

**Gordon Institute
of Business Science**
University of Pretoria

**The advancement of female executives in corporate South Africa: gender
balance and women in leadership**

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Abstract

Society, business and academic literature continue to highlight the increased demand for women in leadership. Despite this, the rate at which women are advancing into executive and senior roles in corporate organisations remains slow. Academic literature has shown that gendered forces operate to inhibit the progression of women into executive and senior roles at societal, organisational and individual levels. There is very little empirical evidence that society and business have considered that these factors, operate in combination, to influence the advancement of women into executive roles in a South African context. The aim of this research study was to investigate the factors that influence the advancement of women executives into senior leadership roles.

An exploratory qualitative study was adopted to gain insights into the extent to which organisations have progressed towards the advancement of women executives in corporate South Africa. The approaches currently being adopted by organisations to advance women were investigated. In addition, factors that slow down the rate of progression for women executives were identified; the potential benefits and drawbacks to women as well as the potential benefits and implications for corporate organisations were assessed. To this end, in-depth interviews were conducted with ten senior executives from eight different industries. The insights obtained from the interviews formed the basis of the data that was analysed by means of thematic content analysis to produce the findings of this study.

The findings of the research indicate that mentorship programmes, support networks, leadership development and training, career growth and exposure, and the provision of a flexible working environment were key approaches that provided benefits for organisations. In addition, the research findings point towards gender stereotyping, male domination and self-limiting beliefs as some of the factors that inhibit the progression of women into executive roles. The model for the advancement of women was devised using these research findings. The model depicts the interdependence of societal, organisational and individual level factors towards influencing the advancement of female executives.

Keywords: Women in leadership; Gender balance; Gender stereotypes; Male domination.

Declaration

I declare that this research report is my own work. It is submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Business Administration at the Gordon Institute of Business Science, University of Pretoria. It has not been submitted before for any degree or examination in any other University. I further declare that I have obtained the necessary authorisation and consent to carry out this research.

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Contents

Abstract	i
Declaration	ii
List of Figures	vii
List of Tables	vii
Chapter 1: Introduction to the Research Problem	1
1.1 Introduction	1
1.2 Purpose	3
1.3 Research Problem	3
1.4 Research Objectives	4
Chapter 2: Literature review	6
2.1 Introduction	6
2.2 Women in leadership	6
2.3 Progress to date	7
2.4 Key inhibiting factors of the advancement of women	9
2.4.1 Societal factors	9
2.4.1.1 <i>Early life experiences</i>	9
2.4.1.2 <i>Social expectations and gender congeniality</i>	10
2.4.2 Organisational factors	11
2.4.2.1 <i>Role conflict</i>	11
2.4.2.2 <i>Access to mentoring</i>	12
2.4.2.3 <i>Flexibility in the workplace</i>	12
2.4.2.4 <i>Selection and promotion bias</i>	13
2.4.2.5 <i>Direct and indirect discrimination</i>	13
2.4.2.6 <i>The glass cliff</i>	13
2.4.3 Individual factors	14
2.4.3.1 <i>Experiences of leadership and personality dispositions</i>	14
2.4.3.2 <i>Role models</i>	15
2.4.3.3 <i>Division of domestic labour</i>	16
2.4.3.4 <i>Assertion/self-confidence</i>	16
2.5 Approaches to the advancement of women.....	17
2.5.1 Professional identities and leadership development programmes	17
2.5.2 Flexible work-life balance.....	19
2.5.3 Access to coaching and mentorship	19
2.5.4. Support networks for women	21
2.5.5 Socialisation	21
2.6 Potential benefits and drawbacks to the advancement of women.....	22
2.6.1 Benefits	22
2.6.2 Drawbacks	23
2.7 Gender-balanced teams and corporate performance.....	25
2.7.1 Women and economic performance.....	26
2.7.2 Leadership styles of women in a mixed gender environment.....	27
2.8 A summary of the literature review	27
Chapter 3: Research Questions	30



Chapter 4: Methodology	32
4.1 Introduction	32
4.2 Research Methodology and design	32
4.2.1 Rationale for proposed method.....	32
4.2.2 Research setting for the study	33
4.3 Research Participants.....	33
4.4 Population	34
4.5 The Sample.....	34
4.6 Unit of Analysis	36
4.7 Data Collection.....	36
4.7.1 Data Collection Tool.....	37
4.7.2 Details of Data Collection.....	38
4.8 Data Analysis	40
4.8.1 Open Coding	41
4.8.2 Axial Coding	41
4.8.3 Selective Coding	41
4.9 Data Validity and Reliability	43
4.10 Research Limitations.....	44
4.11 Summary.....	44
Chapter 5: Results	45
5.1 Introduction	45
5.2 Data Analysis	45
5.3 Presentation of results	45
5.4 Results for Research Question 1	46
5.4.1 What is your opinion regarding your organisation's approach to the advancement of women into leadership positions?.....	46
5.4.2 What drives the advancement of women into leadership roles within your organisation?	49
5.5 Results for Research Question 2	51
5.5.1 What approaches are being adopted by corporates towards the successful advancement of women into leadership roles?	52
5.5.1.1 <i>Career growth and exposure</i>	53
5.5.1.2 <i>Coaching and mentoring programmes</i>	53
5.5.1.3 <i>Training and development</i>	54
5.5.1.4 <i>Talent management</i>	55
5.5.1.5 <i>No approach</i>	56
5.5.2 Please explain whether you believe the approaches used by your organisation to advance women into leadership benefit women and organisations in any way.....	56
5.5.2.1 <i>Mentorship programmes</i>	58
5.5.2.2 <i>Support networks for women</i>	59
5.5.2.3 <i>Other benefits</i>	59
5.6 Results for Research Question 3	60
5.6.1 Factors that inhibit the promotion of women into leadership roles	60
5.6.1.1 <i>Gender stereotyping and societal influence</i>	61
5.6.1.2 <i>Male domination</i>	62
5.6.1.3 <i>Self-limiting beliefs</i>	63
5.6.1.4 <i>Tough and Inflexible work environments</i>	63



5.6.1.5	<i>Employment tenure</i>	64
5.6.2	The attitudes of women in organisations when dealing with the factors that inhibit the promotion of women into leadership roles	65
5.7	Results for Research Question 4	66
5.7.1	Benefits brought about by the advancement of women into leadership roles	66
5.7.1.1	<i>Availability of role models as a benefit leading to opportunities for other women</i>	68
5.7.1.2	<i>Support networks</i>	68
5.7.1.3	<i>Compassion and empathy</i>	69
5.7.2	Drawbacks to the promotion of women into leadership roles	69
5.7.2.1	<i>Dual role of women as mothers (and wives)</i>	70
5.7.2.2	<i>Reluctance to promote other women (the “Queen Bee” syndrome)</i>	71
5.7.2.3	<i>Token appointments</i>	71
5.7.2.4	<i>No drawbacks</i>	72
5.7.2.5	<i>Self-identity and individuality</i>	72
5.8	Results for Research Question 5	73
5.8.1	The benefits of promoting gender-balanced leadership for corporates	73
5.8.1.1	<i>Diverse way of thinking and decision making</i>	74
5.8.1.2	<i>Performance and delivery culture</i>	74
5.8.1.3	<i>Diversity of skills</i>	75
5.8.1.4	<i>Gender balanced teams enable team cohesion</i>	76
5.8.2	Implications of NOT promoting gender-balanced leadership for corporates	76
5.8.2.1	<i>Loss on potential business and government incentives</i>	77
5.8.2.2	<i>Loss of diverse talent</i>	78
5.8.2.3	<i>Reach a plateau in strategic growth</i>	78
5.9	Conclusion on findings	79
Chapter 6:	Discussion of Results	80
6.1	Introduction	80
6.2	Discussion of Results for Research Question 1	80
6.2.1	The extent to which corporates are advancing women into executive and senior roles	80
6.2.2	Drivers for the advancement of women in corporate organisations	82
6.2.2.1	<i>Intentional (strategic objectives)</i>	82
6.2.2.2	<i>Legislative push</i>	83
6.2.2.3	<i>Both legislative and intentional</i>	83
6.2.3	Conclusion to Findings for Research Question 1	84
6.3	Discussion of Results for Research Question 2	85
6.3.1	Approaches being adopted by corporates towards the successful advancement of women into senior roles.....	85
6.3.2	Approaches adopted by corporates towards the advancement of women that yielded benefits.....	88
6.3.3	Conclusion to Findings for Research Question 2	89
6.4	Discussion of Results for Research Question 3	90
6.4.1	Factors that inhibit the promotion of women into executive and senior leadership roles	90
6.4.1.1	<i>Gender stereotyping and societal influence</i>	91
6.4.1.2	<i>Male domination</i>	91
6.4.1.3	<i>Self-limiting beliefs</i>	92



6.4.2 The attitudes of women in organisation’s when dealing with the factors that inhibit the promotion of women into leadership roles	93
6.4.2.1 <i>Defeatist attitudes</i>	93
6.4.2.2 <i>Ambitious</i>	94
6.4.3 Conclusion to Findings for Research Question 3	94
6.5 Discussion of Results for Research Question 4	95
6.5.1 Benefits for women	95
6.5.1.1 <i>Availability of role models</i>	95
6.5.1.2 <i>Support networks for women</i>	96
6.5.1.3 <i>Compassion and empathy</i>	97
6.5.2. Drawbacks for women	97
6.5.2.1 <i>Dual role of women as mothers (and wives)</i>	97
6.5.2.2 <i>Reluctance to promote other women (the “Queen Bee” syndrome)</i>	98
6.5.2.3 <i>Token appointments</i>	98
6.5.2.4 <i>Self-identity and individuality</i>	99
6.5.3 Conclusion to Findings for Research Question 4	100
6.6 Discussion of Results for Research Question 5	100
6.6.1 The benefits of promoting gender-balanced leadership for corporates	100
6.6.1.1 <i>Diverse way of thinking and decision making</i>	100
6.6.1.2 <i>Performance and delivery culture</i>	101
6.6.1.3 <i>Diversity of skills</i>	102
6.6.2 Implications for corporate performance	102
6.6.2.1 <i>Loss of potential business and government incentives</i>	103
6.6.2.2 <i>Loss of diversified talent</i>	103
6.6.2.3 <i>Reach a plateau in strategic growth</i>	104
6.6.3 Conclusion to Findings for Research Question 5	105
6.7 Conclusion	105
Chapter 7: Conclusion	106
7.1 Introduction	106
7.2 Synthesis of Research Findings	106
7.3 The model for the advancement of women into executive and senior roles.....	108
7.3.1 How the model for the advancement of women was developed	108
7.3.2 Explanation of the model for the advancement of women.....	109
7.4 Recommendations for Managers.....	110
7.5 Recommendations for Future Research.....	111
7.6 Research Limitations.....	112
References.....	113
Appendices.....	123
Appendix 1: Invitation to Participate in Research Study	123
Appendix 2: Consent Form	124
Appendix 3: Interview Guideline	126
Appendix 4: Ethical Clearance Letter.....	128

List of Figures

Figure 1: Gendered forces acting to reduce capital accumulation.....	29
Figure 2: Code creation over the course of data analysis.....	34
Figure 3: Data Analysis – Search Patterns in Data.....	40
Figure 4: Approaches that produced benefits	57
Figure 5: Effectiveness of the approaches adopted by corporate organisations	58
Figure 6: Implications for corporates.....	77
Figure 7: Summary of research findings for the effective approaches adopted by organisations	90
Figure 8: Inhibiting factors.....	95
Figure 9: The model for the advancement of women into executive and senior roles	109

List of Tables

Table 1: Sample description.....	36
Table 2: Research Questions and Interview Questions alignment	38
Table 3: Stages of analysis (codes to themes)	42
Table 4: Opinions on organisations’ approach to women advancement	46
Table 5: Drivers for organisations to advance women into senior roles	49
Table 6: Approaches adopted by corporate organisations	52
Table 7: Factors that inhibit the promotion of women into leadership roles.....	61
Table 8: Attitudes of women in response to factors that inhibit their promotion	65
Table 9: Benefits to women, of women advancement for women	66
Table 10: Drawbacks of the promotion of women.....	70
Table 11: The benefits of promoting gender-balanced leadership for corporates	73

Chapter 1: Introduction to the Research Problem

1.1 Introduction

Why so few female CEOs are leading major corporate organisations remains a widely debated topic globally in academic journals and in the daily press (Fitzsimmons, Callan, & Paulsen, 2014; Sandberg & O'Donnell, 2013; Hofmeyr & Mzobe, 2012; Acker, 2009). There are common discussions both globally and locally around the slow progress being made towards the advancement of women into senior roles within corporate organisations. In describing the slow progress, Klaus (2016) made the point that, 44 years after the first woman was appointed CEO of a Fortune 500 company, only 22 women hold the distinction of being Fortune 500 CEOs. Similarly, in a South African context, Hofmeyr and Mzobe (2012) confirmed this observation and stated that the progression of women into more senior roles in the public and private sectors continues to exist as a challenge facing corporate organisations.

In the case of South Africa, despite the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa in 1996 paving the way towards correcting inequalities and persistent discrimination in the South African labour market (Papacostantis & Mushariwa, 2016), the absence of female leaders at the top is evident with only 11.6% of CEO and chairmanship positions held by women (Businesswomen's Association of South Africa, 2015). To add to that, less than 4% of those women hold CEO positions in JSE listed companies (PWC, 2016), confirming the astonishingly low numbers of women leaders.

While women account for nearly half the labour force (Dworkin, Maurer, & Schipani, 2012), it is surprising that women with potential appear to progress slower than their male counterparts in respect of both career progression and pay. Organisations that do not pay attention to this serious lack of talent-management may face several potential issues such as the risk of lagging behind their competitors in attracting, growing and retaining the best employees who become the future generation of leaders. Furthermore, the scarcity of women in top positions may have severe implications for an organisation's competitiveness because of the benefits brought about by gender diversity (Dezsö & Ross, 2012).

Several arguments by researchers cite a range of causes for the slow progress of women into senior leadership positions. Some of these inhibiting factors are related to

gender bias and stereotypes, patriarchy in organisations and the attitudes of women themselves. Ely, Ibarra and Kolb (2011), and Latu, Mast, Lammers and Bombari (2013) highlighted the influence of second generation gender bias and stereotypes which undermine the performance of women in leadership versus intentional efforts to exclude women. They further pointed out that these biases purported that the likelihood of women being associated with leadership is less than that of men. In earlier research, Mathur-Helm (2005) indicated that patriarchy continues to exist in South African organisations which prevents women from advancing into top management and leadership roles in corporates. On the discussion of individual behaviours, McLean and Mina (2016) used the theory of planned behaviours which states that the individual intentions of individuals are, to a great extent, driven by the individual's attitudes. They further asserted that our world views play a role in influencing our perceptions of women in leadership regardless of whether we are male or female.

As argued by Robertson and Byrne (2016), there is an urgent need to address the current levels of gender imbalance, notably in senior management positions. As it appears from literature, there has been progress but it has been slow and appears to be static. The comparative absence of senior women leaders, particularly on company boards, means that women are persistently underutilised or are regarded as a wasted resource (Hofmeyr & Mzobe, 2012; Mathur-Helm, 2005). As a result, the absence of women in positions of authority has a negative impact on corporate performance and causes frustration for women (Hofmeyr & Mzobe, 2012). It is therefore important to question the approaches used by organisations and whether these have the potential to allow women to progress (Robertson & Byrne, 2016). Given that this topic is well researched, this current research aimed to build on work already done by focusing on the approaches adopted by companies that have succeeded in advancing women into leadership roles as well as to investigate the challenges faced by those companies that realise the importance of growing women into leadership roles but are not succeeding.

To this end, this research uncovered the realities around the lack of gender balanced teams at the top levels of organisations. The absence of women in leadership positions makes it difficult for women further down in organisations to progress. The presence of women leaders in organisations could benefit others as well as reduce the gender wage gap. When more women occupy leadership roles, other manifestations of gender discrimination are likely to be reduced (Acker, 2009). Dezsö & Ross (2012) believe that female leadership improves performance. They state that the implications of non-gender balanced teams have social and ethical implications. They posit that the

scarcity of women in top leadership positions may have implications for a corporate organisation's competitiveness because of the benefits brought about by gender diversity. The inclusion of women is believed to bring about improved information processing and decision making by teams (Dezsö & Ross, 2012).

1.2 Purpose

This research study aimed to critically interpret and reflect on the extent to which corporate organisations in South Africa have been able to advance women into senior leadership positions.

The business case for growing the female talent pipeline is clear-cut. It allows companies to: improve performance at all levels including the board; attract and retain a wide pool of talent; improve the organisation's productivity and bottom line; and achieve better corporate governance (PWC, 2016).

This led to the question – why are some companies succeeding in actively promoting women and others not?

The study explored some of the factors that drive the successes of those companies that have made progress towards the advancement of women. In addition, the study sought to understand the inhibiting factors faced by those companies that have not fully succeeded in advancing women into leadership roles. The potential implications for companies who still lack gender balanced leadership teams have been investigated.

1.3 Research Problem

There has been much debate about the factors that limit the ability of women to progress into executive roles as well the barriers that lead to decision makers viewing women as less capable leaders. Researchers cite different reasons for the inability of organisations to advance women into senior leadership roles. Fitzsimmons et al. (2014) conducted a comparative study into the career trajectories of male and female leaders into senior leadership roles such CEO positions. Their findings suggested that some factors, such as the intellectual segregation and treatment of gender and leadership as isolated fields of study, are largely to blame for the lack of integration of leadership. Through the use of a Bourdieusian conceptual framework, the study by Fitzsimmons et al. (2014) concluded that every field is characterised by the dominance of a group of powerful rule makers who only open up senior level opportunities to people who possess financial resources believed to be valuable to them or those whose life

experiences are similar to theirs.

