which acted as a driver of career goal achievement. Mutually beneficial exchange and positive influence were cornerstones of these relationships. Female managers utilise strategic relationships as a career strategy in order to achieve their career objectives. These relationships can be aligned to a place and promotion strategy of the marketing mix. Appendix G, research matrix, and Table 13 below show the similarity between the categories derived from the research results, the literature and theory.

Table 13: Interpretation of Connection (C2)

Marketing Construct	*Key Concept of “Glass-Ceiling”*	*Research Results*
Place	**Informal Networks**	**Exchange Relationships**
Activities employed by the organisation to make the product accessible and open to the buyer.	Informal networks are the exchange of resources such as information, referrals and support between employees, colleagues and influential role players.	Female managers exchange resources through relationships developed within the informal network in order to meet specific needs.
Promotion	**Mentorship**	**Positive Influence**
Act of persuasive communication, where the target market is convinced to purchase based on the features and benefits of a product.	Mentorship is a supportive professional relationship between a senior and less experienced employee, providing both parties career and psychological benefits.	A male or female mentor, potentially from the formal mentorship programme, has a positive influence on the protégé. This influence can result in guidance, skill transfer and other career or psychological benefits.

Respondents highlighted that relationships formed as a result of networking or mentorships provided them with an opportunity to exchange resources and

receive career or psychological benefits. In order to break through the “glass-ceiling”, the female manager must foster these relationships to achieve her career objectives.

Respondents highlighted the ability to exchange resources within an informal setting as being highly beneficial in terms of their career opportunities, job performance and a platform to share experiences. These benefits are similar to those stated within the literature. Career opportunities can be found through participation in an informal network, especially when influential role players are present (Albanesi et al., 2015; April et al., 2007; Brass, 1985; Davies-Netzley, 1998; Oakley, 2000; Roomi, 2013). Job performance can be improved through advance notice of developments within the organisation, allowing the female manager to use her interpersonal ties to influence and proactively take advantage of these developments (Morgan, 2006). Sharing experiences allows members of the informal network to exchange tips on how to succeed or bend the rules of policy (Brink & Benschop, 2014; Kanter, 1977).

The benefits of participation within informal networks and the resulting relationships formed are clear. These relationships become increasingly more important as the female manager progresses up the management hierarchy. However, senior female employees tend to receive less support from their female peers (Sabharwal, 2013). Findings by Carr (2015) show that senior female employees choose to disassociate themselves from their female peers. Perhaps their high sense of self-efficacy leads them to believe that leaning on other women diminishes their achievements. Alternatively, they may risk scrutiny at being associated with radical feminism or nepotism as a result of participating in all-female networks (Brink & Benschop, 2014). Research shows that female employees are often excluded from informal networks as a result of gatekeeping (Brink & Benschop, 2014). Thus, the development of a place strategy to nurture and develop exchange relationships from informal networks is of crucial importance to female employees.

A place strategy was proposed in Chapter Two: Review of the literature, to allow the female manager to exploit the exchange relationships stemming from

participation in an informal network and break through the “glass-ceiling”. Informal networks tended to be more prominent than those derived by structured means. A place strategy proposes two actions, Table 13, which can also be applied by the female manager in these scenarios.

The first action, distribution strategy, is the activities performed to make a product accessible and open to the buyer, executed by a group of sellers (Kotler, 1984). The female manager operating within an informal network is able to use a distribution strategy to display her skill and make known her aspirations to influential role players. In so doing, she gains exposure to career opportunities. The advantage of using informal networks as a distribution channel is that the members of the network with whom the female manager forms close bonds can also act as agents or spokespeople on her behalf when in formal settings. In addition, she would not have access to these opportunities through any formal means (Brink & Benschop, 2014; Davies-Netzley, 1998; Oakley, 2000). This may be as a result of gatekeepers dictating inclusion and exclusion from formal networks (Brink & Benschop, 2014).

The second action, channel relationship strategy, is the management cooperation, conflict and competition within the channel (Kotler, 1984). The female manager is able to utilise cooperation strategies to share experiences and improve her job performance. A female employee may find herself cooperating with other members of the informal network to prepare for an opportunity or project where all involved will derive benefit and personal support (Ross-Smith & Huppatz, 2010).

Career benefits were described by respondents as skills transfer, while psychological benefits included advice or guidance to navigate the organisational climate. They described these benefits as having a positive influence on their career. The research by Kram (1983), and later Tharenou (2005), supports these findings. *Career* functions are described as those aiding career advancement such as sponsorship, exposure and visibility, coaching, protection and challenging assignments. *Psychological* functions predominantly improve self-

confidence through role modelling, acceptance and confirmation, counselling and friendship.