Furthermore, Fitzsimmons and Callan (2016) argued that there are forces, which they referred to as “gendered” forces, that operate at various levels – societal, organisational and individual. They believed that these forces inhibit the accumulation of valuable career capital required for women to progress into senior executive roles.

The study sought to gain a deeper understanding of the approaches adopted by corporate organisations that have made strides towards the advancement of women into leadership roles in the context of the gendered forces highlighted by Fitzsimmons and Callan (2016). The study also sought to explore the forces that inhibit the progression of women into senior leadership roles in corporate organisations and discusses the implications for corporates who are not able to utilise their female talent fully. For the purposes of this study, executive and senior leadership roles were defined as CEO’s, business directors, executive managers, senior managers and general managers.

Given that the subjects of leadership and gender are treated in isolation globally and in South Africa, this study further sought to understand the integration between male and female leaders and the concept of gender-balanced leadership teams and whether a healthy balance between the two can bring positive results for corporate organisations. It has become a societal and business conundrum as to why women are underrepresented in leadership when several studies have shown that women in leadership positions have a positive impact on an organisation’s performance (Acker, 2009; Dezsö & Ross, 2012). This will be explored further.

1.4 Research Objectives

The objectives of this study were to establish the key challenges faced by corporate organisations and women who wish to advance into senior positions and how corporate organisations have progressed women into senior leadership roles. In addition, this study established new insights into how organisations can improve the advancement of women into senior leadership roles. The research aimed to:

1. establish the extent to which corporates have progressed towards the advancement of women into executive and senior leadership positions;

2. investigate the approaches adopted by corporates and identify which of those approaches have been the most impactful towards driving the advancement of women into leadership roles;
3. identify the key factors that inhibit the promotion of women into leadership roles and understand the attitudes of women towards these inhibiting factors;
4. understand the benefits or drawbacks to women of the promotion of women into senior leadership roles;
5. assess the benefits of promoting gender-balanced leadership and the implications of NOT promoting gender-balanced leadership for corporates.

The literature review in Chapter 2 focuses on the three gendered forces – societal, organisational and individual, which are identified by Fitzsimmons and Callan (2016) as a summary of forces that occur over the lifetime of females. These forces, depending on the context in which they are observed, can be described as positive and negative influences on the advancement of women into leadership roles. This research aimed to assist corporate organisations by providing a model that can be practically applied based on the current literature as well as insights gained from the research process.

The remainder of the report is outlined as follows: Chapter 3 covers the research questions which draw on themes that arose from the literature reviewed in Chapter 2 in addition to the purpose of the study explained in this chapter. Chapter 4 describes and provides the rationale for the chosen research methodology while Chapters 5 and 6 present the results and discussion of results respectively. In conclusion, Chapter 7 presents the model for the advancement of women, recommendations for managers and recommendations for future research.

Chapter 2: Literature review

2.1 Introduction

The literature reviewed provided a platform of past and contemporary established knowledge relating to the field of research. Having reviewed literature on the advancement of women into leadership roles, it was determined that there are three main forces that drive the advancement of women into leadership roles or the lack thereof. These forces are societal, organisational and individual, which Fitzsimmons and Callan (2016) described as having the ability to operate autonomously or in combination to exclude women from accessing the positions that would allow them to accumulate valuable capital. Fitzsimmons and Callan (2016) devised a framework which emphasised that valuable capital accumulation unlocks more opportunities for capital accumulation, that is, access to a promotion or more responsibility provides an environment to accumulate new capital and provides opportunities to develop, test and refine senior executives around the subjects of leadership, self-efficacy, strategy, integrity, acumen and stewardship. The literature presented assessed approaches used by organisations to advance women into senior leadership roles in the context of the three gendered forces and explained the inhibiting factors for the advancement of women in the same context.

2.2 Women in leadership

Globally, women graduates account for 50% to 60% of college and university graduates but the majority of leadership positions are held by their male counterparts (Dworkin, Maurer, & Schipani, 2012; European Commission, 2011; Shore, Rahman, & Tilley, 2014). According to McLean and Beigi (2016), worldviews influence the manner in which we see and react to the world with regards to women in leadership. They added that our anticipated and real behaviours, as well as the manner in which we appraise our own and others' performances are shaped by our worldviews. The theory of planned behaviour (Ajzen, 2014, p. 133) states that the behavioural intentions of individuals are a result of their attitudes. This is also true about women in leadership. The manner in which individuals perceive women in leadership roles is therefore largely influenced by our worldview which is dependent on our gender (McLean & Beigi, 2016). Although traditional male leadership still has a role in leadership, it is necessary to create more authentic leadership roles for both women and men working together as equal partners.

In exploring the leadership experiences of women globally, Latu et al. (2013) discussed the stereotypes and gender biases related to women in leadership roles. They argued that there are several stereotypes which undermine the performance of women in leadership tasks, one of which leads to the reality that women are less likely to be associated with leadership than men. This view is supported by Shore et al. (2014) who assert that there is a perception that women are less able to handle stress related to high powered jobs. These stereotypes are attributed to family, culture and gender biases that believe that leadership is purely a masculine trait and that males make better leaders (Shore et al., 2014; Hofmeyr & Mzobe, 2012).

2.3 Progress to date

On a global scale, several researchers agreed that, while women account for nearly half of the labour force in most parts of the world, the number of women in senior management roles remains unreasonably low (Dworkin et al., 2012; Bierema, 2016; Robertson & Byrne, 2016; Fitzsimmons & Callan, 2016; Adams, Gupta, & Leeth, 2009). Furthermore, women hold approximately 60% of bachelor's degrees yet only 14% of senior executive positions at Fortune 500 companies are held by women. These factors raise concerns of fair and equal opportunities (Korkki, 2011; Fitzpatrick & Rappaport, 2011). In Europe, for example, while women accounted for nine out every 20 workers (45.4%) in 2009, they represented less than a third (32.8%) of business leaders. Although the gender disparity appears to be narrowing over time, the rate is slow. In Europe alone, in the year 2000, female business leaders accounted for 30.7% of the workforce and, almost a decade later, there was only 32.8% female leadership (European Commission, 2011), a further indication of slow progress.

Gender disparity in employment continues to be one of the challenges faced by the African continent (Anyanwu & Augustine, 2013). In South Africa, women empowerment is largely about addressing the legacies of colonialism, apartheid and the transformation of society, particularly regarding issues of power between men, women, racialised institutions and laws (Statistics South Africa, 2015) as well as diverse cultures. The Millennium Development Goals (MDG) framework and process has afforded South Africa a good-faith chance to address development and transformation challenges around gender. Women and girls have also been allowed to “expand their choices” according to the UNDP definition (Statistics South Africa, 2015). To move forward, the successes of the country thus far need to be acknowledged and a way to leverage these successes going forward needs to be established.

It must be acknowledged that, despite sluggish progress globally, steady progress is being made by women rising into senior executive roles within corporates in some parts of the world, confirming the manifestation of cracks in the supposed glass ceiling (Adams et al., 2009). Women in developing countries have the highest figures of women in leadership roles particularly in the BRICS countries – Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa. In these areas, women account for 30 percent of senior leadership positions, a figure higher than the global average of 24 percent (Saab, 2014). More surprising is that none of these countries enforce compulsory legislation towards addressing the subject. The global leader is Russia with 43 percent of women in senior leadership. Other neighbouring countries, such as Estonia, Poland, and Georgia, boast 30 percent (Saab, 2014). According to Time Magazine, between 2012 and 2013, the number of women in senior leadership roles in China doubled from 25 percent to 51 percent (Saab 2014). At board level, the representation of women is said to have increased in 1995 from 9.6 percent to 16.9 percent in 2013 (Bierema, 2016), representing slow but steady progress.

In the South African context, Hofmeyr and Mzobe (2012) suggested that, while women have been able to rise beyond the stereotypes they face in organisations, at more senior levels, they encounter the glass ceiling.

Glass ceiling is a representation of barriers that obstruct women from opportunities of advancement in the work place (Acker, 2009).

Are corporates moving towards the advancement of women into leadership positions? The statistics suggest that there has been some progress in ensuring female leadership and political involvement is mobilised. South Africa ranks amongst the top in the world when it comes to the representation of women in legislative assemblies and political participation (Statistics South Africa, 2015). However, there is no doubt that women are still significantly underrepresented in organisations. Of greater concern is that the issues that have emerged in research over the past twenty years still appear to be the same issues that hold women back today and that little progress has taken place (Hofmeyr & Mzobe, 2012). While there have been great strides in the public sector in South Africa, it must be said that a lot of work still needs to be done in the private sector to ensure the glass ceiling is breached (Statistics South Africa, 2015; RobecoSAM AG, 2015).

2.4 Key inhibiting factors of the advancement of women

Globally, women are progressing into executive roles in small numbers and at a slow pace. Analysis revealed that women are faced with greater barriers to advancement and a more difficult path to senior leadership. A study by Lean In & McKinsey & Company (2015) revealed that, in the corporate pipeline in 2012, only 16% of most senior executive positions were held by women. Three years later, in 2015, there was only a 1% improvement with women representing only 17% of leaders in the most senior executive positions. The study further revealed that women are not advancing at similar rates to men with the expected representation of women being 15 percent lower than that of men.

Fitzsimmons and Callan (2016) argued that gendered forces operating at societal, organisation and individual levels are the inhibiting forces for the accumulation of valuable career capital. These forces limit the ability of women to accumulate the capital required to progress into executive roles. Career capital is defined as the value derived from ongoing improvement in one's career and the acknowledgement of the competitive nature of both the external and internal labour markets (Lamb & Sutherland, 2010).

From the literature reviewed and based on the preliminary framework devised by Fitzsimmons and Callan (2016), three core themes were identified as being forces that influence the advancement of women into senior leadership roles across various corporate spheres or limit the accumulation of career capital required for women to advance into senior roles, these are:

- Societal factors
- Organisational factors
- Individual factors

These themes will be discussed below.

2.4.1 Societal factors

2.4.1.1 Early life experiences

Gendered behaviour is developed during the early childhood or adolescent years of a human being and this behaviour is largely acquired from interpretations of societal norms (Martin, 2013; Fitzsimmons & Callan, 2016). There are differences in the

upbringing of girls and boys with a plethora of researchers believing that boys are given opportunities to take risks, act independently and to succeed more than girls. This encourages self-confidence and risk taking for males later on in life (Pallier, 2003; Sutter & Glätzle-Rützler, 2014; Andersen et al., 2013; Martin, 2013) giving men an advantage when competing. This leaves women with less confidence and low self-esteem later on in life, more so in a work context.

Another example of factors that contribute to the early career development of men is that, traditionally, boys play contact team sports which are believed to encourage resilience, strategic thinking, leadership as well as understanding the importance of developing social skills (Gould & Carson, 2008). From an early age, gendered contexts are already created by societal-level effects in children. The “pink and blue” decisions endorsed by societal norms and made by families and schools should be carefully considered as they ultimately create differentiated gender levels of valuable capital (Fitzsimmons & Callan, 2016). These decisions may appear non-consequential, but they can have lasting consequences on the ability of women to access opportunities for capital growth.

2.4.1.2 Social expectations and gender congeniality

The categorisation of people by masculinity or femininity provides the basis for the classification of “others”. This kind of behaviour is socially constructed, induces mental associations and is learned (Fitzsimmons & Callan, 2016). In addition, this sex categorisation accompanied by gender stereotyping encompasses beliefs that shape the behaviours of these gender groups towards one another. As such, this ongoing stereotype associates management with being male and may lead to decision makers viewing women as less capable and competent leaders than men (Glass & Cook, 2016).

Another dynamic brought about by gender stereotyping is the belief that girls are not good enough at science, technology, engineering and maths subjects (STEM). This negatively influences the choices made by girls in high school; often making girls doubt their own abilities to perform in these subjects (Else-Quest & Mineo, 2013). Avoiding these subjects at high school level already precludes them from having a fair chance to compete in industry and other roles that could potentially provide an assortment of opportunities. Furthermore, girls miss out on opportunities to develop their capital accumulation around leadership and strategic decision making roles (Fitzsimmons & Callan, 2016).

Desai, Chugh and Brief (2014) posit that societal models influence the behaviour of organisations as well as the actions of married men whose wives stay at home. They suggested that, because of this, these men may disfavour women in the workplace implying that, on average, all married men could potentially make decisions that are detrimental to the advancement of women into senior leadership roles. To add to this, cultural stereotypes often lead to men being appointed into senior leadership roles over women thereby limiting the potential valuable capital that could be accumulated by women (Fitzsimmons & Callan, 2016). This phenomenon is similar to those instances where organisations are caused by societal-level factors to appoint women into roles that are perceived to be softer roles that are often associated with support functions. This often limits women's access to portfolios that may be considered tough.

2.4.2 Organisational factors

2.4.2.1 Role conflict

Amongst the problems faced by women and their perceived ability to manage in senior roles, are the pressures associated with the roles themselves as well as the perceived inability of women to meet these pressures (Fitzsimmons & Callan, 2016). Shore et al. (2014) concur with these views by stating that there is a perception that stress related to high powered jobs is more difficult for women to handle than their male counterparts. Leadership is viewed as a masculine trait in most cultures with the perception that males make better leaders. In a way, this barrier is related to culture influence, family and gender biases as well negative labelling. This behaviour and the stereotyping of women's roles, according to Farrington (2012), may lead to reduced female performance or even prevent women from positions that are traditionally perceived to be dominated by males.

Although social capital can be viewed as essential to the advancement of one's career, it tends to be a barrier for women's advancement into senior leadership roles. This is because, typically, networking happens after hours or requires longer hours at work or even travel (Fitzsimmons et al., 2014). This may disadvantage women when accumulating valuable career capital and gaining access to opportunities because their participation in social networks may be limited due to the additional responsibilities that women have in the home. The peak of women's careers also often coincides with having children or supporting their families. Most women exit the labour force during this time making the need for flexibility in the workplace a key factor for increasing the accumulation of career capital (Fitzsimmons & Callan, 2016).

2.4.2.2 Access to mentoring

Research conducted by Hofmeyr and Mzobe (2012) cited the need for coaching and mentoring as missing elements for women trying to progress into senior roles within corporate organisations. One in four respondents in the study by Hofmeyr and Mzobe (2012) indicated the need for such support and less than half revealed that their companies had such programmes in place. The reasons cited for the need for mentoring was to assist junior females to grow by providing guidance, giving advice, sharing information and providing support. Women felt that it was necessary for women themselves to help each other to succeed in the corporate world.

Several other challenges associated with mentoring emerged from the literature. It was revealed that mentoring poses problems particularly if a desired mentor is male because male mentors may be reluctant to mentor females for fear of sexual harassment claims (Dworkin et al., 2012; Fitzsimmons & Callan, 2016). Some roles, particularly those that were previously male dominated, require interactions between males and females, particularly if valuable capital must be transferred, and may be impacted by these fears. This reality results in a limited development and improvement of valuable capital in women that male mentors may provide (Dworkin et al., 2012; Fitzsimmons & Callan, 2016).

2.4.2.3 Flexibility in the workplace

Over the years, women have to come to accept their dual roles as mothers (and/or wives) and leaders and are comfortable balancing these roles. However, there are societal issues at play that may leave women feeling guilty for pursuing their careers. In some instances, organisations are unable to provide family-friendly environments which could assist women to thrive in an enabling environment and help minimise their guilt about not being able to meet their family demands (Eagly, 2007). Other researchers cited the need to integrate the organisational and family needs to overcome this barrier (Hofmeyr & Mzobe, 2012).

For women, being the primary caregiver of children means they may be associated with a greater number of sick days or time away from work than their male counterparts. This means that some women are only given access to roles that require less responsibility, resulting in slower career progression. In addition to slower progression, women who find themselves in these situations are subjected to poorly paying jobs as the motherhood role is seen by some organisations as a motherhood

issue. The decision making around the flexible working arrangements of women is, to a large extent, a cultural factor. The workplace culture explains the gaps between the flexibility of policies in organisations and their implementation. The old belief that employees are to be seen at work to prove effectiveness is another factor that influences the policy makers around flexible working hours (Fitzsimmons & Callan, 2016).

2.4.2.4 Selection and promotion bias

Generally, women have to wait much longer than men for promotion at all stages of their careers with the gap increasing more at senior levels (Fitzsimmons & Callan, 2016). Confirmation of gender bias in promotion is supported by an experiment by Koch, D'Mello and Sackett (2015) where the aim of the study was to measure hiring intentions based on performance. Performance was measured against promotion and while women scored higher on job performance than men, men scored higher on potential for promotion. When further investigation was done in order to understand the difference in scoring, it emerged that males often imposed what may have been unconscious casual criteria associated with the social characteristics of those on the panel. This happened habitually during assessments for roles that were typically in male industries where panel members were mostly male (Koch et al., 2015).

2.4.2.5 Direct and indirect discrimination

Discrimination in the workplace presents in many different forms with evidence suggesting that it is still prevalent (Holland & Cortina, 2013). There is evidence that gender discrimination is a factor that inhibits the advancement of women into leadership roles (Hofmeyr & Mzobe, 2012), in particular, in male dominated industries such as mining, engineering and construction. Discrimination has negative consequences such as lower job satisfaction, disengagement, exclusion of women from key functions and decreased productivity (Fitzsimmons & Callan, 2016). In some cases, the pressures placed on women by stereotyping and blatant discrimination may lead to women overcompensating or totally withdrawing due to fear of rejection (Hofmeyr & Mzobe, 2012).

2.4.2.6 The glass cliff

Brückmuller and Branscombe (2010) looked into circumstances under which women achieve leadership positions, despite the glass ceiling. Their findings suggested that women are more likely to obtain leadership positions when those positions are

associated with crises and a higher risk of failure. This phenomenon is termed “the glass cliff” which is explained as “the likelihood of women achieving board positions that are associated with a state of crisis and a high risk for failure” (Mulcahy & Linehan, 2014, p. 426). Research by Mulcahy and Linehan (2014) also examined the underrepresentation of women on corporate boards and the causes of the glass cliff. Their study warned against the belief that the improved numbers of women appearing on boards meant that the issue of the advancement of women has been dealt with suggesting that, even when the glass ceiling cracks, there are still remaining gender dynamics that prevent opportunities for women.

2.4.3 Individual factors

2.4.3.1 Experiences of leadership and personality dispositions

Gender differences in leadership styles have been examined extensively with varied findings. While there may be subtle but consistent differences between men and women in the workplace, on the whole, the genders do not differ much in their leadership styles (Fitzsimmons & Callan, 2016). Literature reviewed attempted to understand the differences in leadership styles between men and women. Evidence presented by Shore et al. (2014) shows partial evidence of gender differences in leadership behaviours of men and women but their findings suggest that women tend to use more authoritarian leadership styles than men. They also suggest that women often take decisions in isolation, particularly decisions that relate to the setting of objectives. Fitzsimmons and Callan (2016), on the other hand, were of the view that women take a more democratic approach to leadership than men do. They further used other leadership effectiveness measures (adopted from the five transformational leadership behaviours), such as transformational and contingent leadership, suggesting that women outperformed men in these areas of leadership but consistently scored low on the area of inspirational motivation. It appears therefore that there cannot be a single measure of leadership that fits all personalities whether male or female.

Perceptions of how men and women should behave are influenced by gender stereotypes. According to the social role theory, the role of gender can be categorised in two ways: the female communal role which is likely to involve a nurturing, kind and supportive nature and the male dictating role which is associated with control, strong authority as well as demanding behaviour (Cenkci & Özçelik, 2015). The same views were held by other researchers who confirmed that leadership is often viewed as a

masculine trait in many cultures, creating the perception that males make better leaders (Shore et al., 2014). The continuous stereotypes against women may lead women to believe that they are not good enough or suited for positions that are traditionally perceived to be male dominant (Farrington, 2012). As a result, women tend to alter their personalities by hiding their femininity in order to be more masculine if they are negatively perceived to be too feminine (Fitzsimmons et al., 2014; Ely et al., 2011) leading them to lose their authenticity.

2.4.3.2 Role models

Several researchers cited a lack of role models for women as a barrier towards the advancement of women into senior roles (Ely et al., 2011; Hofmeyr & Mzobe, 2012; Latu et al., 2013; Fitzsimmons & Callan, 2016; Beaman, Duflo, Pande, & Topalova, 2012). A natural experiment performed in India indicated that the presence of females in leadership has a significant influence on adolescent girls' career ambitions and educational achievements. In villages where a female leader was assigned, the experiment found that the gender gap in educational achievement was closed with girls spending less time doing household chores (Beaman et al., 2012). Individuals learnt new roles through identifying with role models and experimenting with makeshift identities using internal company standards and external feedback. This means that the scarcity of senior women leaders in the workplace leaves women with fewer role models to identify with (Ely et al., 2011) posing a serious barrier towards the advancement of these women into senior roles.

In other leadership domains, some women are said to be threatened by highly successful female role models especially in cases where women had to self-evaluate. They often presented with behaviour characterised by low self-evaluation, a lower level of aspiration in pursuing leadership roles and feelings of inferiority (Latu et al., 2013). Yet exceptions to these findings exist, according to Asgari, Dasgupta and Stout (2012) who explained that some female role models inspire women but only when the role model and the participant have commonalities. The study by Beaman et al. (2012) suggested that, while young girls were influenced by role models in changing attitudes towards education, there was no evidence of influence or changes in young women's labour market opportunities, suggesting that the impact of women leaders seemingly reflects a role model effect. The role model effect was described by Pereira (2012) as the influence and change in awareness that results from parents and teenagers being

persuaded by seeing women in charge. This change in perception gives hope to young girls and has an impact on reality.

2.4.3.3 Division of domestic labour

According to Groyberg and Abrahams (2014), there continues to be an imbalance in the sharing of domestic duties in the home between men and women. Women still take on twice as much domestic responsibility than their male counterparts and also focus more of their energy on raising children than men do. These and other factors limit the career growth and access to opportunities for women. In addition, there are some workplace norms that require after hours work that women often cannot participate in due to their parenting responsibilities. Those who do participate are left feeling guilty and doubting their parenting capabilities (Fitzsimmons & Callan, 2016). This imbalance in the sharing of household duties leaves women at a disadvantage in the ability to advance into more senior roles. Spouses need to jointly acknowledge their parental duties and, if these duties were shared fairly, women would benefit from participating more actively in the work place and stand a chance of getting opportunities to advance into senior roles (Hofmeyr & Mzobe, 2012).

2.4.3.4 Assertion/self-confidence

Women, according to Streifel (2015), are said to perceive themselves as having limited power. Furthermore, other factors such as gender stereotyping, lack of mentoring and lack of access to networking opportunities result in emotional and psychological impacts on women which leaves them with feelings of self-doubt and a lack of confidence (Hofmeyr & Mzobe, 2012). The comparative lack of confidence in women is well documented in literature and Sturm, Taylor, Atwater and Braddy (2014) emphasised that the lack of self-worth and self-confidence in women is, to a certain extent, to blame for the lost opportunities to develop career capitals around strategy, stewardship and leadership that women encounter.

Cultural beliefs about gender are also a factor that inhibits the advancement of women in corporate organisations. Ibarra and Petriglieri (2016) explained that the term “Impossible selves” is used to describe cultural prescriptions related to behaviour and leadership identity that junior females may find impossible to achieve. They argued that cultural beliefs, such as patterns and practices of interaction and well as workplace structures, unconsciously favour men therefore impeding women from living up to

these cultural prescriptions. Women are often left with feelings of self-doubt and a lack of self-worth leading to their reluctance to take up challenging senior roles.

2.5 Approaches to the advancement of women

Literature revealed that there are several approaches that can be adopted by corporates in order to successfully advance women into leadership roles. Hofmeyr and Mzobe (2012) revealed that there were a few exceptions that stood out as solutions for corporates given by a group of women who were surveyed. The approaches suggested were leadership development programmes; flexible work-life balance; employment equity (experience and education); coaching and mentorship (education); support networks for women and socialisation. In addition, the Women's Leadership Institute (WLI) (2015) designed and tested a model that would distinguish the different formal and informal approaches taken in order to advance women into leadership roles. Formal approaches were driven by policies that identified leadership training, objective recruitment, performance management and advancement plans. Informal approaches were identified as being the provision of job challenges, enabling an inclusive culture, mentoring and coaching and the development of external networks.

Although this model was devised by WLI, several other authors shared similar views. Robertson and Byrne (2016) emphasised the importance of using mentorship or sponsorship to encourage the advancement of females into leadership roles. In addition, they highlighted the importance of recognising work flexibility as a business advantage. More importantly, they emphasised the value of normalising this advantage across the organisation and using it as an enabler rather than tailoring it to suit a specific gender. Additionally, Hofmeyr and Mzobe (2012) pointed out the importance of initiatives such as coaching and mentorship programmes, flexible work environments, support networks for women, education and training and socialisation. The literature reviewed sought to explore possible approaches that could be considered by corporate organisations for the advancement of women into senior leadership roles.

2.5.1 Professional identities and leadership development programmes

In their research, Ely et al. (2011) conceptualised leadership development as identity work and, by outlining leadership development, they discovered the dynamics of gender which play a role in making a leader. According to a theory by DeRue and Ashford (2010), creating and internalising a leader identity is key to the process of becoming a leader. They suggested that women's progress may be impeded by

pervasive yet understated forms of gender bias which tend to obstruct the identity work required by women to assume leadership roles. Given this context, Ely et al. (2011) provided a theoretical rationale for separating women into women-only groups to teach them leadership through leadership development programmes that are designed to increase the likelihood of women advancing into senior leadership roles. Despite the fact that Ely et al. (2011) recommended the separation of women, it is also important to include men given that men are part of the workforce and can potentially provide different perspectives to some of the issues currently faced by both women and organisations towards the advancement of women into leadership roles. This would provide for an integrated learning platform.

Typically, individuals who get nominated for leadership development programmes are those who have proven leadership potential. Leaders, or those who nominate candidates for such programmes, do so with the expectation that these programmes will facilitate the transitions of these individuals into senior leadership roles (Ely et al., 2011). Transitions that are successful involve the participants losing their professional identities that are not suitable for the role and developing newer, more fitting identities (Ibarra & Petriglieri, 2016). Nevertheless, people often have conflicting feelings about leaving the safety of the roles in which they have done extremely well and, as a result, have a difficult time shedding their unwanted professional identities (Ely et al., 2011).

When people lose their professional identities to become leaders, they must attend leadership development programmes which, according to Ely et al. (2011), are held to prepare leaders by allowing them to share their experiences and doubts about the required changes in identity. Some women, however, choose to retain their image and identity and create a leader identity that will enable them to remain authentic as well as avoid disapproval from colleagues and clients (Ibarra & Petriglieri, 2016).

In South Africa, Hofmeyr and Mzobe (2012) conducted research to find possible solutions to the leadership advancement challenges faced by women. They found that only 54% of respondents said that their companies offered leadership development programmes, showing that there remains a need for leadership development programmes to be implemented in more companies. Twenty-one percent of respondents mentioned leadership development programmes as a solution for the advancement of women into leadership roles (Hofmeyr & Mzobe, 2012).

2.5.2 Flexible work-life balance

The subject of work-life balance is highly controversial and gender is a variable in research on work-life balance. While issues of family-work conflict impact both genders, literature efforts are mostly around women (Adame, Caplliure, & Miquel, 2016). Research by Hofmeyr and Mzobe (2012) discovered that some women valued flexible working hours and believed that the work/life balance could provide a solution to the slow progression of women into senior roles. In spite of this, only 10% of the respondents felt that this was a necessity, suggesting that most women were comfortable and had accepted their dual roles as mothers and wives as well as leaders.

At the same time, Adame et al. (2016) believed that women struggle because of the multiple roles they play. They believe that family commitments are one of the biggest obstacles for women's career advancement. Similarly Ely et al. (2011) believed that women have more negotiations to deal with in the work place and often have to break through gendered structures such as negotiating flexible work arrangements which is an indication of how difficult it is for working mothers to succeed or advance.

Despite the low percentage of women who indicated the need for flexible working hours, it would still be advantageous for organisations to provide flexibility for women and allow them the opportunity to do well both at home and at work. Several researchers refer to this as a family-friendly policy which could ease the lives of women and allow them to thrive at work as well as minimise the level of guilt about not being able to meet all of their family obligations (Hofmeyr & Mzobe, 2012; International Labour Organisation, 2016). South Africa has endorsed positive policies that include laws on flexible working hours and other codes of conduct and revised working practices to support family-friendly policies and encourage work-family balance particularly for women in the domestic and labour markets (Statistics South Africa, 2015).

2.5.3 Access to coaching and mentorship

The term "mentor" dates back to Greek mythology and describes

a relationship between a younger adult and an older, more experienced adult [who] helps the younger individual learn to navigate the adult world and the world of work (Allen, Eby, Poteet, Lentz, & Lima, 2004, p. 127).

Mentoring is one of the key drivers for women to advance into senior roles such as CEO roles (Allen et al., 2004; Rosser, 2005). According to Kram (as cited in Fitzsimmons & Callan, 2016), mentoring can be categorised into two distinct functions: career development and psychosocial functions. Career development functions are those that include “coaching, sponsorship, exposure, protection and the provision of challenging career assignments” (Fitzsimmons & Callan, 2016), while the psychosocial functions are those that comprise “encouragement, friendship, advice, feedback, helping individuals develop a sense of competence, confidence and effectiveness” (Fitzsimmons & Callan, 2016).

Dworkin et al. (2012) added that the best way to get around organisational barriers is to engage in targeted mentoring programs. Several studies, such as the Pathway Study, acknowledged mentoring as a path that can be used effectively to advance to top levels of the organisation. They suggested that mentoring relationships are more successful if the relationship is established in the early years of women’s careers. Women with potential must be identified and paired with a suitable mentor with the understanding that the mentoring relationship lasts for a minimum of two years. Face-to-face contact between mentor and mentee needs to be facilitated and training for the mentor and mentee is required on how to relate with each other in order to maximise the relationship, particularly in the case of different genders.

There is a strong belief that mentoring is more beneficial for the progression of women than it is for men (Fitzsimmons & Callan, 2016). Mentoring provides several benefits that include promotion decisions, career advancement, job satisfaction and increased salary (Dworkin et al., 2012; Fitzsimmons & Callan, 2016; Allen, Lentz, & Day Rachel, 2006). The benefits of having female role models are that they encourage other women to advance into senior roles thereby improving self-efficacy, overcoming the barriers associated with leading as a woman and increasing leadership capital (Dworkin et al., 2012).

Dworkin et al. (2012) argued that a mentor should have influence within the organisation. Women should also be allowed the opportunity to choose their own mentors, where possible, to overcome their lack of networks within the organisations (Dworkin et al., 2012).

2.5.4. Support networks for women

It is a well-known phenomenon that the existence of an informal network could be the key to opportunities in leadership and can shape the development process of individuals (Ely et al., 2011). In their research, Hofmeyr and Mzobe (2012) found that women consider support networks to be beneficial for the advancement of females in corporate organisations. They stated that networks create an enabling environment in which they can share experiences and ideas. At least 25% of the respondents of Hofmeyr and Mzobe's (2012) research considered this to be a solution. Ely et al. (2011) also found that informal networks have an important role to play in becoming a leader. Informal networks can shape a career course by generating access to jobs, focusing information flow, referrals, building a reputation, providing protection, political advice and support and increasing the prospects and rate of advancement (Ely et al., 2011). This happens in South Africa through organisations such as Business Women's Association and Destiny Connect that offer women leadership workshops that expose them to role models from various industries who are willing to share their experiences thereby empowering the women (Hofmeyr & Mzobe, 2012).

2.5.5 Socialisation

Given the extensive discussion in section 2.4.1.1 on the early life experiences and the factors that drive gender differences in respect of competitiveness, it is obvious that senior level positions entail competitiveness. Andersen et al. (2013) provided an explanation for gender wage gaps as well as career choices, which begs the question whether women are born less competitive or does socialisation have a role to play in women becoming less competitive? In their study to establish the origins of differences in competitiveness, however, Andersen et al. (2013) found that there is no difference in the early childhood years and that girls only become less competitive than boys when they reach puberty.

Martin (2013) described gender socialisation as the process through which children engage in learning about the social attitudes, behaviours and expectations linked to gender, that is, "knowing whether they are a boy or girl" (Martin, 2013). Early exposure from various sources of socialisation such as parents, other children and siblings has instant consequences on the attitudes of children. For example, children may start at any early age to favour members of their own gender group in their attitudes and, in some cases, display discriminatory behaviour towards members of the opposite gender. While children make their own choices of who to interact with and develop

skills to interrelate with members of their own gender, it is important for adults to provide environments for children to play in mixed-gender groups in order to encourage constructive interpersonal interactions between boys and girls who come from a range of backgrounds (Hofmeyr & Mzobe, 2012; Martin, 2013). Other societal institutions such as schools and churches can play an active role in changing the mentalities that societies have become accustomed to, for example, that a woman's place is in the kitchen and not in the boardroom as well as stereotypes that believe that men make better leaders than women (Hofmeyr & Mzobe, 2012).

The implications for gender socialisation in the work place were highlighted by Abdullah, Ismail and Nachum (2014). They suggested that, even in a corporate setting, females are subject to prejudiced assessments by the market (society) which results in them being underrepresented and undervalued on boards (Abdullah et al., 2014).

2.6 Potential benefits and drawbacks to the advancement of women

2.6.1 Benefits

Although recent academic research and business media believe that women make better leaders than men because of their relational and cooperative natures, academic literature about this "female advantage" in leadership is mixed (Post, 2015). Post (2015) revealed that there is no evidence of differences in cooperative learning, cohesion and participative communication between teams led by men or women, however, Post's (2015) study showed that context plays a critical role in the relationship between the genders of the leader and the quality of team interactions and relationships. Post (2015) also revealed that teams may realise benefits from female leadership in the areas of cohesion, cooperative learning and inclusive communication especially when there is a need for coordination, for example, when teams are larger, functionally different or dispersed geographically. Dezső and Ross (2012) further asserted that the inclusion of women improves information processing and decision making of teams. Post (2015) posited that the quality of the relationships between team members is improved under female leadership thus reducing the bias in the evaluation of the "female advantage" in leadership.

While this research focused largely on the relationship between the gender of leaders and team cohesion, further research suggested that participative and cooperative team norms enable team performance (Savelsbergh, Gevers, Van der Heijden, & Poell,

2012) which could explain why some studies confirmed that it is positively linked to team performance and innovation (Savelsbergh et al., 2012).

A study by Zenger Folkman (2011) sought to explore differences in competencies and, while there is a bias that females are better at nurturing competencies such as relationship building and developing others, the study revealed otherwise. Instead, the results of the study showed that there were bigger differences between males and females in the areas of taking initiative, displaying integrity and honesty, self-development and driving for results. To this end, it is evident that there is value in having females promoted into senior leadership roles as the competencies of both male and female leaders are brought out to build an inclusive integrated team.