The organisational climate presents additional obstacles for female employees when compared to their male colleagues – challenges conceptualised in the "glass-ceiling". As a result, the importance of a mentor to assist the female manager in navigating these obstacles is highlighted. An ideal mentor provides professional and personal assistance, as described earlier, although the ability to source a suitable mentor is often a challenge for the female manager. This may be due to the fact that high profile or influential male managers, occupying positions of power, tend to mentor those with similar backgrounds and education to themselves (Holt et al., 2016). However, should the female employee manage to enter into such a mentor relationship, she is more likely to receive a promotion than her male counterpart (Tharenou, 2005). This clearly shows that with the backing and support of a mentor, a female manager is able to overcome the "glass-ceiling". In return, the mentor gains the satisfaction of identifying up and coming talent, as well as being instrumental in their success (Ghosh & Reio, 2013; Holt et al., 2016).

Organisations recognise the mutual benefits available to both the protégé and mentor. In an attempt to encourage mentorship among its employees, many organisations offer formal mentoring programmes with set guidelines. The respondents of this study described the organisation's formal mentorship programme as cumbersome in terms of administrative expectations and lacking in suitable mentors, which resulted in a negative experience of mentorship. Hu et al. (2014) suggest that mentoring within an organisation will only be successful if the mentor believes that the organisation truly supports and values its employees. This highlights a potential environmental issue within the organisation. Regardless of this, research on formal mentoring programmes suggests that while the programmes make mentoring more structured and accessible, mentorships may take longer to develop as a result of forced participation or poor fit (Broadbridge & Ehrich, 2008; Holt et al., 2016). The importance of mentorship cannot be discounted and the use of a promotion strategy becomes highly relevant when engaging formal or informal mentorship opportunities.

A promotion strategy was proposed in Chapter Two: Review of the literature, to enhance mentorships for female managers and gain positive influence, which is vital in overcoming the “glass-ceiling”. A promotion strategy, Table 13, can be used in the following two ways:

The first, personal selling, is where face-to-face interaction aids the cultivation of the buyer-seller relationship through the immediate adjustment of the communication based on the recipient’s response (Kotler, 1984; Kotler & Keller, 2009). The role of the mentor in this scenario is two-fold; firstly, in terms of providing an opportunity for the female manager to interact directly with potential employers (Broadbridge & Ehrich, 2008; Ragins et al., 1998; Robbins & Judge, 2011), and secondly, in terms of coaching and preparation for the interaction in the form of psychological benefits such as an empathetic ear or sounding board (Broadbridge & Ehrich, 2008; Davies-Netzley, 1998; DeCastro et al., 2013; Kram, 1983).

The second, sales role, is when the seller makes use of an agent or salesperson to encourage goodwill or educate buyers on the product (Kotler & Keller, 2009). For this study, the female manager is the seller, her mentor acts as her salesperson and the buyer is the organisation offering an employment opportunity. The female manager’s mentor acts in a sales role by stimulating demand of the buyer to aid her in deriving career benefits. The mentor can do this by highlighting the protégé’s skills, past accomplishments and aptitude for the position, while handling any objections that may stem from gender discrimination (Brink & Benschop, 2014; Weitz & Bradford, 1999).

The concepts of informal networks and mentorship share similarities in terms of the relationships formed at these platforms. Within these relationships, exchanges are made, resulting in positive influence. Informal networks provide the female manager with a platform to satisfy her need to exchange resources using a place strategy of distribution and cooperation. She is also able to receive professional and personal benefits through the utilisation of a promotion strategy to enhance her mentor relationship via personal selling and a sales agent. In so

doing she is able to overcome two scenarios resulting from the “glass-ceiling” and deliver her career objectives.

5.2.3 Application of the marketing mix as a career strategy

The relationship between Theme One and Theme Four is illustrated by C3 of Figure eight and is described as the application of the marketing mix as a career strategy. This relationship was used to answer the research question, when can the marketing mix be applied by South African female managers as a career strategy to break through the “glass-ceiling”. This relationship has been determined through the investigation of the research sub-questions, which are summarised here.

RSQ1: Respondents made use of a few fragmented strategies which were hard work, networking and specialised skills. They did not have holistic strategies, meaning they did not integrate all aspects of their careers and could not address the scenarios resulting from the four key concepts of the “glass-ceiling”, namely, professional persona, remuneration, informal networks and mentorship.

RSQ2: The 4Ps of the marketing mix strategy were examined in conjunction with the research results derived from the interview schedule (Appendix D), based on the circumstances proposed in the literature as the four key concepts of the “glass-ceiling”. The marketing mix was found to be a holistic career strategy based on the validity of C1 and C2.

From the preceding, it is clear that while female managers apply career strategies, these strategies fail to address all facets of the “glass-ceiling”, for this study defined as professional persona, remuneration, informal networks and mentorship. The strategies applied are at times unconscious and also lack adaptability. This may result in the female manager feeling dissatisfied in her career, as evidenced in the research results of Chapter Four: Research results. In order to overcome the four key concepts of the “glass-ceiling”, a holistic strategy was required. The marketing mix was proposed as such a strategy and the response to RSQ2 determined that the marketing mix was suitable to address the four key concepts of the “glass-ceiling”.

Chapter Two: Review of the literature, discussed criticisms of individual career strategy application. Firstly, career strategies do not work for women. The findings of this research show that career strategies applied in insolation may not work, however, a holistic strategy can address the key concepts of the “glass-ceiling”. Secondly, organisations should change and not the individual. The findings of this research show that the marketing mix presents a malleable career strategy. It can be adjusted to suit the demands placed on the female manager as a result of an unreceptive organisational climate as organisational change may be a lengthy and arduous process.

The research question is thus answered, based on the responses of the participants, the marketing mix can be utilised by female managers as a career strategy to overcome the “glass-ceiling” when all four Ps of the marketing mix are used to address the key concepts and resulting scenarios.

CHAPTER 6: CONCLUSION

This chapter completes the study and the concluding remarks are organised as follows: to begin, a summary of the findings is discussed, followed by the contributions made by the study and managerial recommendations; thereafter, the limitations of the study are provided, with subsequent suggestions for future research, before the chapter is closed with a final conclusion.

6.1 Summary of findings

The aim of the study was to determine the suitability of the marketing mix as a career strategy to aid female managers in overcoming the "glass-ceiling". In the process of this investigation, the career strategies applied by female managers were uncovered, as were the circumstances in which the marketing mix was suitable.

Research question: *When can the marketing mix be applied by South African female managers as a career strategy to break through the "glass-ceiling"?*

The marketing mix can be utilised by female managers as a career strategy to break through the "glass-ceiling" when all four Ps of the marketing mix are used to address the four key concepts of the "glass-ceiling", namely, professional persona, remuneration, informal networks and mentorship, including the resulting scenarios. This was represented by C3, Figure eight.

RSQ1: *To identify the career strategies employed by South African female managers to succeed in breaking through the "glass-ceiling*".

Respondents identified strategies of hard work, networking, specialised skill and higher qualifications, which formulated Theme One. While these functions acted as strategic actions, they were deemed incomplete. The respondents applied them in silos, which were found to be ineffective to fully address the four key concepts of the "glass-ceiling", namely, professional persona, remuneration, informal networks and mentorship.

RSQ2: *To determine the circumstances in which the marketing mix can be applied by South African female managers as a career strategy to break through the "glass-ceiling".*

The marketing mix was proposed as a holistic career strategy able to accommodate the four key concepts of the "glass-ceiling". Through the data analysis process, it was determined that the circumstances resulting from the "glass-ceiling" were addressed suitably by the marketing mix represented by C2 and C3, Figure eight.

6.2 Contributions

This study was able to complete 21 interviews derived from a sample of female managers participating in the Female Leadership Development Programme (FLDP). The data derived from the respondents was comprised of their experiences with the "glass-ceiling" and career strategies employed to overcome workplace inequality. The research question was answered and thus the suitability of the marketing mix as a career strategy for female managers to apply when facing the challenges associated with the "glass-ceiling" has been established. As such, a contribution to the literature of the "glass-ceiling" and marketing theory has been made and is discussed in the paragraphs that follow.

6.2.1 Body of knowledge

This study aimed to contribute to the body of knowledge on gender in management. Within this field are discussions on career strategies. Tomlinson et al. (2013) argue that career strategies are born from necessity as a result of organisational structures being gender biased. Research by Acker (1990, 2006) shows us that while organisations would like to change, challenges remain due to stereotypical thinking based on gendered or racialised identities and advantages. Tomlinson et al. (2013) propose that strategies are proactive and should be applied constantly throughout a career. In this regard, the research results support and strengthen existing thinking on career strategies and their importance to female managers.

Further areas of interest in the field of gender in management are the “glass-ceiling” and resulting gender inequality in the workplace. It is clear that the existing body of knowledge on these topics is extensive and potentially overwhelming, as evident in Chapter Two: Review of the literature, which provided a review of the literature. This research has attempted to group a portion of this content into four key challenges associated with the “glass-ceiling”, namely, professional persona, remuneration, informal networks and mentorship. In so doing, the vast concept of gender inequality becomes potentially easier to understand and address.

This study has also attempted to cement the relationship between the challenges of the “glass-ceiling” mentioned above and the mitigating action of a career strategy. The grouping of gender inequality literature into four key concepts has potentially facilitated the development of a career strategy as each challenge is defined and can now be addressed. This provided a platform from which to determine the suitability of the marketing mix as a career strategy to be utilised by female managers in addressing the “glass-ceiling”.