2.6.2 Drawbacks

While there are evidently more benefits towards the advancement of women into senior roles, there are a few drawbacks for societies, organisations and women themselves (both leaders and juniors). These are discussed below:

Derks, Van Laar and Ellemers (2016) introduced the concept of the “Queen Bee” phenomenon whereby women in leadership roles integrate into organisations that are predominantly male led and distance themselves from other women who are lower in the organisational hierarchy than themselves. These women are perceived to be protecting their territories (Phakathi, 2016) which legitimises gender inequality in organisations. Derks et al. (2016) attributed the Queen Bee phenomenon to gender discrimination and a social identity threat experienced by women in their organisations.

On a societal level, gender inequality is rife and the Queen Bee phenomenon is said to perpetuate gender inequality and negative stereotypes against women even further. As Derks et al. (2016) explained, the Queen Bee phenomenon allows societies and the media to conclude that women are to blame for their inferior outcomes. Societies tend to use the Queen Bee phenomenon to prove that it is the rivalry between women and not an unjust system that causes women to limit the career growth opportunities of their junior counterparts. In a study performed by Eagly (2007), there was evidence that, in some leadership positions, women faced more obstacles than men as a result of being treated differently to men by societies. Eagly (2007) conducted several national polls that were aimed at understanding the attitudes of male and female leaders. When asked the question “If you were taking a new job and had your choice of a boss, would you prefer to work for a man or woman?” over a number of years, respondents

consistently showed preference for male bosses over female bosses. Given the findings of several researchers regarding the Queen Bee phenomenon, it is considered one of the most powerful factors that contribute to limiting opportunities for women in the workplace as well as preserving gender inequality in societies. However, the Queen Bee phenomenon must not be used as an excuse to distract from the real issue, which is a lack of opportunities for women and the difficult work situations which lead them to Queen Bee behaviour in the first place (Derks et al., 2016).

There are several benefits of improving gender diversity at all levels in the workplace in order to leverage the diverse perspectives brought about by men and women in leadership roles (Post, 2015). The consequences of gender inequality, such as the Queen Bee syndrome, for organisations is that women feel that, in order to be accepted, they need to adjust themselves to fit the masculine culture of their organisations (Derks et al., 2016). Some women who wish to remain authentic struggle with this and find themselves not wanting to take up senior roles because they believe that they are unlikely to contribute meaningfully in a diverse way. The attempt of women to behave like their male counterparts may lead to organisations discontinuing their gender equality policies because they do not recognise the value of the different perspectives brought about by having female leaders (Derks et al., 2016). While several researchers' studies, such as the one by Eagly (2007), revealed preferences of male leaders over female leaders, a follow up poll by Eagly (2007) discovered that 43 percent of the respondents, when asked about their choice between male and female leaders, gave the egalitarian response of "no preference" or "it doesn't matter". Corporate organisations therefore need to assess their organisational culture and align it to their gender diversity policies in order to achieve the desired outcomes of gender equality.

To a large extent, women in leadership roles face more resistance and less support than their male counterparts. More so, those women tend to adopt behaviour that is not congruent with their gender roles (Eagly, 2007), also known as "Queen Bees" (Derks et al., 2016). While the Queen Bee syndrome contributes to the promotion of women into senior leadership, it was found that senior women, who did not distance themselves from other women in order to succeed, received more support from their female subordinates than Queen Bees did. This is because of a belief of low status groups that they must only support a leader who is actively engaged and supportive of the low status groups (Van Laar, Bleeker, Ellemers, & Meijer, 2014). This may cause less optimal work conditions for female leaders than their male counterparts. In addition,

because some female leaders distance themselves from other women, they fail to benefit from the psychological support brought about by identifying with other women (Derks et al., 2016).

As a result of the lack of visibility of some senior female leaders to their junior counterparts, more junior women in organisations may discard their career ambitions and miss out on opportunities. This has the following repercussions: firstly, senior women who display gender stereotypes can significantly influence the careers of junior women because their stereotypical evaluations will be deemed to be credible. These negative evaluations of other women may lead to damaging the self-confidence of junior women leading them to fear taking up potential opportunities. Moreover, junior women may become disheartened because they expect senior women to act in their best interests (Ely et al., 2011; Derks et al., 2016). Secondly, junior women, particularly in male dominated environments, need female role models (Ely et al., 2011; Beaman et al., 2012; Latu et al., 2013; Fitzsimmons & Callan, 2016). However, women in lower levels of the organisation rate stereotypical senior women as poor role models who do not reflect a true representation of women as a group and are perceived to be more difficult to work with (Derks et al., 2016). This lack of support for junior women by senior women may leave them demoralised and, instead of being inspired, they perceive upward movement in organisations as unachievable and unattractive (Derks et al., 2016).

2.7 Gender-balanced teams and corporate performance

An organisation's behaviour and performance are a direct reflection of the function of its top management team – the team that makes important strategic decisions for the organisation therefore improving the task performance of this team should improve the overall performance of the company (Dezsö & Ross, 2012). In their research, Dezsö and Ross (2012) crafted a theoretical model to explain how female representation in top management contributes informational and social diversity benefits as well as managerial task performance which ultimately improves organisational performance.

Larkin, Bernardi and Bosco (2012) supported this argument by highlighting further benefits of gender diversity such as women's understanding of the complexities of an organisation. They stated that women are able to bring different insights into the boardroom and often represent the diversity of the company's consumer base. For companies in which innovation contributes significantly to the strategy, it was

highlighted through research that having female representation in senior leadership was beneficial. This was as a result of the nurturing, cooperative nature of the feminine management style (Dezsö & Ross, 2012; Zenger Folkman, 2011). Organisations with diverse boards outperformed their peers in respect of overall performance (Larkin et al., 2012).

2.7.1 Women and economic performance

The main objective behind the operations of a business is to earn a profit and increase shareholder value. Positive governance plays a role towards influencing investors (Larkin et al., 2012) with investors willing to pay more for firms with effective corporate governance policies (Carter, Simkins, & Simpson, 2003; Nekhili & Gatfaoui, 2013). Carter et al. (2003) further suggested that there is a correlation between a diverse board and shareholder value and that reputation drives the investment decisions of individuals. On the other hand, Tatton (2016) pointed out that investors in publicly listed companies may be averse however recent performance results from companies led by female CEOs indicated that those fears were unsubstantiated. Research further suggested that the share price performance of an organisation was largely associated with its corporate reputation (Nekhili & Gatfaoui, 2013).

Increasing shareholder value comes with expectations such as ethical considerations with many organisations acknowledging that this could prove difficult in the context of acting in a socially responsible manner while still realising high profits (Larkin et al., 2012). Findings by Tsoutsoura (2004) indicated that having more women on company boards positively impacted the social responsibility behaviours of organisations. Dezsö and Ross (2012), on the other hand, pointed out that, while diversity can sometimes cause problems with communication in cases where it is excessive, this is unlikely to be the case with gender diversity because most teams are moving towards a more balanced gender mix. They added that diversity may negatively impact social cohesion, however these discomforts need not imply poor performance but instead they are associated with superior decision making which can be brought about by diversity.

Companies that have greater gender diversity on their boards generally look aggressive; they tend to outperform when markets are falling, deliver higher average returns through the cycle while exhibiting less volatility in earnings and typically have lower gearing ratios (Galbreath, 2011). Galbreath (2011) further posited that companies with a great number of female directors have a better chance of having influence in the oversight of investor funds and ensuring there is a reduction in conflicts

of interest between managers and shareholders. Another supporting view was presented by Gul, Srinidhi and Ng (2011) who stated that gender diverse boards stimulated organisations to improve the disclosure of their corporate data. This, in turn, positions the company to maximise economic performance (Galbreath, 2011).

While research by Bernardi, Bosco and Columb (2009) found that corporate organisations that had higher percentages of women on their boards had a better chance of being on the 100 best companies to work for and be named most ethical companies, their research failed to associate female directors and listings with financial performance.

2.7.2 Leadership styles of women in a mixed gender environment

Latu et al. (2013) defined the gender leadership predicament by stating that women are less likely to be associated with leadership than men as a result of a stereotype which weakens the performance of women in leadership tasks. Despite this claim, Glass and Cook (2016) believed that women contribute great potential to organisations. A recent body of research suggested that female leaders are associated with other organisational benefits such as better innovation, extensive consumer outreach and improved corporate social responsibility records (Dezsö & Ross, 2012). Furthermore, the presence of women in leadership positions increases opportunities for women further down the organisational hierarchy and subsequently reduces gender segregation in organisations (Glass & Cook, 2016).

A study on overall leadership effectiveness by gender by Zenger Folkman (2011) revealed that, at all levels of organisations, women excelled in leadership competencies. At the top management and executive levels, the study revealed that women are 61 percent effective while male leaders are only 52 percent effective.

2.8 A summary of the literature review

The advancement of women into senior leadership roles relates to the steps taken by organisations towards enabling women to occupy roles of seniority and high-level decision making within corporate organisations. Literature was reviewed in order to understand the reasons why the progression of women into senior positions has been slow. Sutter and Glätzle-Rützler (2014) raised the issue of gender difference in the willingness to compete that explains gender differences in the labour work force. Similarly, Fitzsimmons et al. (2014) cited that gendered forces working at societal,

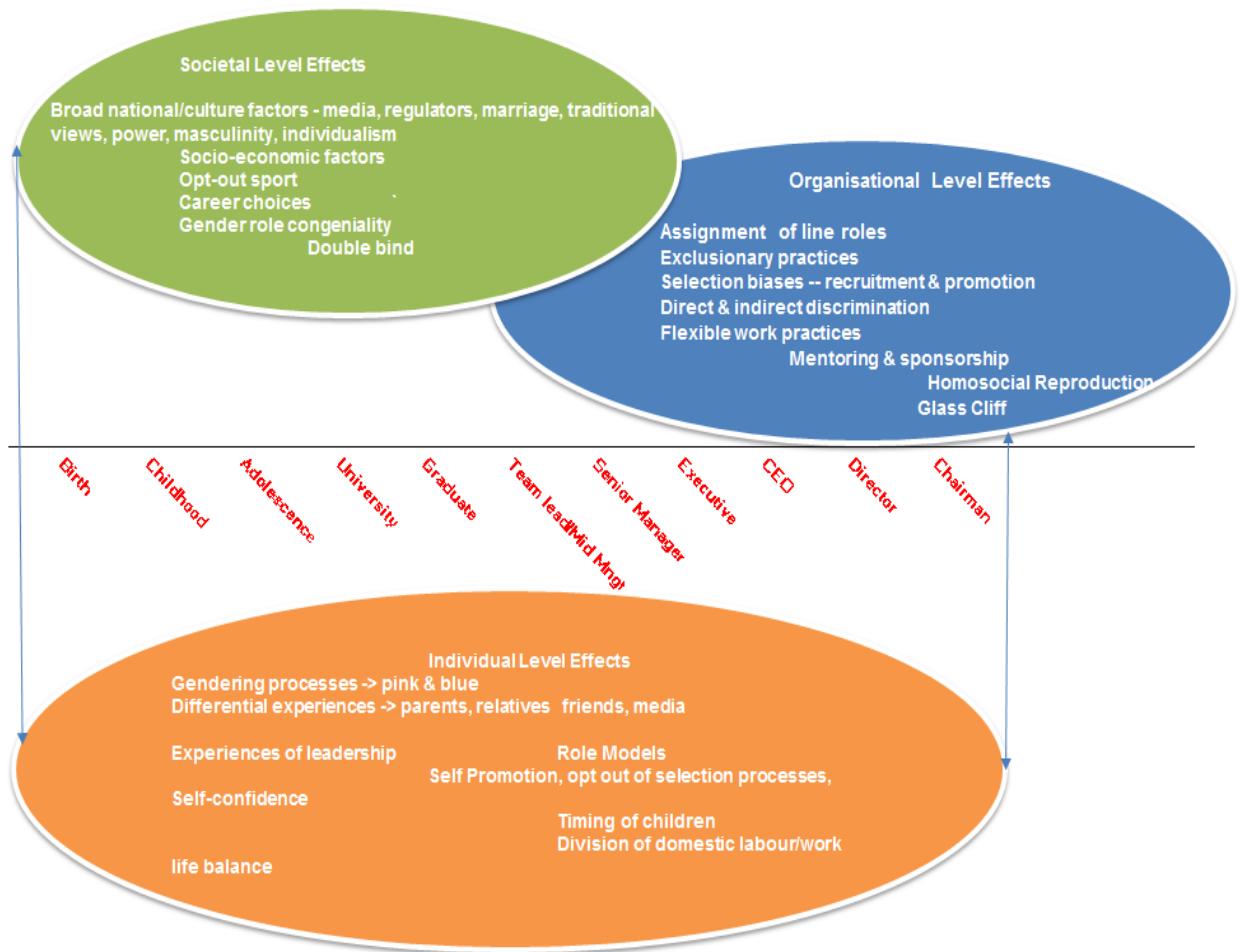
organisational and individual levels are the factors that impede the accumulation of valuable career capital and hence limit the progression of women into executive roles.

The majority of the literature reviewed identified the origins of the gender gap as early as childhood with some confirming through empirical evidence that boys are more likely to start competing from as early as kindergarten (Sutter & Glätzle-Rützler, 2014) with this gap said to prevail through adolescence. Similarly, some of the factors pointed out by Fitzsimmons et al. (2014) are early life experiences, social expectations, the glass cliff, the double bind, direct and indirect discrimination as well as selection and promotion bias which span across the lifetime of individuals. It is important therefore to acknowledge this gap but also to find means through which the already existing gap can be closed in order to accelerate the progression of women in corporate organisations.

From the literature review, it is evident that the factors that hinder the progression of women into senior roles are far more complex and do not operate in isolation. Fitzsimmons et al. (2014) devised a framework to clarify the challenges faced by organisations and women regarding the slow progression of women into executive roles. It is necessary to get greater understanding of the forces at work that influence the advancement of women into leadership roles and to come up with a solution that will address the key areas that cause these inhibiting factors.

Figure 1 below illustrates the societal, organisational and individual forces which are cited as being at the core of the success or failure of the advancement of women in organisations. The framework highlights that the accumulation of the necessary capital necessary for women's advancement is context dependent. As such, the cited factors can occur in isolation or in combination to impede women from gaining access to contexts which would enable the accumulation of the necessary capital (Fitzsimmons & Callan, 2016). For example, the impact of societal effects could influence the subject choices of young girls in high school and university and ultimately preclude them from gaining access to certain roles earlier on in their careers. Similarly, the lack of support from organisations for women with young children could exclude them from some work assignments which, in turn, stops them accumulating the necessary experience required to fill senior roles.

**Figure 1: Gendered forces acting to reduce capital accumulation
(Adapted from Fitzsimmons & Callan, 2016, p. 363)**



The aim of the study is to gain an understanding of the approaches adopted by corporate organisations in South Africa in relation to the forces mentioned in Figure 1. The factors that inhibit the successful advancement of women into executive roles will be clarified in relation to the framework described in Figure 1. The required leadership capital in the context of gender will be investigated and a solution proposed to organisations on how they can influence the career and social capital required by females in order to advance into senior roles. A model for the advancement of women that covers a combination of all three forces (societal, organisational, and individual) will be proposed to corporate organisations.

Chapter 3: Research Questions

This chapter draws on the various themes arising from the literature reviewed in Chapter 2, in addition to the purpose of the study explained in Chapter 1.

The reviewed literature indicated that gender balance appears fundamentally static based on its slow progress. Robertson and Byrne (2016) pointed out that if the desired gender balance change was to continue at the current pace, it would take decades before any significant levels were reached. As Bierema (2016) explained, women are well equipped for leadership roles but appear to be overlooked due to the manner in which organisations view images of ideal workers. It is becoming more evident that approaches used by organisations thus far are simply incapable of breaking through to the next level (Robertson & Byrne, 2016).

The literature reviewed further challenged organisations to relook at their understanding of women's leadership. Dworkin, Maurer and Schipani (2012) point out that the leadership gap between male and female leaders is surprising given that a significant body of research suggests that corporate organisations that hire women at the top levels have significant financial gains in doing so. Furthermore, a Pepperdine study revealed that firms promoting women to higher management had profits of 18% to 69% more than average *Fortune 500* firms.

This research study seeks to provide corporate organisations and women with insights into the ways that corporate organisations have been able to advance women into executive and senior roles and provide an understanding of the key challenges corporates still face. This will be achieved by answering the questions below and interpreting the findings into meaningful approaches that could assist corporates towards the advancement of women into leadership roles and the improvement of their performance. The research questions were based on the exploratory nature of the study. The topic on the advancement of women has been extensively researched globally however there is a dearth of literature on the subject in a South African context.

Research question 1:

To what extent are corporates moving towards the advancement of women into leadership positions?

Research question 2:

What approaches are being adopted by corporates towards the successful advancement of women into leadership roles?

Research question 3:

What are the key factors that inhibit the advancement of women into leadership roles?

Research question 4:

What are the potential benefits or drawbacks to the promotion of women into senior leadership roles for women?

Research question 5:

What are the benefits of promoting gender-balanced leadership and what are the implications of NOT promoting gender-balanced leadership for corporates?

Chapter 4: Methodology

I want to understand the world from your point of view. I want to know what you know in the way you know it. I want to understand the meaning of your experience, to walk in your shoes, to feel things as you feel them, to explain things as you explain them. Will you become my teacher and help me understand? (Spradley, 2016)

4.1 Introduction

This chapter discusses the research methodology that was selected for this study. This research aimed to collect rich, thick data which is only possible through observations and interviews (Neuman, 2000). The study was qualitative and exploratory in nature. Qualitative research requires the documentation of specific events, recording people's words, observing their behaviour as well as examining visual images (Neuman, 2000). The focus in qualitative research is on the examination of people's life experiences in order to understand their experiences and the meaning of these experiences. In a qualitative study, a researcher aims to understand how participants operate in their natural settings, that is, how they feel and how they think (Henning, Van Rensburg, & Smit, 2004). The choice of a qualitative research design is justified next.

4.2 Research Methodology and design

4.2.1 Rationale for proposed method

As indicated earlier, a qualitative research design is appropriate for this study because a qualitative researcher studies phenomena in their natural settings to make sense of them and this gives an opportunity to interpret social phenomena which include relationships, interactions and behaviour (Creswell, 1998; Pope & Mays, 2009). As the topic is personal in nature, a qualitative research design gives a deeper understanding regarding the subject of women in leadership roles.

Since the aim of qualitative research is to understand phenomena in the real world, the researcher is not able to control the phenomena under study (Patton, 2002). In order to obtain a deeper understanding, the qualities and characteristics of phenomena are examined (Henning et al., 2004). Qualitative research designs lend themselves to flexibility regarding the vibrant and evolving nature of data compared with the inflexible design of quantitative studies (Strauss & Corbin, 2008, p. 13). Qualitative research emphasises the "human factor and the intimate first-hand knowledge of the research

setting” (Neuman, 2000, p. 126) as well as the study being aimed at “searching for meanings and essences of experience rather than measurements and explanations” (Moustakas, 1994, p. 21). Qualitative research is nonlinear and cyclical; the researcher constantly moves “backwards and sideways before moving on” and, with each movement, new data and new insights are acquired (Neumann, 2000, p. 124). As indicated, the phenomenon of women’s advancement into leadership roles as well their experiences and opinions were investigated in this study.

4.2.2 Research setting for the study

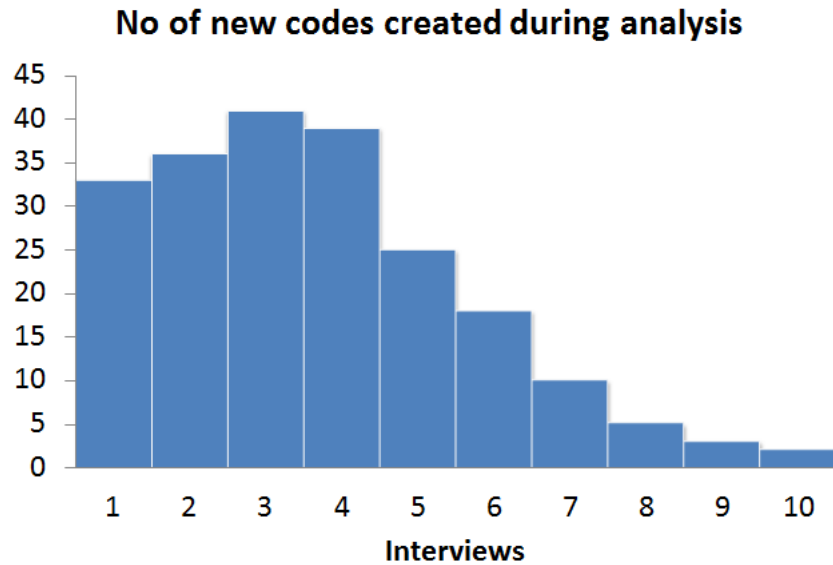
Neuman (2000, p. 352) identified a research site as the setting in which activities or events transpired and a socially defined terrain with ever-changing boundaries. Although it would have been ideal to interview the participants at their place of employment, it was not always possible however participants described their physical surroundings as well as the ethos of the companies.

4.3 Research Participants

In the choice of participants for a study, it is necessary to choose individuals who will provide rich, thick data that is required to answer the questions of the study. Since the focus of this study was on the advancement of women into positions of leadership, participants were chosen who possessed considerable knowledge related to women in senior leadership positions.

Participants were approached and asked whether they would be willing to participate in a study of this nature. According to Neuman (2000), researchers select samples or an activity that “illuminates social life” and that the primary purpose of sampling is “to collect specific cases, events or actions that can clarify and deepen understanding”. The intention of the researcher was to interview 12 participants. Consequently, the number of participants was limited to ten because this number was deemed adequate for the requirements of the study following data saturation being reached and no new insights being gained during the interview process (Morse, 1995). Figure 2 below provides evidence of the data saturation as it was reached during the interview process based on the data analysis that followed the interview process.

Figure 2: Code creation over the course of data analysis



4.4 Population

The population for this research study was defined as senior executives in corporate organisations across various sectors within South Africa, who are exposed to the realities of gender diversity in their organisations particularly in relation to the advancement of women into executive roles. In the study, senior executives were categorised as CEOs, executive managers, management directors, general managers or senior line managers.

In order to perform qualitative research, Gillham (2003) stated that intuition, insightfulness and understanding are required. In the search for participants, it was decided to include men as part of the sample. Often, in studies that relate to women issues only, men's views are not brought into the study. It was important for this research to act on Gillham's recommendations in order to get a different perspective from the men interviewed.

4.5 The Sample

The selected sample was based on judgement in order to get a particular representation and account of the views or opinions of the person being interviewed (Silverman, 2006). Purposive sampling was chosen as it is the most regularly used form of non-probability sampling to collect qualitative data. Individuals who were

chosen to participate in the interviews were identified on the basis that they were well positioned to answer the research questions and met the research objectives (Saunders & Lewis, 2012). In addition, the chosen individuals had personal experiences to share (Creswell, 1998) as they had experience in rising beyond the challenges of gender diversity. Furthermore, they were selected due to their seniority within their organisations.

The sample was therefore drawn from the population of senior executives from corporate organisations in various sectors within South Africa. Executives from corporate organisations located in Pretoria and Johannesburg, Gauteng, were interviewed. Various communication methods were used to contact the executives in order to request interviews with them, such as e-mail and telephone.

The sample selection was purposive in nature and was made across eight different industries, which comprised financial services, research and technological innovation, petroleum, manufacturing, motor, infrastructure and natural resources, telecommunications, and rail manufacturing and innovation. According to Neuman (2000), qualitative researchers select a small collection of cases or activities that bring out the reality of social life. He further asserted that the fundamental purpose of sampling is to bring together specific cases, happenings or actions that clarify and provide a deeper understanding. Accordingly, the number of participants was limited to ten as it was believed this number was adequate for the requirements of this study.

The number of participants who represented each industry and their respective positions and gender are represented in Table 1 below.

Table 1: Sample description

Industry	Positions	Number of participants	Gender of participants
Financial Services	Executive Head: Human Resources	1	Female
	Head: Platform Execution	1	Female
	Executive: Business Manager	1	Female
Research and Technological Innovation	Senior Manager	1	Female
Petroleum	Head: Marketing	1	Female
Manufacturing	Executive: Trade Division	1	Male
Motor	Senior Vice President (Region Africa South)	1	Male
Infrastructure and Natural resources	CEO	1	Female
Telecommunications	Vice President of South and East Africa	1	Male
Rail Industry	Executive Manager: Corporate Services	1	Female
Total		10	

4.6 Unit of Analysis

The unit of analysis for this study was the views and insights of the executives interviewed regarding the advancement of women into senior leadership roles. As this was a qualitative study, the data collection method chosen for this study was in-depth face-to-face interviews which were deemed most appropriate for the study and are discussed in section 4.7 below.

4.7 Data Collection

According to Gillham (2003), a great portion of the population prefers talking about their feelings, viewpoints and experiences instead of writing them down. For purposes of this inquiry, in-depth semi-structured face-to-face interviews were considered the most

appropriate method. In addition, De Vos, Strydom, Fouche, Poggenpoel and Schurink (2000) confirm that the use of interviews for collecting data is characteristic of behavioural sciences, a category in which parts of this study falls.

4.7.1 Data Collection Tool

Data collection for this study was performed by means of semi-structured face-to-face interviews; a technique that enabled the researcher to ask about a set of themes using predetermined questions (Saunders & Lewis, 2012). This technique allowed the researcher to vary the order in which the themes were presented and the order in which the questions were asked. Semi-structured interviews allowed the researcher to get a detailed view of the participant's opinions, perceptions and experiences on a particular topic (De Vos et al., 2006; Creswell, 2002) as well as to obtain rich data (Silverman, 2006).

Interviewing requires active listening on the part of the interviewer as well as gaining and upholding trust with the participants (Silverman, 2006). It was important to establish trust with the participants for this study as the nature of the conversations was sensitive. Central to the preparation for a semi-structured interview is to find out as much as possible about the individual being interviewed as well as the organisation they work for prior to the interview (Saunders & Lewis, 2012).

In order to ensure consistency between interviews, an interview guide was developed and used (Zikmund, 2003; Saunders & Lewis, 2012). While the interview guide was prepared solely for use by the interviewer, an introductory email (Appendix 1) detailing the purpose of the study was emailed to the participants along with an informed consent letter (Appendix 2) which explained the terms of the interview. The interview questions were formulated from the research questions. This was done to ensure consistency between the literature reviewed and to guide the interview by keeping it within the confines of the topic being investigated. The interview questions were mapped to each of the research questions stipulated in Chapter 3. Table 2 below provides a representation of how the interview questions were aligned to the research questions.

Table 2: Research Questions and Interview Questions alignment

Research Questions	Interview questions
<p>Research question 1: To what extent are corporates moving towards the promotion of women into leadership positions?</p>	<p>1. In your opinion, how has your organisation fared in its approach to the advancement of women into leadership positions?</p> <p>2. What drives the advancement of women into leadership roles within your organisation?</p>
<p>Research question 2: What approaches are being adopted by corporates towards the successful advancement of women into leadership roles?</p>	<p>3. What approaches are being adopted by your organisation towards the successful advancement of women into senior leadership roles?</p> <p>4. Please explain whether you believe the approaches used by your organisation to advance women into leadership roles benefit women and organisations in any way.</p>
<p>Research question 3: What are the key factors that inhibit the promotion of women into leadership roles?</p>	<p>5. In your opinion, what are the factors that inhibit the promotion of women into leadership roles?</p> <p>6. What are the attitudes of women in your organisation when dealing with the factors that inhibit the promotion of women into leadership roles?</p>
<p>Research question 4: What are the potential benefits or drawbacks to the promotion of women into senior leadership roles for women?</p>	<p>7. Explain what benefits you believe the promotion of women into leadership roles yields for women.</p> <p>8. Do you perceive any drawbacks in the promotion of women into leadership roles? Please explain.</p>
<p>Research question 5: What are the benefits of promoting gender-balanced leadership and what are the implications of NOT promoting gender-balanced leadership for corporates?</p>	<p>9. What are the potential benefits of promoting gender-balanced leadership teams for corporates?</p> <p>10. What are the potential implications of NOT promoting gender-balanced leadership teams for corporates?</p>

It was explained to the participants that, while interviews would be recorded, the information would not be shared with anyone other than the researcher and her supervisor. All interviews were recorded in digital format after receiving consent from the participants and transcribed in preparation for coding during the analysis process (Patton, 2002). Following the collection of raw data, a thematic approach to analyse the data was used.

4.7.2 Details of Data Collection

Data collection was performed through the use of in-depth, semi-structured face-to-

face interviews with the ten executives who formed the sample. It was important to consider locations that were suitable for the participants and where they felt comfortable without disturbances (Saunders & Lewis, 2012). In addition, in order to accommodate participants who were away due to work commitments and travel, two interviews were conducted face-to-face using video calling and one interview was conducted telephonically. The interviews were conducted using the interview guideline as presented in Appendix 3. The order in which the questions were asked and the themes covered varied from one interview to the next. As such, it was possible for the researcher to omit some questions and ask other questions which were more appropriate for the situation (Saunders & Lewis, 2012).

The interview process began with formal introductions and a reminder of the informed consent. A brief description of the title of the research, context and scope of the research was provided. Following this, the interview questions were posed to participants in a non-leading manner allowing the participants to respond based on their own personal views and their own understanding of the question being asked. In order to obtain rich data, the researcher must allow the participant the space to talk and interpret meanings within the borders of the topic (Silverman, 2006). This enabled the researcher to ask questions that followed up on certain aspects of the answers provided by the participants.

Following the first three interviews, which were used as trial interviews, the interview guideline was adjusted to reframe questions that appeared difficult for participants to answer. One such question was asking the participants to express what they believed the appropriate gender balance for organisations should be. Most participants were unable to interpret this question and thought they had to provide a percentage figure which proved difficult for them. Following the initial interviews, the interview guideline was narrowed down by seven questions as some interview questions were not answering the research questions directly. The interviews were conducted until a point of data saturation was reached and no new data was being obtained from the interviews and no new insights were emerging from the interview process (Morse, 1995).

During the interview process, audio recordings and supplementary notes were taken as well as observations made. While it was difficult to make observations during the telephonic interview, it was possible to make notes based on the sounds made by the participant such as laughing or sighing. Interviews that were conducted via video

calling, that is, Skype, were very similar to face-to-face interviews allowing for observations and notes to be made however the quality of the connectivity during one of the interviews made it difficult to have an uninterrupted conversation. This potentially had an impact on the quality of the data extracted from that interview.

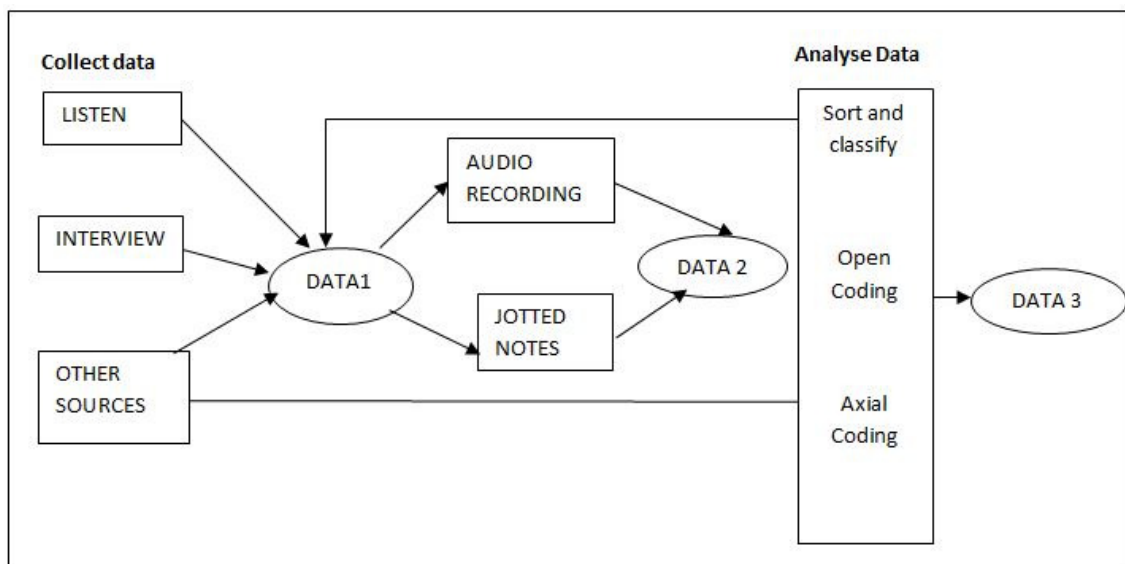
4.8 Data Analysis

Data analysis means a search for patterns in data – recurrent behaviours, objects or a body of knowledge (Neuman, 2000, p. 426)

The analysis of the interview data entailed the identification of common insights and themes that appeared from the data collected during the interview process.

Data analysis involves “[g]enerating, developing, and verifying concepts – a process that builds over time and with the acquisition of data” (Strauss & Corbin, 2008, p.57). An attempt was made to analyse the data during the collection process in order to identify new insights and themes throughout the interview process. Figure 3 presented below illustrates the data analysis procedure that was used in the study. Data 1 was the raw data and the process followed by the researcher. Data 2 illustrates recorded data while Data 3 illustrates the selected themes that were handled and presented in the findings.

Figure 3: Data Analysis – Search Patterns in Data
(Adapted from Neuman, 2000, p. 426)



As soon as an interview was completed, the data from the audio recordings were transcribed verbatim prior to analysis (Creswell, 2003). The transcripts were read by

the researcher and any discrepancies were corrected. Following to the transcription and correction of transcriptions, the researcher proceeded with the data analysis. The analysis of data was performed by employing a thematic analysis as recommended by Patton (2002).

Accordingly, the three stages of raw data analysis that were applied to the raw data were open coding, axial coding and selective coding (Neuman, 2000) and are discussed next.

4.8.1 Open Coding

Open coding is the first pass through the raw data where the researcher is required to read the raw data intensely while examining the data to identify important terms, key incidences and emerging themes (Neuman, 2000). Through the process of open coding, interesting, essence-capturing ideas were identified and labelled using words or short phrases that were used to answer each of the interview questions. This was done using Microsoft Word and comments were used to record the initial codes. Once all the initial codes had been identified, they were transferred onto a Microsoft Excel template that was designed on a question by question basis which captured direct quotes alongside each code of each participant per row.

4.8.2 Axial Coding

The second pass through the data is known as axial coding where the labelled and coded data is clustered to elicit initial themes (Neuman, 2000). Data was sorted according to relevant characteristics into categories, which sometimes led to new classifications or, in some cases, assumed one of the initial codes as a classification to create themes. In addition, minor themes were incorporated under major themes. This part of the analysis process was supported by the use of enumeration, where the number of mentions per code was counted to add to the total per theme. The total mentions per code were used to rank the identified constructs per question to determine the significance of each construct.

4.8.3 Selective Coding

The final pass through the data that has already been categorised, is referred to as selective coding. Strauss and Corbin (1998) and De Vos et al. (2006) described selective coding as the technique through which the central category is selected and methodically linked to additional categories, validating those links and adding to categories that need additional modification and expansion. The selective coding

process involves scanning current data and comparing it to previous codes. It is important during this process to search for cases that make the identified themes visible in order to compare and contrast them. It is also necessary to revisit field notes during this stage, to find conflicts or compromises.