This study has introduced a novel career strategy being the marketing mix, which was deemed suitable to address the four key concepts of the “glass-ceiling” via the 4Ps, namely product, price, place and promotion. The theoretical contribution follows.

6.2.2 Marketing theory

Chapter Two: Review of the literature described marketing theory as the theoretical lens through which this study was conceptualised. In answering the research question and sub-questions, an unusually and relatively unexplored relationship between concepts in marketing theory and those of career strategies was uncovered. Utilising the Colquitt and Zapata-Phelan (2007) theory contribution model, supported by the data analysis process, each axis of theory building and theory testing is discussed.

On the axis of theory building, this study examined a previously unexplored relationship between the marketing mix and the “glass-ceiling”. The marketing mix is traditionally applied by organisations to manage and control internal factors, the 4Ps, in order to succeed in an environment of uncontrollable variables (Kotler & Keller, 2009).

This study revealed that the marketing mix can be applied by female managers to align their internal resources into a career strategy that is able to counteract the challenges of the “glass-ceiling”. Therefore, marketing theory has been expanded through a novel application. This represented a departure from existing literature and challenged current thinking (Anderson & Taylor, 1995; McCole, 2004; Mintz & Currim, 2013; O'Cass & Heirati, 2015; Wooliscroft & Shaw, 2012; Zineldin & Philipson, 2007), which Colquitt and Zapata-Phelan (2007) suggest builds existing theory.

On the axis of theory testing, the foundation of this study was based on past conceptual arguments initially introduced by Kotler and Levy (1969) and later supported by additional research (Andreasen & Kotler, 2008; Kotler, 1979, 1987, 2005). These arguments proposed the broadening of marketing theory to include application by persons, which is what the study attempts to do.

To the best of the researcher’s knowledge, these arguments had not been applied to the female manager encountering the “glass-ceiling”. This research has developed existing arguments in order to paint a comprehensive picture of the “glass-ceiling” phenomenon, which Colquitt and Zapata-Phelan (2007) suggest is a test of existing theory.

In summary, based on the Colquitt and Zapata-Phelan (2007) model, this study ranks highly on both the axis of theory building and theory testing. Existing conceptual arguments have been developed and extended to reveal a novel application of the marketing mix by female managers encountering the “glass-ceiling”, and in so doing, marketing theory has been expanded. This means that the theory has been applied to individuals, which is an unusual sample as the majority of studies on this theory have been largely conducted on organisations.

On this basis, it can be determined that a high level of contribution to marketing theory has been achieved.

6.3 Managerial Recommendations

Organisations and management teams may benefit from encouraging female employees to develop career strategies because they are able to address the challenges arising from the “glass-ceiling”. The organisation can promote career strategy application through workshops, development guides or counselling and establishing programmes. This study has established that female managers make use of career strategies to aid them in navigating the corporate gauntlet. However, these strategies were found to be insufficient to ensure success as they failed to address all potential eventualities resulting from the four key concepts of the “glass-ceiling”, namely professional persona, remuneration, informal networks and mentorship. It has been determined that a holistic strategy such as a marketing mix strategy can be developed and applied to each concept.

The inauguration of the Female Leadership Programme (FLDP) was certainly a positive step toward career strategy implementation as the initiatives of the programme aligned closely to the strategic actions proposed in this study, Table two of Chapter Three: Research design and methodology. It is recommended that the organisation continue with subsequent programmes based on the benefits derived by the organisation and FLDP participants.

The organisation was able to retain critical talent while motivating the participants. Three respondents claimed that had they not been selected to participate in the FLDP, they had considered leaving the company to pursue external opportunities. They viewed their selection and participation in the programme as an indication of their increased value to the organisation and the opening of potential advancement or personal growth opportunities within the organisation.

The respondents highlighted several benefits that they had derived from their participation in the FLDP. They spoke of advantages to the programme, such as exposure, increased confidence and encouragement. Initiatives of the

programme, such as personal development planning and counselling, had improved self-knowledge among the respondents, which in turn, increased their self-value. The programme itself created an informal network by offering mentorship programmes and specialised managerial and leadership training to participants.

Subsequent programmes of this nature may benefit from the following recommendations in order to unlock additional value.

Greater support and investment from top management: Two respondents stated that they deemed a lack of support from top management as a key stumbling block for the programme's success. These sentiments are echoed in the literature of Kalev et al. (2006), Booysen (1999) and Ragins et al. (1998) who state that initiatives of this nature must be supported and enforced by top management in order to succeed.