Through the selective coding process, it was possible to further collapse themes that appeared to have relationships in order to narrow down the responses to significant themes. In some cases, the transcribed interviews were revisited, with open codes to verify if the question was being answered. This process ensured that the research questions were answered correctly and that the themes used were relevant in answering that question.

An extract from the initial stages of analysis for Research Question 1 (Interview question 1) is displayed in Table 3 below:

Table 3: Stages of analysis (codes to themes)

Interview Question 1: In your opinion, how has your organisation fared in its approach to the advancement of women into leadership positions?		
Quotes	Codes	Themes
Huge shift towards an intentional effort to appoint women	Huge shift towards an intentional effort to appoint women	There is a shift towards an intentional effort to advance women
Thirty percent at the moment on executive level; but we need to look at middle management level and senior management level as well to make sure that that representation is consistent at an Exco level, that you've got a pipeline for females to take over previously male-dominant roles	Shift towards an intentional effort to appoint women	
69% female representation	Female representation	
We fare very well	Progress is being made	
There are definitely a lot more women in senior roles than men	More females than men	
Aggressive on transformation and the key driver for transformation is the promotion of transformational females in the organisation and I must also stress the reason why it's a key driver is because the CSIR is lacking in numbers.	Aggressive transformation drive	
There has been a lot of effort in not only recruiting transformational candidates but also recruiting females	Promotion of female candidates	

But we need to look at middle management level and senior management level as well to make sure that that representation is consistent at an Exco level, that you've got a pipeline for females to take over previously male-dominant roles	Male-dominant roles	Senior roles are still male dominated
There is still an over-concentration of white males at middle-senior management level so that ultimately impacts, you know, the extent to which there is space for females to actually grow within that space	Male-dominant roles	
Obviously in the oil industry, it's still very white male.	White male	
It's still a man's world especially on the senior leadership I suppose	Male domination	
... where you find that females are the minority and it's really quite a struggle	Women in the minority	
The motor industry is very male dominated, which it still is actually until today but the wheels of change haven't been moving that quickly and what's happened now is that, as much as the strategy has been there, it has been in existence for a long time, the implementation hasn't been that great or good to some extent	Male dominated	

4.9 Data Validity and Reliability

Merriam (2002) stated that conducting the study in an ethical fashion ensures the validity and reliability of the research being conducted. Furthermore, validity and reliability are defined by Saunders and Lewis (2012) as the two criteria required for assessing a measurement. Zikmund, Babin, Carr and Griffin (2013) also referred to validity as the representation of the accuracy with which the "intended concept" is measured, as well as reflecting on the extent to which the measurement is measuring what it intends to measure. The measurement used must therefore be both reliable and accurate (Patton, 2002).

The nature of qualitative research means that it could potentially be open to subjective responses as well as various forms of bias. Interviewer bias happens when the interviewer influences the manner in which participants respond to questions (Saunders & Lewis, 2012). The use of an interview guideline for the semi-structured in-depth interviews ensured that questions were asked in a standardised manner. While the participants were encouraged to treat the interview as a discussion, it was

important for the interviewer to limit her own opinions and experiences, and focus more on listening to the participants.

4.10 Research Limitations

As mentioned in section 4.9 above, qualitative research is subjective in nature and, as such, is at risk of being influenced by several biases (Saunders & Lewis, 2012). The following aspects were identified as limitations of the study:

- The sample was limited to senior executives who were categorised as CEO, executive managers, management directors, general managers or senior line managers. The views of individuals at the lower levels of the organisations could have contributed to the study by understanding the topic from their perspective.
- The researcher was not formally trained to conduct expert interviews. This could have impacted the interpretation of the results as analysis remains debatable because of its enquirer dependent nature (Patton, 2002).
- The sample was limited to individuals from companies located in Johannesburg and Pretoria, Gauteng, South Africa. On this basis, geographical bias could have influenced the participants' responses.
- The sample was selected from only 8 different sectors. In most instances, there was only one representative from each of the sectors which implies a certain level of subjectivity in the participants' responses.

4.11 Summary

This chapter provided the research design and methodology chosen for the study. The selection of participants as well as their organisations was discussed. The rationale for the chosen data collection and methods was explained and finally the method used for data analysis was discussed.

Chapter 5 provides an in-depth description of the findings of the study. The data collected provided insight onto the extent to which corporate South Africa has progressed towards the advancement of women into senior leadership roles and what approaches have been adopted by corporate organisations towards the successful advancement of women into senior leadership roles.

Chapter 5: Results

5.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the results of the research according to the research questions defined in Chapter 3. The chapter provides the findings of the data analysis that was conducted through the technique of in-depth face-to-face interviews. Due to the geographical location of some of the participants at the time, two interviews were conducted via video calling and one interview was a telephonic interview.

5.2 Data Analysis

Interview questions were formulated with the assistance of a consistency matrix and in line with the objectives of the research as highlighted in Chapter 1. All interviews were scheduled and took place over a period of two months. The intention of the researcher was to interview 12 participants however, the researcher reached a point where no new data was being obtained from the interviews and no new insights were emerging from the interview process. As such, data saturation was reached (Morse, 1995) as illustrated in Figure 2 of this document, and the researcher believed that the number of participants, capped at ten, was sufficient to provide rich data.

During the interview process, audio recordings and supplementary notes were taken as well as observations made. The audio recordings were transcribed verbatim. The rich data collected was analysed using thematic content analysis as described in Chapter 4. The key themes that emerged during the analysis are discussed below. In most cases, the actual words used by the participants are used in text, in spite of some of the excerpts being grammatically incorrect.

5.3 Presentation of results

Results of this study are presented per research question according to the questions presented in Chapter 3 as well as the interview questions mapped in Table 2 of this document.

5.4 Results for Research Question 1

To what extent are corporates moving towards the promotion of women into leadership positions?

Research Question 1 was aimed at reflecting on the progress made by corporate organisations to date in respect of their ability to advance women into senior leadership roles. The two interview questions that were asked in respect of this research question were specifically structured to get the personal views and opinions of the participants regarding how they believed their organisations had progressed towards the advancement of women into executive and senior leadership roles.

5.4.1 What is your opinion regarding your organisation's approach to the advancement of women into leadership positions?

The first question sought to establish whether corporate organisations were making a shift towards the advancement of women into executive or senior roles. The views of participants were mixed, with some pointing out that their organisations were making the shift towards successful advancement of women while others indicated that a lot more could be done. Table 4 illustrates several themes that emerged while analysing data pertaining to interview question 1.

Table 4: Opinions on organisations' approach to women advancement

Rank	Progress of companies	No of mentions
1	Huge shift towards an intentional effort to appoint women	9
2	Slow progress - a lot more can be done	6
3	The roles are still male dominated	5
4	Need to advance transformational candidates	2

In analysing the top 3 views expressed by participants, they indicated at least nine times that their organisations were making a shift towards the advancement of women into executive and senior roles. They expressed their views as follows:

I must say that I've really seen, especially over the last five years a huge shift towards an intentional effort to appoint women in portfolios in the executive role.

Thirty percent at the moment on executive level; but we need to look at middle-management level and senior-management level as well to make sure that that

representation is consistent at an Exco level, that you've got a pipeline for females to take over previously male-dominant roles.

Aggressive on transformation and the key driver for transformation is the promotion of transformational females in the [organisation] and I must also stress the reason why it's a key driver is because the [organisation] is lacking in numbers. There has been a lot of effort in not only recruiting transformational candidates but also recruiting females.

A participant who is the CEO of her organisation highlighted that their main goal as an organisation was to appoint only females stating that

... so, we have about 69% female representation. So we'd think in that regard we fare very well but we've actively searched for having those kinds of numbers because we just wanted to be able to ensure that we promote women.

She further highlighted that the subject of women empowerment was a serious matter for her organisation and that has led to their success. As she put it, "... so it's been a very important management issue for us to be able to get there. It does not mean that it's an easy thing to achieve".

Similarly, the theme of slow progress emerged six times with participants interviewed stating that not enough was being done by their organisations to advance women into senior roles. While some participants indicated the good intentions of their organisations, "the recognition that the organisation needed to have women in leadership and is part of their 2020 vision", the trouble was that there simply was no action plan. One of the participants said "I think for me that wasn't clear as to what needed to be done or what was going to be done whether there was an action plan or not." This participant acknowledged that her organisation had set targets but felt that those targets were not ambitious enough because

25% of all managerial roles [are] to be held by women. Which I just felt was not a very ambitious target, one can do a lot more.

In answering this question, some participants highlighted that most senior roles were predominantly occupied by males. As indicated in Table 4 above, the issue of male domination of senior positions was amongst the top three constructs. While the subject of male domination may be viewed as an inhibiting factor by some, the researcher purposefully included the responses in relation to male domination in this section of the

document to highlight that the participants gave those views in direct response to research question 1. This how the participants expressed their views:

There is still an over-concentration of white males at middle-senior management level so that ultimately impacts, you know, the extent to which there is space for females to actually grow within that space.

I think there is still a lot of work that needs to be done and the different Exco's that I have sat in where you find that females are the minority and it's really quite a struggle.

It's still a man's world especially on the Senior Leadership I suppose.

Obviously the oil industry, it's still very white male.

One participant specifically pointed out that male domination is a subject for discussion at a strategic level of his organisation; however the implementation of change in this regard has not been good. As he puts it

The motor industry is very male dominated, which it still is actually until today but with the wheels of change haven't been moving that quickly and what's happened now is that, as much as the strategy has been there it has been in existence for a long time, the implementation hasn't been that great or good to some extent.

One Vice President of a large corporate felt that the subject of women empowerment was a tough topic of discussion. As he put it, he said "I think you have taken a very tough topic". When asked about his opinion on the progress made by his company, he felt that his response was a contradiction. His initial response was "we are committed to basically empower and yes at [the organisation] we have women in senior positions". In the same breadth, he said "at [the organisation] women are poorly represented in leadership positions". In clarifying his contradiction this is what he had to say

Sounds like a contradiction, we would like to do it but we are not doing it as much as what we would like to do it. There is a bit of progress but we are still very far from where we should be.

This confirms the views of most other participants who felt that not enough was being done by corporate organisations towards the advancement of women.

5.4.2 What drives the advancement of women into leadership roles within your organisation?

The second interview question invited participants to express their views on what they believed to be the drivers for the actions of their organisations to advance women into senior leadership and primarily to establish whether the organisations efforts were intentional or forced by legislation.

Table 5 provides a summary of the drivers that were identified by the participants interviewed.

Table 5: Drivers for organisations to advance women into senior roles

Rank	Drivers for women advancement in organisations	Frequency
1	Intentional (strategic objectives)	17
2	Both Legislative and intentional	3
2	Legislative push	3
3	No driver No plan	2
4	Influence from the board	1

According to the results displayed in Table 5, individuals had differing viewpoints on the factors that drive the actions of their organisations to advance women into leadership roles. Of the top two constructs, the one with the highest frequency was the indication that organisations intentionally create opportunities for females to advance. One executive said “I’ve seen more executives making decisions around appointing business managers within their portfolios to intentionally create an opportunity for females, specifically, to get exposure to businesses”. The CEO of an organisation who also happens to be female confirmed this view and added, “we’ve actively searched for having those kinds of numbers because we just wanted to be able to ensure that we promote women.” The emphasis she said, was that

we become a vehicle for women to come in and support the junior, middle management and senior management and our approach has always been that we don’t only bring them into the job but we also mentor them into the position they are going to grow into.

The CEO did however state that those individuals had to be willing participants in order for this to be successfully implemented.

Another driver which was identified by participants was the need to fulfil strategic objectives of the organisations to ensure gender diversity in leadership teams. One participant indicated that the strategic objective of her organisation was to intentionally recruit females and, in particular, transformational females. Confirming strategic initiatives as a driver for her organisation, she said,

... the focus has been very aggressive on transformation and the key driver for transformation is the promotion of transformational females in the [organisation] and I must also stress the reason why it's a key driver is because the [organisation] is lacking in numbers.

She further said that “there has been a lot of focus on my side of also recruiting transformational females because that is the strategy of organisation that comes from the top.” Another participant suggested that the advancement of women in their organisation had been formalised as part of the strategy. She expressed her view as follows:

I like the fact that it was formalised and it was communicated in a particular strategy, a definite target set and then one can track how are we performing then a concerted effort could be made.

This further highlights the benefits of formalising women advancement plans as part of the organisation's strategy, as it can be measurable. Equally, most participants expressed their views that their organisations' actions to advance women were forced by legislation. One executive said,

So, our attitude as an organisation towards women and women empowerment is that it is as much an autonomous thing that we do as well as also an interventionist thing that we do. So, in other words, when we do have vacancies, people in senior places, we automatically are biased towards the BEE score card automatically and, at the same time, we are told that you will have to look for women. The mandate is clear, we want black and we want women.

The Vice President of another large firm highlighted that, despite the legislative push, they were still unable to implement any changes towards the advancement of women. He articulated this as follows:

We've been driven by legislation and, as much as we have been pushed and pushed, it's still not happening. I think up until we get to a point, this year ... For example, here, you need to be a level 6 contributor. Now, for this year, we

know for a fact that we will be dropping to a level 8 and then for us to maintain that level 8 next year, we have to.

It was also highlighted by some of the participants that, in some cases, both intention and legislation drive the actions of companies to think about the advancement of their female talent. One executive said,

... it has to be intentional thing and it has to be things that you know; you need to think strategically around it as well and you need to think about and look at what you've got without necessarily thinking of bringing people from outside the organisation into the organisation as well because that could be too disruptive at times depending on what your executive or senior layer looks like.

In addition, most participants whose organisations were attempting to advance women into senior roles highlighted the need to grow their talent pool and provide support to junior and middle management as a driver for their advancement efforts. They explained:

We become a vehicle for women to come in and support the junior, middle management and senior management, mentor them into the position they are going to grow into.

... and you need to think about and look at what you've got without necessarily thinking of bringing people from outside the organisation.

I think, for me, it is really just about having a clear talent management, which is something that we are doing.

... have a clear view around how do we equip them for those senior roles.

5.5 Results for Research Question 2

What approaches are being adopted by corporates towards the successful advancement of women into leadership roles?

The aim of Research Question 2 was to identify the approaches used by organisations towards the advancement of women into leadership roles. Participants were encouraged to express their views on whether they believed the approaches adopted by their organisations benefited women or not. It was important to understand whether organisations had any action plans to facilitate the growing of female leadership talent. Participants were also encouraged to discuss the challenges they observed their organisations to be facing towards the implementation of the women advancement

approaches.

5.5.1 What approaches are being adopted by corporates towards the successful advancement of women into leadership roles?

Thematic content analysis was used to extract common themes that were identified by participants in response to Research Question 2. The approaches identified by participants as being adopted by their organisations were ranked according to the number of times each participant identified each respective approach. Approaches that ranked higher were considered to be the factors that have led to the success of those companies that indicated that they were making good progress towards the advancement of women into senior leadership roles. Table 6 below presents the approaches identified by participants as being adopted by their organisations in an attempt to advance women, in percentage form.

Table 6: Approaches adopted by corporate organisations

Rank	Approaches to the advancement of women	No of times mentioned
1	Career growth and exposure	7
2	Coaching & mentoring programmes	6
3	Training and development	4
3	Talent management	4
4	Succession planning	3
4	Recruitment of females at all levels	3
4	No approach	3
5	Support networks	3
5	Leadership development programmes	2
5	Women advancement as a performance measure	2
5	Creating an enabling environment	2
5	Creation of awareness	2
6	Provide support structures	1
6	Employment tenure - natural progression	1

5.5.1.1 Career growth and exposure

Creating opportunities for career growth and exposure for women within organisations was the top approach that was identified by participants as being adopted by their organisations towards the advancement of women into executive and senior roles. In defining how they created opportunities for women, the participants referred to methods such as giving females more exposure to senior portfolios intentionally; making deliberate female appointments; creating an enabling environment that allows people to be equal; promotion of women; ensuring female representation at all levels; and fast tracking females. Participants indicated their views in this way:

I've seen more executives making decisions around appointing business managers within their portfolios to intentionally create an opportunity for females, specifically, to get exposure to businesses so you'll see [the Group COO] has got [a female], [Group CFO] has got myself and [the Group Executive: Brand and Corporate Affairs] is looking for someone at the moment.

There has been a lot of effort in not only recruiting transformational candidates but also recruiting females.

So, we persevere in doing that and then there is also a lot of promotion of women like there is some interventions in women in technology leadership so, we really promoted the dialogue, awareness and consciousness around having women.

So, yes at [our organisation] women appointments or basically appointment of everyone is basically at the core of how we operate.

But, I should also be very quick – you can't be asking for equality between men and women before you have created an environment that allows people to be equal.

5.5.1.2 Coaching and mentoring programmes

A total of six participants mentioned coaching and mentorship programmes as an approach that had been adopted by their organisations towards the advancement of women into leadership roles. They highlighted the importance of having women who were already in senior positions share their experiences with upcoming young leaders. Some participants pointed out however that the upcoming young female leaders had to identify the need themselves otherwise "it's hard to see a dream for someone when they don't see it themselves, it's very hard so, the thing to really always try and do is to almost workshop the dream with the party" as one of the participants put it.

In expressing their views on mentorship and coaching as an approach of women advancement, participants said:

... and our approach has always been that we don't only bring them into the job but we also mentor them into the position they are going to grow into.