The top management team or executive committee could illustrate their support and commitment to the programme through engagement with the participants at official functions. They could provide more visibility of the programme to the board and public via periodic updates and noting successes. The programme, its participants and progress could be discussed at management meetings and internally within the organisation. Finally, additional funding could be provided to develop the participants through professional or academic development programmes and training. This show of support would emphasise the importance of the programme and the organisation's commitment to developing female leadership within the organisation.

Clearly defined success criteria: Two respondents mentioned that the responsibility for success weighed too heavily on the participant. They would have liked clear criteria to be put in place by the organisation to measure the success of the programme, such as certain positions earmarked for the candidates. Career progression was highlighted as a goal of all respondents, yet the programme was unable to guarantee any formal advancement opportunities.

The programme may have benefited from predefining success criteria, which would manage the expectations of both participants and stakeholders. It would also allow all role-players a clear measure to define the success of the programme and substantiate the investment mentioned above. It would furthermore pave the way for similar programmes to be deployed in state-owned companies (SOC) and organisations in general in future.

6.4 Limitations

The study has several limitations. The aim was to determine the extent of strategy application by female managers to break through the “glass-ceiling”, with specific attention given to the suitability of the marketing mix as one such strategy. Based on the literature, assumptions were made regarding the “glass-ceiling”, namely that it exists at each level of the management hierarchy and that it becomes increasingly difficult to break through at higher levels within the organisation. As a result, female managers of all management levels were sampled, based on their interactions with the “glass-ceiling”.

The methodological limitations of this study were consistent with the philosophical assumptions made for this research. As this is a qualitative, interpretivist study, the findings are not quantifiable or generalisable to the population in question. So too does the size, homogeneity and purposive selection of the sample limit generalisability. The sample comprised participants of the FLDP, therefore the findings cannot be generalised to all female employees within the organisation. However, there are certain concepts uncovered by this research that are transferable among female managers, such as the application of career strategies to enhance exchange relationships and manage workplace perception.

The ontological and epistemological assumptions of this study also indicate a level of subjectivity which may limit the strength of the findings. The data collection method selected, a one-hour semi-structured interview, may also create a limitation as to the depth of the response garnered from the respondent. As the researcher, I was individually responsible for analysis of the data. This may result in consistency, but only allows for a single perspective.

It was, thus, important to ensure rigour through validity and reliability tools. For example, validity has been illustrated by the inclusion of verbatim quotes and completion of a pilot study, while reliability was ensured through the documentation of all steps taken throughout the research process to ensure the reader is aware of the process followed and to allow for replication.

6.5 Recommendations for further research

The results of this study provided two key insights, firstly, that female managers apply career strategies in order to succeed within the organisation, and secondly, that the marketing mix is suitable as a career strategy when attempting to overcome the "glass-ceiling". On this basis, two recommendations for further research can be made.

Firstly, further research on career strategies employed by existing, successful female managers in overcoming the "glass-ceiling" is suggested. A case study or similar academic investigation could be performed to analyse the career strategies employed by these women. A retrospective view on their strategic actions used to ensure success may uncover key findings which may support career strategy development in young female employees. It may also guide the elements making up a career strategy and give more weight to certain actions, such as mentorship and networking. In addition, successful women of minority groups could be considered for investigation to expand current thinking on race and the "glass-ceiling". This further investigation may advance the literature on career strategies and support implementation in future.

Secondly, a traditional application of the marketing mix, being the 4Ps, was utilised in this study. Chapter Two: Review of the literature, discussed the potential of expanding the 4Ps to include People, Physical Evidence, Process and Productivity, collectively known as the 8Ps of service marketing (Baida et al., 2003). Service marketing focuses on the human element (Constantinides, 2006), which, in the case of the female manager, is related to her brand. Further

investigation into the application of services marketing, particularly personal branding, may uncover interesting findings.

Finally, a message to organisations to incorporate career strategy support as recommended. Further investigation can be performed on the success of female leadership development programmes – especially in state-owned companies (SOC). Perhaps a review could be performed at the culmination of the FLDP to track the success of the programme and its participants. This could include a comparison to similar programmes executed within other SOCs. This would provide valuable information for future programmes of this nature.

6.6 Conclusion

The movement of women into the workplace has placed increasing attention on the role of the organisation in creating a gender-neutral environment in which all employees are able to succeed (Ibarra & Petriglieri, 2016; Schwartz, 1989; Tomlinson et al., 2013). However, the reality is that pervading racial and gender stereotypes remain (Acker, 1990, 2006), which creates an uncontrollable external environment in which the female manager exists.

This phenomenon has been described as the “glass-ceiling”, where women can observe opportunity but are held back by gender discrimination (Morgan, 2006). A review of the gender in management literature and current conversations on the “glass-ceiling” highlighted four key areas of interest: professional persona (Beja, 2014; Doubell & Struwig, 2014), remuneration (Ñopo et al., 2012; Rosser & Mamiseishvili, 2014), informal networks (Brink & Benschop, 2014; Watts et al., 2015), and mentorship (Durbin & Tomlinson, 2014; Rhee & Sigler, 2015).

The research results of this study have shown that female managers consciously or subconsciously apply strategic actions to manage and succeed in this climate. While necessary, the actions highlighted by respondents were found to be incomplete. This research established the suitability of a marketing mix as a holistic strategy to counter the four key concepts. Kotler and Levy (1969) suggest that a marketing mix strategy, conventionally applied to organisations (McCole,

2004; Mintz & Currim, 2013; Shapiro, 1973; Shaw & Jones, 2005; Wooliscroft & Shaw, 2012), could be extended to persons. To the best of the researcher's knowledge, this is one of the first empirical investigations performed regarding the application of the marketing mix by female managers attempting to break through the "glass-ceiling", which has resulted in a contribution to gender in management literature and marketing theory.

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Appendix A: Request to participate



Dear FLDP Participant

My name is Lorin Baxter and I am a participant of the Female Leadership Development Programme (FLDP). I am currently completing my Masters in Management by Research through the University of Witwatersrand. The proposed tile of my Master's degree is "Application of the Marketing Mix as a Strategy to Overcome the "Glass-Ceiling" for South African Female Managers".

I would like to request an hour of your time to complete a face to face interview and discuss your views on the general issues facing female employees and your participation in the FLDP. Your experience as a female employee in a management role, as well as your participation in the FLDP, makes you part of a unique group of South African female managers. I would greatly value your input, as you are one of the pioneers in the establishment of female development programmes in South Africa.

If you choose to participate in this study, please contact me telephonically at 081 347 6136 or via email at baxterle@telkom.co.za. You may also find me on Outlook.

Your participation in this study would be greatly appreciated. This research will contribute to a larger body of knowledge on gender in management.

Kind Regards

Lorin Baxter Dr Zanele Ndaba (Supervisor)

Appendix B: Consent to participate in research



Application of the Marketing Mix as a Strategy to Overcome the "Glass-Ceiling" for South African Female Managers

Researcher: Lorin Baxter (0813476136 / baxterle@telkom.co.za)

Please Initial Box

1. I confirm that I have read and understand the information sheet for the above study and have had the opportunity to ask questions. ☐
2. I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time, without giving reason. ☐
3. I agree to take part in the above study. ☐
4. I agree to the interview being audio recorded. ☐
5. I understand that interviews will be confidential and I agree to the use of anonymised quotes in academic publications. ☐

Name of Participant	Date	Signature
Name of Researcher	Date	Signature

Appendix C: Participant Information Sheet



Application of the Marketing Mix as a Strategy to Overcome the "Glass-Ceiling" for South African Female Managers

Introduction and Purpose

My name is Lorin Baxter. I am a postgraduate student at the University of Witwatersrand, working with my supervisor, Dr Zanele Ndaba (Zanele.Ndaba@wits.ac.za), in the Wits Business School Faculty of Commerce, Law and Management. I would like to invite you to take part in my research study, which concerns gender in management.

You have been invited to participate based on your experience as a female employee in a management role, as well as your participation in the Female Leadership Development Programme (FLDP).

Procedures

If you agree to participate in my research, I will conduct an interview with you at a time and location of your choice. The interview will involve questions about inequality in the workplace, career strategies, management style, remuneration, networking and mentorship. It should last about one hour.

With your permission, I will audiotape and take notes during the interview. The recording is to accurately record the information you provide, and will be used for transcription purposes only. If you choose not to be audiotaped, I will take notes instead. If you agree to being audiotaped but feel uncomfortable at any time during the interview, I can turn off the recorder at your request.

I expect to conduct only one interview; however, follow-ups may be needed for added clarification. If so, I will contact you by mail/phone to request this.

Benefits

There is no direct benefit to you from taking part in this study. It is hoped that the research will benefit female managers experiencing the issues of inequality in the workplace.

Risks/Discomforts

As you and I are employed by the same organisation and are both participating in the Female Leadership Development Programme (FLDP), please be assured that you will not risk institutional sanctions as a result of participation in this study.

This research will touch on topics that you may find sensitive. Some of the research questions may make you uncomfortable or upset. Should you require any emotional support subsequent to the interview please feel free to discuss with your LEAD (Leadership Evolution and Development) Guide. You are also encouraged to make use of the Employee Assistance Programme where confidential treatment by a registered psychologist or social worker will be provided. More information can be found at: [REMOVED]

Confidentiality

As with all research, there is a chance that confidentiality could be compromised; however, I am taking precautions to minimise this risk. If results of this study are published or presented, individual names and other personally identifiable information will not be used.