The second one is around woman empowerment and although we haven't really formalised the structure with regards to that programme just yet, but the thinking is by a level just to create a space whereby women can start sharing their experiences and some of the wisdom that lies in successful women that they can transfer onto upcoming, young females in the organisation, but also making sure that we build in coach programmes for women specifically but it has to be about women identifying the need, the drive to want to succeed.

So, we also have a staff mentorship program.

We can call it self-management, but what we are creating is really around active citizenship and helping people to take accountability and part of it is knowing self and how they can influence. We have been doing this program for the last four years. I mean, the transformation that happens when people should take their own space and really embrace [it] to say, what can I influence?

5.5.1.3 Training and development

Participants reported that training and development represented a significant portion of the approaches adopted by their organisations and it ranked amongst the top three methods adopted by corporate organisations.

Training and development could be categorised into formal training and on-the-job informal training. One participant described a senior member of her team:

His focus is to make sure to sit down with the more junior people and to teach them how to publish and then what I also do is I also focus on experiential training.

In response to formal training, the participant said

... and then what I also do is that every person in my team is required to go on formal training so you can upgrade your skills because the [organisation] is focused on thought leadership.

Other participants expressed their views as follows:

... and I mean, actually, the most obvious one is around training and development of internal female talent.

I would image that they have had development ... through training and stuff like that, to eventually get them to where they are.

5.5.1.4 Talent management

Similar to training and development, talent management ranked third of all the approaches identified by participants as having been adopted by their organisations. Talent management, in this context, refers to the period after which females have been recruited into the organisation. The focus of this time is on actively creating a female pipeline, not only from an entry level, but also through the junior and middle manager level positions. One participant highlighted the importance of managing talent at a holistic organisational level to avert the risk of losing already groomed talent to other areas or regions of the business leaving gaps in place. For those South African corporates who face structural changes that may leave them being a part of global organisations, this is a reality. As one participant indicated

We are part of this organisation that has suddenly become a global organisation and South Africa, for all the things that we also do wrong, have quite a talented workforce that is in demand everywhere. So it's been made very clear to us that, as the organisation grows globally, the talent is going to come out of South Africa.

In addition, the participant expressed his views as follows:

The more we grow, the weaker we become as a home organisation in terms of talent. So today, the view is, we have got to actually develop people within the organisation so that they are ready to take over in those positions.

We've seen quite a number of the existing talent being promoted into senior positions and then we've restructured accordingly as we've now got these new channels to service.

Still on the subject of talent management, other participants expressed their views as follows:

I think there is a lot of focus in talent management.

I think for me it is really just about having a clear talent management, which is something that we are doing.

5.5.1.5 No approach

While a significant number of participants indicated that their organisations took the issue of advancement into leadership roles seriously, some participants believed their organisations were not particularly interested in female empowerment and, as a result, did not have any action plans or approaches to address the issue of underrepresentation of women. In describing the current situation in her organisation, one participant stated that

I don't necessarily think priority would be women. It is probably getting a lot of men into leadership positions. Because you will find across the different affiliates, all my colleagues are white males.

When further asked about whether the organisation was making plans to adopt any approaches to address gender imbalance in senior leadership in the organisation, her response was “There isn't. There just isn't”.

Another executive from an organisation that was not actively advancing women into senior or executive roles indicated that his organisation was forced by legislation and the threat of losing business, particularly government business, to ensure they meet the female numbers required at the top. Despite this and the issue of the advancement of women being a long standing gender item in their monthly executive committee meetings, there was still no plan of action in place. He expressed his views as follows:

It's an agenda item on Exco which, on a monthly basis, but with us, it's that mind set. We haven't grasped it yet.

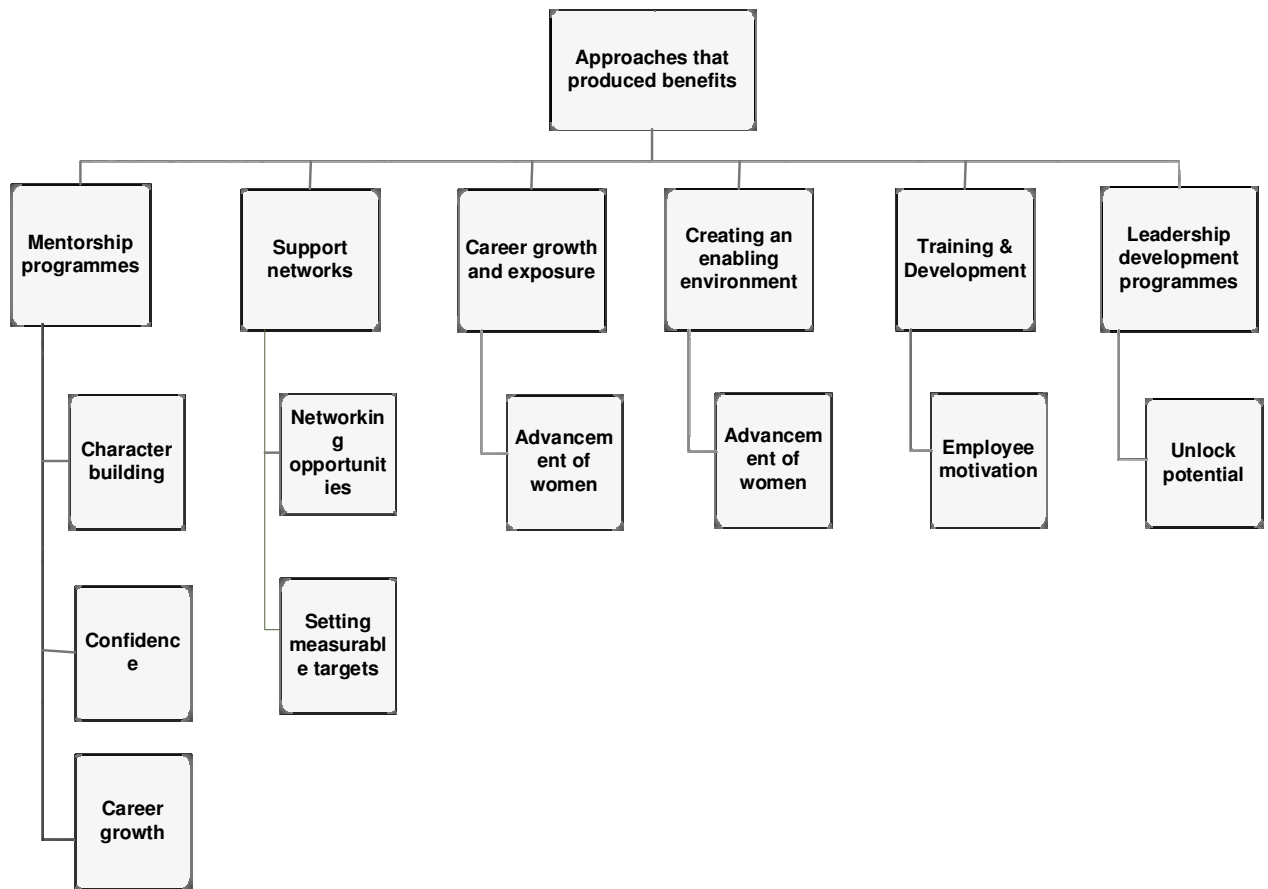
In response to the question of whether or not there were any internal programmes aimed at growing internal talent, he responded “Nothing internally, there is no such a program”.

5.5.2 Please explain whether you believe the approaches used by your organisation to advance women into leadership benefit women and organisations in any way

In an effort to explore whether the approaches adopted by corporate organisations yielded any results, participants were asked to express their views in this regard. Participants provided benefits that they believed were related to some of the interventions pointed out in section 5.5.1 above. During the analysis process, the benefits were tied back to the intervention that they were directly related to in order to establish the various factors that emerged as a result of a particular method. This

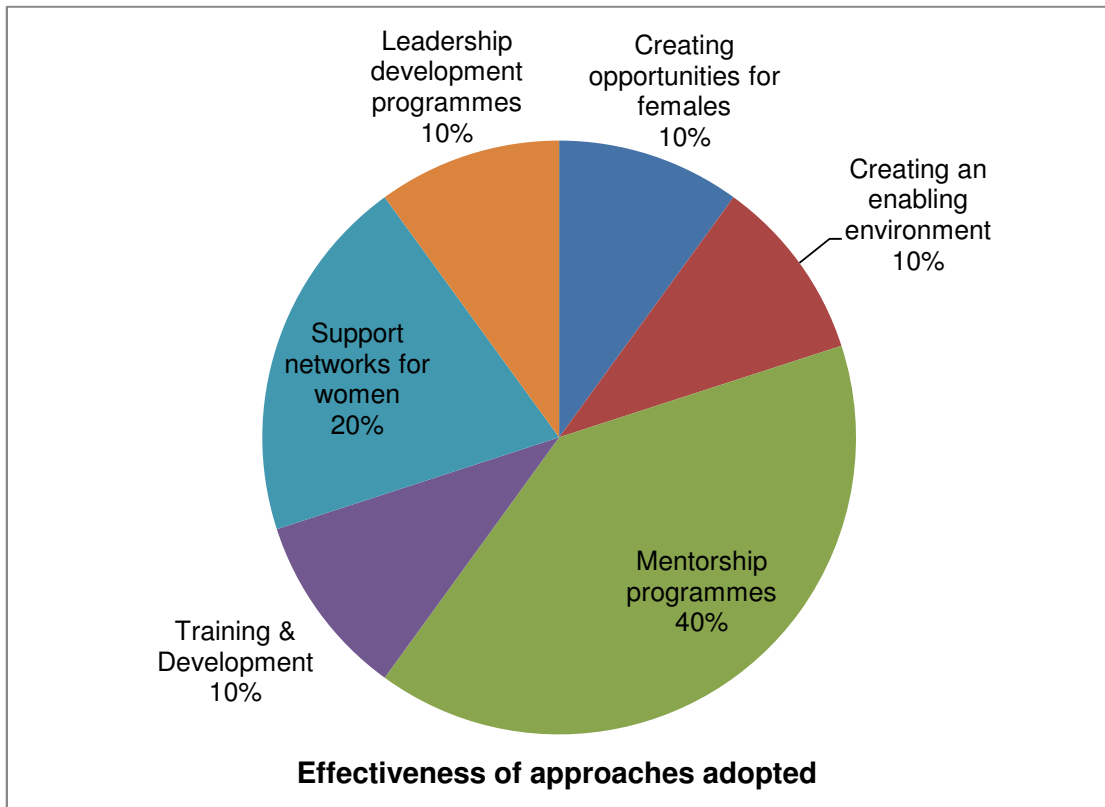
information is represented in Figure 4 below.

Figure 4: Approaches that produced benefits



In addition, the effectiveness of the each of the approaches adopted was analysed. Mentorship programmes were the most effective, followed by support networks for women as represented by Figure 5 below.

Figure 5: Effectiveness of the approaches adopted by corporate organisations



5.5.2.1 Mentorship programmes

As illustrated in Figure 5, mentorship programmes are believed by participants to be the approach that has had the most benefits for their organisations. Two of the participants from different organisations cited character building as one of the benefits they believed was as a result of mentorship and coaching programmes adopted by their organisations. One CEO articulated her view in the following manner when asked how her employees had benefited from mentoring and coaching:

We have found that the women that we have been successful in recruiting and retaining are very strong headed people who did not necessarily come in strong headed. Who came in, not sure, because they have come from environments where they might not have been validated, they might not have been acknowledged to an environment where we absolutely contribute and everybody is acknowledged and is aware of everybody's contribution. So it takes a bit of time to rebuild that person's confidence, that person's understanding of where they are going and then once they catch on, it really is beneficial.

Another executive emphasised personal and career growth as benefits of mentoring

programs and expressed her views by saying:

Some changed jobs, got promotion because they know themselves and they influence themselves differently.

I have seen tremendous growth from people who had gone through the programme – yesterday at the canteen I met this girl and she was just asking me, what is happening with [the program]. She went through the program and she is learning. I meet a lot of people because it is really transformational.

5.5.2.2 Support networks for women

Based on the results of the study and, as illustrated in Figure 5, support networks for women were believed to be the approach that ranked second highest in respect of the benefits it provided. The creation of networking opportunities were realised as a result of these initiatives with one participant articulating her views as follows:

But I think what I can mention was that the value we found was that, when there were certain topics that Exco needed, let's say an opinion on or advice on, they would approach the leadership of this women's network or the people that were driving it. So, for example, there are a lot of engineers, in needing to find female engineers, again the organisation approached the woman network.

Another participant expressed the following on the benefits realised from support networks for women:

So, maybe 25% makes sense for where the organisation lies. I like the fact that it was formalised and it was communicated in a particular strategy, a definite target set and then one can track how are we performing then a concerted effort could be made.

5.5.2.3 Other benefits

Other benefits that were cited as being realised by those companies who appeared to be successfully implementing women advancement techniques are the advancement of women, employee motivation and unlocking female potential. One participant explained the unlocking of potential brought about by leadership development programmes adopted by his organisation:

What they are capable of in a semi academic environment but working in teams outside of their comfort zones. For instance, they would have to give us a critique on a strategic plan. So there is a group of people that has to look the people in the eye and put the plan together and critique it. The manner in

which they have done that and shown their own personal growth was quite admirable. We see that there was great benefit in doing this thing because now we see them outside of their role. Because, if you see them in the role all the time, you just take them for granted.

From that, those people then get put into positions outside of their comfort zone. We have one particular lady that was in HR who is now in, I think we call it operations but it's actually logistics. She's gone from a pure administrative role, not that I'm running HR people down, but she was pure administrative and have now gone into a logistics role which is actually operational and it's a lot more people engaging, systems engaging and stuff like that. But, we wouldn't have known that if we hadn't known that if we didn't see her in that.

5.6 Results for Research Question 3

What are the key factors that inhibit the promotion of women into leadership roles?

5.6.1 Factors that inhibit the promotion of women into leadership roles

Through the use of thematic content analysis, it was possible to identify themes and determine factors that were identified by participants during the interview process as contributing to the impeding of women's advancement into senior roles in corporate organisations. The factors identified were ranked based on the number of participants who identified each inhibiting factor. Table 7 below reflects the factors that inhibit the advancement of women into executive and senior roles as identified by participants.

Table 7: Factors that inhibit the advancement of women into leadership roles

Rank	Factors that inhibit the promotion of women	No of mentions
1	Gender stereotyping and societal influence	9
2	Male domination	8
3	Self-limiting beliefs	7
4	Tough and Inflexible work environments	4
4	Employment tenure	4
5	Lack of mentorship	3
5	Breaking through established networks	3
5	Gender inequality and discrimination	3
5	Family responsibility	3
6	Lack of support networks	2
6	Limiting Career strategies/choices	2
6	No regard for women advancement	2
7	Lack of role models	1
7	No access to opportunities	1
7	Negotiation skills	1
7	Lack of training	1
7	No succession planning	1
7	Favouritism	1

The top four ranking factors were considered the most prominent and were further explored below:

5.6.1.1 Gender stereotyping and societal influence

Gender stereotyping and societal influence were considered the leading elements of the factors inhibiting the promotion of women. Gender stereotypes, in this context, are referred to as generalisations about the role and capability of each gender while societal influences are to blame for gender stereotyping. Participants highlighted that there were perceptions about the roles that women could actually perform as well as those stereotypes that influenced the manner in which women were accepted as female leaders. The responses of participants are reflected below:

Very specific male-dominant views and perceptions of women in working space. They (women) are perceived as soft or not necessarily adding value or being a bit dismissive. It's very gender specific stereotypes that I think plays out and also realising that sometimes, in order to get people to move along with you, you need to meet them where they are at.

The way that society thinks about women is the way that women start thinking about themselves and that's how they show up in the corporate context and that societal and individual views then contribute in the corporate environment as well.

So I found it difficult in that he, and I don't even know if it is a respect thing, because he did not know me so he could not be disrespectful because he did not know me but just taking an instruction from me as a woman.

They tend to take the stereotypes. We say these jobs are tough for women even when women are designed for to do those jobs.

5.6.1.2 Male domination

Male domination had the second highest mention by participants who were interviewed as an inhibiting factor to the advancement of women into senior roles within corporate organisations. The views of participants were split, with some citing the existence of "old boys clubs" as a factor and some participants highlighting the intimidation that occurred as a result of males being in the majority in senior leadership. Some participants indicated that the domination of males in senior roles simply meant that there was no space for females to assume those roles. Their perspectives were represented as follows:

There is still an over-concentration of white males at middle-senior management level so that ultimately impacts, you know, the extent to which there is space for females to actually grow within that space.

I think that there is this brothers or the boys club if I can put it like that. And again, a lot of the guys that have been here for a long time, they kind of team up to look out for each other and we going anywhere and you'll find, even in meetings, they are overbearing and what they say goes. So I do find, and funny enough, if I compare it to my previous company, there was a boys club there but not as dominant as it is here.

It's still a man's world especially in the senior leadership, I suppose.

But when somebody, a male, then spoke exactly what I said then that project

was accepted but just because he is a male.

5.6.1.3 Self-limiting beliefs

I think for me, when it comes to the promotion of women, I think we tend to be our own worst enemy in the sense that 1) before you even say put your hand up, you question yourself a thousand times whether am I really up to this or should I be doing this?

These were the words of one executive who shared her experience by explaining that for her to advance in the corporate world, she had to “grab her career by the horns”, as she put it. Her view was that most women sat back and had the expectation that someone was responsible for “pulling them out from wherever they were”. As she further explained about these women, she said, “They might say, oh no, who am I? And why not just take that step forward to advance their own careers”.