To minimise the risks to anonymity, a coding system will be employed to protect identifiable information. Only I will have access to this information. This information will be stored electronically with password protection.

When the research is completed, I may save the tapes and notes for use in future research done by myself or others. I will retain these records for up to 2 years after the study is over. The same measures described above will be taken to protect confidentiality of this study data.

Compensation

You will not receive payment for choosing to take part in this study.

Rights

Participation in research is completely voluntary. You are free to decline to take part in the project. You can decline to answer any questions and are free to stop taking part in the project at any time. Whether or not you choose to participate in the research and whether or not you choose to answer a question or continue participating in the project, there will be no penalty to you or loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled.

Questions

Kindly note that the final dissertation will be published within the academic community (Wits Business School Library, academic journal article, academic conference, research students, etc.) You are welcome to request a copy of the finalised research dissertation. If you have any questions about this research, please feel free to contact me. I can be reached at 0813476136 or baxterle@telkom.co.za

Appendix D: Interview Schedule

Candidate code: _____

Date: _____

Opening

A. (Establish Rapport) [shake hands] My name is Lorin Baxter and I am member of the Female Leadership Development Programme (FLDP). I will be interviewing you to discuss your view on the general issues facing female employees and participation in the FLDP.
B. (Purpose) I would like to ask you some questions about your background, your education, some experiences you have had during your career and your thoughts on the programme. I would like to gain a better understanding of the ladies in the programme.
C. (Motivation) I hope to use this information to complete my Master in Management by Research (MMR) through the University of Witwatersrand.
D. (Time Line) The interview should take about 60 minutes. Are you comfortable to respond to some questions at this time?

(Transition: Let me begin by asking you some questions about your background and role within the organisation)

A. (Topic) General demographic information

1. In a few sentences, please introduce yourself.
2. What is your current role within the organisation?
    i. How long have you been in this role?
    ii. Prior to your current role, what was your position?
    iii. What would be the ideal next step in your career?

(Transition to the next topic: I would now like to discuss how you plan on taking the next step in your career.)

B. (Topic) Career Strategies

1. What actions or strategies have you on implemented, if any, to help you succeed?
    i. How did you formulate this strategy?
    ii. Would you say that applying this strategy has aided your career advancement?
2. Would you say that a strategy can help you in your career?
    i. In which ways?

(Transition to the next topic: I would now like to ask you a few questions about your management style within this role.)

C. (Topic) Product / Professional Persona

1. How would you describe your management / leadership style?
    i. Have you made any changes as a result of being on the FLDP?
2. What style or dress code is required in your current position?
    i. How do you dress for work?
    ii. Have you made any changes as a result of being on the FLDP?
3. Please describe your academic history.
    i. Do you have any professional certifications?
    ii. Would you consider completing additional training or qualifications? Why?
    iii. What would you like to add to your Curriculum Vitae?

(Transition to the next topic: There are many articles in the press relating to female earnings compared to their male counterparts, I would like to discuss this with you now.)

D. (Topic) Price / Remuneration

1. Do you consider yourself fairly remunerated? Why?
    i. How would you compare your salary to your male counterparts?
    i. How would you propose an increase to your promoter?
    ii. Are there other benefits you would prefer in place monetary remuneration?
2. How would you go about improving your salary or benefits?
3. Do you feel that participation in the FLDP has changed your value to the organisation in any way?

(Transition to the next topic: Now I would like to discuss your participation in the FLDP)

E. (Topic) Place / Informal Networks

1. Have you enjoyed being part of the FLDP thus far?
    i. What has been the highlight?
    ii. What could be improved?
2. How would you describe the benefit of being part of the FLDP network?
3. How has your experience been with the subgroup/pod?
4. Are you part of any other groups or professional associations with work/industry colleagues?
    i. How did this benefit you as a person / as an employee?

(Transition to the next topic: Finally, I would like to touch on mentorship and coaching.)

F. (Topic) Promotion / Mentorship

1. Do you have a mentor?
    i. If answer is "Yes": How did your mentorship relationship come about?
    ii. If answer is "No": Would you take up an opportunity to have a mentor?
    iii. Would you utilise the formal mentorship programme within the organisation?
2. Have you made use of coaching?
    i. If answer is "Yes":
        1. What made you chose that person?
        2. How has coaching made an impact on your career?
    ii. If answer is "No": Do you plan to make use of coaching in the future? If not, please explain why.

(Transition to the next topic: Well, it has been a pleasure finding out more about you. Let me briefly summarize the information that I have recorded during our interview.)

Closing

A. (Summarize) You are currently working in _____ Your strategy to succeed is _____. Your views on the FLDP initiatives are _____.
B. (Maintain Rapport) I appreciate the time you took for this interview. Is there anything else you think would be helpful for me to know?
C. (Action to be taken) I should have all the information I need. Would it be alright to call you on your cell phone if I have any more questions? Thanks again. I look forward to seeing you at our future FLDP functions.

Additional probing sub questions:

1. How has / would this have affected your career?
2. How did this benefit you as a person / as an employee?
3. How has the programme affected this?
4. Please describe how you felt.
5. Would you consider changing?
6. Would you ask your promoter?

Appendix E: Ethics Approval

Research Office

HUMAN RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE (NON-MEDICAL)
R14/49 Baxter

CLEARANCE CERTIFICATE	**PROTOCOL NUMBER: H15/10/03**
PROJECT TITLE	Application of the marketing mix as a strategy to overcome the glass ceiling" for South African female managers
INVESTIGATOR(S)	Ms L Baxter
SCHOOL/DEPARTMENT	Wits Business School/
DATE CONSIDERED	23 October 2015
DECISION OF THE COMMITTEE	Approved unconditionally
EXPIRY DATE	12 November 2018

DATE 13 November 2015 **CHAIRPERSON** J. Knight
(Professor J Knight)

cc: Supervisor : Dr Z Ndaba

DECLARATION OF INVESTIGATOR(S)

To be completed in duplicate and **ONE COPY** returned to the Secretary at Room 10005, 10th Floor, Senate House, University.

I/We fully understand the conditions under which I am/we are authorized to carry out the abovementioned research and I/we 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. **I agree to completion of a yearly progress report.**

Signature

19 , 11 , 2015
Date

PLEASE QUOTE THE PROTOCOL NUMBER ON ALL ENQUIRIES

Appendix F: Implementation Plan

Expected Completion	*Description*	*Contingency*
September 2015	Consultation with programme facilitator to discuss email to be sent to candidates requesting participation and to discuss support to be offered to respondents during research process.	Consultation to be scheduled subject to availability of facilitator, taking into account annual leave scheduled during this time.
September 2015	Facilitator to request participation from programme candidates via email. Reminder email to be sent two weeks later. Final reminder to be sent two weeks thereafter.	Should insufficient responses be received after the final reminder, individual emails will be sent to each candidate to request participation in the research.
October / November 2015	Interviews to be scheduled with respondents on receipt of positive response to aforementioned email. All interviews to be completed by 30 November 2015.	Interviews must be completed prior to 1 December 2015 as this is a month of school and festive holidays which may impact availability. Only exceptions will be accommodated during December on request.
December 2016	Interviews to be transcribed within the first two weeks of December 2016.	A research assistant will be employed to transcribe the interviews accurately. Data analysis must begin as quickly as possible after collection.
January to April 2016	Step One: Code the data and identify categories Step Two: Develop the code book Step Three: Corroborating and legitimating themes.	During this period the findings (Chapter Four: Research results) and discussion (Chapter Five: Discussion) will be conceptualised.
May – June 2016	Write up of: Chapter Five: Discussion Themes discussed in conjunction with literature; and Chapter Six: Conclusion Conclusion and recommendations.	During this period multiple reverts between supervisor and researcher are expected.
June 2016	Submission to editor for final editing Submission to the organisation for final approval.	External editor to be sourced. Organisation has requested a view of completed document.
July 2016	Submission for completion of MMR.	

Appendix G: Research Matrix

Marketing Construct	*Key Concept of "Glass-Ceiling"*	*Research Results*
Product	**Professional Persona**	**Professional Image**
Exterior visible style and packaging, plus the features and quality it brings to the buyer in order to best satisfy a need.	Professional persona is made up of workplace quality in terms of job performance and management style; features being skill and level of education; and style in terms of outward appearance.	Proactive management of the perceptions of colleagues and peers in order to portray a professional image that was conservative, capable and people-centred.
Price	**Remuneration**	**Value Perception**
Amount of money the buyer must pay the seller to purchase the product.	Remuneration is the manner in which an employee is reimbursed for their output.	Value perception in terms of value to the organisation reflected in remuneration amount. In addition, value perception is reflected in self-value of the female employee and her confidence in her ability to deliver according to organisation expectations.
Place	**Informal Networks**	**Exchange Relationships**
Activities employed by the organisation to make the product accessible and open to the buyer.	Informal networks are the exchange of resources such as information, referrals and support between employees, colleagues and influential role players.	Female managers exchange resources through relationships developed within the informal network in order to meet specific needs.
Promotion	**Mentorship**	**Positive Influence**
Act of persuasive communication, where the target market is convinced to purchase based on the features and benefits of a product.	Mentorship is a supportive professional relationship between a senior and less experienced employee, providing both parties career and psychological benefits.	A male or female mentor, potentially from the formal mentorship programme, has a positive influence on the protégé. This influence can result in guidance, skill transfer and other career or psychological benefits.