Most other participants shared the same views and expressed their perspectives as follows:

I still believe that one of the most difficult struggles of women empowerment is women themselves. Because the level of consciousness and pushing is not as hard as it should be. I know it comes from a man saying that but, as a man, I can say when we are pushing for these things, it can't just be men pushing it for women. Women have to be pushing it more for themselves.

So, some again might quit without even trying. You know, resigning themselves to saying, you know what, I don't even think it's possible to juggle it all.

So there is that influence from the society and then from an organisation point of view, is that when you look, majority of people ... in organisations are women but they are not occupying the top seats in our conversation and that also is historical but it is then how do we then change around how business sees the role of women and how we can fast track women into senior management?

5.6.1.4 Tough and Inflexible work environments

Tough working conditions and expectations from employers were also cited as being a contributing factor that made some women reluctant to take on some leadership or senior roles as these inflexible conditions either impacted their family lives or they simply felt they could not succeed under those conditions. As one participant commented about the inflexible global rotational strategy imposed by her organisation

which required her to relocate to another city for four years:

I think it's quite insensitive. I don't think its progressive enough. I think what you find is that [the organisation] being dominated by males; they are more, more about ... because, typically, many of them have wives that don't work, so they can go all over the world so they are eternal expatriates.

Other views expressed by participants are as follows:

... the issue of not wanting to fail and not understanding that failure is actually important. But, sometimes also environment in a corporation are clearing in such a way that, actually, failure is not an option and yet people grow much more from failure and also that, as a woman, if you are from an environment for whatever reason, you are carrying all women of the world. When a man gets a job, he fails, he failed. I don't know why it is when a woman gets a job, she is representing all women of the world. If she fails, then all women in this company cannot be hired again.

She has a child, she will be senior woman and she will go drop off her kid at school. Be in late, leave early, pick up the kid, work until a certain hour. They are not looking for that. They want that person there whenever they look for her. That person should be there all the time, whenever. That person should be at their beck and call.

5.6.1.5 Employment tenure

Employment tenure was cited by some participants as the reason why women were not progressing into roles of more responsibility and decision making. Some participants did acknowledge that employment tenure was also a means through which females made a natural progression into senior roles which was a good thing. However, the problem came as a result of the legacies of the past which implied that most senior roles were predominantly occupied by males. In that regard, they felt that there was no space for women to progress.

Comments from some of the participants are presented below:

And they start working there straight after school and some of them start working during the time that they are studying and they go into retirement at the [organisation] and they never go anywhere else. It becomes very difficult because this is a very close knit tight network of people that have known each other for the last 25 years. It's very difficult to break through that.

People don't leave so people occupy positions for years, many years so when one position becomes available on the management part then all the management wants to apply for that.

You have an MD and a Chairman that has been in the business for the past, he's never worked anywhere except there.

5.6.2 The attitudes of women in organisations when dealing with the factors that inhibit the promotion of women into leadership roles

When asked about their views on the attitudes of women in response to their slow progression in corporate organisation or the attitudes of those who merely felt they were being overlooked, the perspectives of participants were equally mixed.

Table 8: Attitudes of women in response to factors that inhibit their promotion

Rank	Attitudes of women	No. of mentions
1	Defeatist attitudes	4
2	Ambitious	3
3	Assertive	2
3	Immaturity	2
4	Passivity	1

Some participants believed that females displayed a defeatist attitude and accepted the mediocrity offered by their organisations. On the other hand, some participants believed that some females were ambitious and displayed assertive behaviour in fighting for their advancement. The views of participants are expressed below while Table 8 above illustrates the split views and the identified attitudes.

Most of them feel defeated. Most of them feel it's okay for them to play small. Most of them believe that their role should be related to them supporting their men.

But, the overall point is that women would have to want this more than anybody else and have to fight for this more than anybody else. You can't underestimate their existence since time immemorial in equalities that have been embedded in society. That have been playing at the back and also the front and sides of these women. That have convinced them to stay small, the big world belongs to men.

I think that the saddest thing for me is that some women actually accept the

mediocrity of what's being imposed on them as their reality and they're willing to live within it.

On the women with “go-getter” attitudes, this is what some participants said:

You find people that really, really want to move past it and they find ways and they find avenues of doing the same.

And then you get women who actually find a way of surpassing what they perceive to be the glass ceiling by exploring different avenues.

5.7 Results for Research Question 4

What are the potential benefits or drawbacks to the promotion of women into senior leadership roles for women?

In analysing the data for Research Question 4, various codes emerged that were grouped into categories in order to come up with the main themes during the selective coding stage.

5.7.1 Benefits brought about by the advancement of women into leadership roles

Table 9 below provides a view of some of the benefits to the advancement of women into senior roles as identified by participants that were specific to women. Four themes emerged from the data collected during interviews; they were ranked according to the number of times each code was mentioned using enumeration. The benefits are discussed below:

Table 9: Benefits to women, of women advancement for women

Interview Question 7 - Explain what benefits you believe the promotion of women into leadership roles yields for women?			
Examples of quotes	Codes	Themes	No. of mentions
I think it provides something that is a very key element to existence and that's hope. I think that seeing people like [Group CFO] etc., can operate at that level and doing it quite well without losing herself	Role models gives hope	Availability of role models	13
I think it encourages women to say: if you can, I can too. It challenges the norms and it challenges the ways women sometimes think about themselves	Role model challenge norms		



<p>You know. But then when I got it, I hope they got the message that it's possible. Next time you try it also and see. It sends a positive message.</p>	<p>Role model - positive message</p>		
<p>Even the call centre because I walk around a lot, I always interact with people, I've found that I have inspired a lot of people, I have become an unconscious role model to a lot of people</p>	<p>Role model - inspire other females</p>		
<p>women who are successful in my understanding and perception bring up other women and collaborate with them</p>	<p>Bring up other women</p>	<p>Support networks</p>	<p>4</p>
<p>the more women there are in this environment the more support we give each other. The more diverse the environment can be. The more business we can do in this environment because we have diverse thinking. We have diverse planning skills. We have diverse approaches to how we sell whatever product or service that the business is selling</p>	<p>Support for other women</p>		
<p>They would choose their top 20 performers and you will actually go into a full day forum with these Senior leaders that were women. If there was a Spring Day, they would go and choose people and you would be able to go and interact with them</p>	<p>Encourage relationship building and networking</p>		
<p>So they were more available to us and of course after that first meeting and spending a full day with someone like that, you would feel more comfortable. If you needed to drop them an email</p>	<p>Networking</p>		
<p>so what I have seen in women in senior roles is many times, they have a lot more compassion and empathy for many of the things that women do go through</p>	<p>Compassion and empathy for women</p>	<p>Compassion & empathy</p>	<p>4</p>
<p>Executive Director is very, she's got a lot of compassion for women</p>	<p>Compassion for women</p>		
<p>They say it was your compassion. The fact that you are a mother. The fact that you are a family person and that type of thing.</p>	<p>Women management style compassion</p>		

5.7.1.1 Availability of role models as a benefit leading to opportunities for other women

The value of having role models in organisations was cited as the highest ranking benefit for females within corporates. In particular, participants highlighted the benefit of role modelling as leading to opportunities for other women in the organisation. In describing the benefits of role models, participants pointed out that role models give hope, inspire confidence in other women, challenge the thinking of females and others, encourage other women and serve as a catalyst to advance other women.

When commenting about those industries that were predominantly male dominated, one participant said,

So when women see women in senior positions, it's encouraging for them as well especially in the [organisation] that focuses on Science and Technology, Science, Engineering and Technology. You know it's not a traditional field that women do it so it's encouraging to see women have these roles so that other women and other kids can also go into the Science, Engineering and Technology Field.

This suggested that other women and younger children who were yet to make career choices were encouraged to choose career paths that were previously perceived to be suited to males.

As one participant explained, she once applied for a position which was deemed unachievable for her by many in her organisation, largely because she was young and also female. On getting the job, she pointed out that many females were encouraged to start applying for senior roles as her experience had given them hope that they too, could achieve it. As she put it,

But then when I got it [the job], I hope they got the message that it's possible. Next time you try it also and see. It sends a positive message.

5.7.1.2 Support networks

Support networks were highlighted by participants as being a benefit that resulted from having a larger female presence in senior roles. The perspectives of the participants were that the presence of women in leadership roles gave them the opportunity to support other females who were further down the organisational hierarchy in order to get them to succeed. One participant said the following of women leaders who were

successful in their organisations, “women who are successful in my understanding and perception bring up other women and collaborate with them”.

Similarly support networks were identified as a vehicle for creating networking opportunities. Participants highlighted that, the more women there were in senior roles, the more opportunities appeared for younger women to engage with their senior counterparts. As one participant said about her former organisation, women leaders would set aside time on some significant days such as women’s day to spend time with other women in the organisation. Of this, she said

I found that where they were really, really good, those women leaders, they actually like on Women’s Day. They would choose their top 20 performers and you will actually go into a full day forum with these senior leaders that were women. If there was a Spring Day, they would go and choose people and you would be able to go and interact with them.

She suggested that this created networking opportunities for more junior women and an opportunity to be known by their senior female counterparts and in the process, this opened up channels for access to senior leadership.

5.7.1.3 Compassion and empathy

The compassion displayed by female leaders to other females came out as the second significant theme. Participants highlighted that it was important to have females in leadership teams as they often could relate with the challenges that other women face given that they are women themselves. As one participant said, “They say it was your compassion. The fact that you are a mother. The fact that you are a family person and that type of thing”. This was in reference to the compassion and understanding she displayed towards mothers who had to sometimes deal with challenge of juggling family responsibilities and work commitments.

5.7.2 Drawbacks to the promotion of women into leadership roles

While some participants initially had difficulty considering any drawbacks that could occur as a result of the promotion of women into leadership roles, some drawbacks were acknowledged by participants. The analysis process allowed common themes to emerge that are presented in Table 10 below. In addition, there were some participants who indicated that they believed there were no drawbacks to the advancement of women.

Table 10: Drawbacks to the promotion of women

Rank	Drawbacks to the promotion of women	Frequency
1	Dual role of women as mothers (and wives)	3
1	Reluctance to promote other women	3
1	Token appointments	3
1	No drawbacks	3
2	Self-identity and individuality	2
3	Failure due to lack of support	1
3	Bad attitude	1

A total of seven drawbacks were identified as a result of the promotion of women. Four of the seven were equally highlighted as top ranking disadvantages of the promotion of women.

5.7.2.1 Dual role of women as mothers (and wives)

Participants highlighted the personal impact on women as a result of being promoted into senior roles as they had to find the right balance between their work and their home responsibilities. The struggle was even worse for mothers who had to rely on extended families for support and child care while they were attending to their demanding jobs. Participants expressed their views as follows:

I've often thought that the one element that could suffer as a result of our empowerment could be the roles that we play as mothers. That again goes back to the societal influence. So, over the years I've really looked at that very intently. I realised that it's actually to the extent that we are not compartmentalise our lives because we don't live in little boxes that we now say that you are now going to jump out of this box and jump into the other etcetera, but it's about being conscious and being present and making sure that every moment with whoever you are spending it with actually counts.

They can only benefit from senior positions. From a personal perspective there are drawbacks for them. You all have to find the compromise between home life and work life.

You would think at 4pm she would go home but it's the same, the impact is now personal. The nanny tends to play a bigger role in the family. The extended family, like the mother and the mother-in-law start playing bigger roles.

5.7.2.2 Reluctance to promote other women (the “Queen Bee” syndrome)

The “Queen Bee” syndrome came out strongly as a negative that arose from the empowerment of women into leadership roles. The “Queen Bee” syndrome is referred to as the reluctance of women executives to encourage the promotion of other women. Participants highlighted that some women who held senior roles were threatened by other women.

I had a coaching session yesterday with a very strong black female that literally was boxed by another black female, because you don't realise there is this greater battle being played outside of yourselves that you start taking each other on and you don't realise that, by letting another black woman lose, you're actually allowing a whole host of other black women to lose; there is all those perceptions around BBBEE and EE how black women are given positions in today's world, in South Africa specifically, and then we don't need this.

This participant further suggested that often women who were senior but not successful often felt threatened by other women. As she put it, “women who are not successful are very fearful about other women; they always see them as a threat”.

Another participant suggested that women executives who felt threatened by other women sometimes opted to appoint males instead of their women counterparts.

Women tend to feel very threatened by that one and that's a real problem. So because a woman feeling threatened by another woman, they would much rather promote men and that's a challenge and for me, that has been a challenge even in other previous positions that I had.

5.7.2.3 Token appointments

Similarly, incorrect appointments that were made in some cases due to forced legislation were highlighted by participants as being a drawback for women in that some women were appointed into roles that they were not necessarily ready to assume. That, together with a lack of the support from organisations, may cause them to fail as a result. Participants expressed their views as follows:

In terms of BEE scoring, I've seen some very bad appointments being made. I've had a very close experience, where somebody that I found in my current work environment, and I didn't think they were ready.

They did it because they were compliant or maybe they were forced to do it but then once they have some confirmation that this person can't quite do it, then

they really make it really miserable of you to say.

Women get into leadership positions and they are not ready and they mess it up so you end up having a quantity of women but not the quality of the leadership.

5.7.2.4 No drawbacks

The initial reaction of most participants was that there could be no drawbacks resulting from the promotion of women into senior and executive roles. Instead, some of them expressed their regret about the fact that these types of conversations were still being held. One participant said,

No, I'm always amazed actually that we still have these conversations because women bear children, raise children are married to men most of the time, run households. It's always amazing to me that when there is something to do with office work or something to do with the business environment, all of a sudden they are not good enough because I'm not sure if we are to turn the tables and we are to judge men on what women do would that [can] be seen to be a performance area where they are strong.

Other participants' views were:

I can't think of any drawback if women get promoted.

No I don't see any disadvantage. The only disadvantage is having the wrong leader. That is the only thing for us in terms our selection. We need to make sure that we get the right people for the different roles.

5.7.2.5 Self-identity and individuality

Loss of self-identity and individuality ranked second highest with participants highlighting that, when women are appointed into executive or senior roles, they feel the need to change their identities or behaviour in order to fit the part. One participant said,

There is a view that women have to be like men when they are in corporate for them to be successful. I think it's wrong. A lot of them have to change their behaviour to try to be iron women.

Adding to this argument, another participant pointed out that women tend to exaggerate the male behaviour they attempt to simulate:

Women became more like men than men were; you still find that today where

you find women that are like that and that for me is so bad because I think you are missing out on so much of who you could be if you just allow yourself to be who you are.

5.8 Results for Research Question 5

What are the benefits of promoting gender-balanced leadership and what are the implications of NOT promoting gender-balanced leadership for corporates?

Research Question 5 was aligned to two interview questions, interview questions 9 and 10. Interview question 9 attempted to understand the benefits brought about the advancement of females into senior roles, in other words, the promotion of gender-balanced leadership. Interview question 10, on the other hand, was aimed at understanding the implications for corporate organisations that did NOT promote gender-balanced leadership teams.

5.8.1 The benefits of promoting gender-balanced leadership for corporates

Various themes emerged during the analysis of raw data. The themes were ranked through the use of enumeration, that is, the number of times a code was mentioned by a participant. The codes that had the highest number of mentions were ranked as the most significant as represented in Table 11 below. As such, the most significant benefits that were identified by participants are discussed below:

Table 11: The benefits of promoting gender-balanced leadership for corporates

Rank	Benefits for corporates	No of times mentioned
1	Diverse way of thinking and decision making	10
2	Performance and delivery culture	5
2	Diversity of skills	5
3	Team cohesion	2
3	Risk taking & increased access to markets	2
4	Economic and Human rights	1
4	Profitability	1
4	Increased productivity and global GDP	1

5.8.1.1 Diverse way of thinking and decision making

Participants highlighted that having women at the top encouraged diversity within organisations as well as influenced the level of decision making at a senior organisational level. Participants expressed their views as follows:

That you are not only just getting one gender's view or one gender's approach. You are getting a multi-view or multi-dimensional approach to things.

If you bring women into power in organisations you allow them to make decisions, you allow them to allocate resources, you allow them to take bets, take accountability. Whether we like it or not, truthfully speaking, women would better understand women than men would understand women.

Our view of diversity is what drives that. Our leadership most certainly the more diverse the leadership team is the more powerful we become and the more dynamic we are. So, the more women we have of different cultures, the more men we have of different cultures the better we are as an organisation.

It could be symptomatic that they are different cultures. Nothing wrong with doers. It's not a talk shop. Let's meet next quarter to talk about it. By next quarter it's about how much we've done. So, the culture change has most certainly brought about this. I do believe that it's got to do that we have women in place and we've got black people in place that has never been there. So, it's a different culture.

5.8.1.2 Performance and delivery culture

Some participants explained that their experiences of having women in their leadership teams saw a shift in the culture of performance and delivery. They expressed their views as follows:

I think that there is a benefit of having a woman in a leadership role because, in that, I read a quote by, I think it is William Goulding that says that "the greatest disservice that woman make to themselves is thinking that they are equal to men" while the reality is that we are so much more because we have a tendency to duplicate whatever is given to us. So with that, I think that women are able to look at things for what it is and also look beyond the peripheries of what analytical and factual data presents and tap into the emotion of not only people but also circumstance that is able to mobilise people to achieving outcomes.

I think that you get even more diversity when you think of a group of women

with all different perspectives and a group of men with different perspectives; be it culturally, be it tribal, be it whatever but if you can get a group of people together with such differing views that they are actually able to contribute and build on the way in which you articulate where you are headed and their views around strategy, as an example, you will be able to achieve so much more.

For example in my department, we are... I have most of my leadership team is 75% women. My direct reports, it's females and all the projects we are delivering are projects I'd say to some extent I'm going to change the way we do business globally as [the organisation].

We have become a lot more agile and a lot more mobile as an organisation.

5.8.1.3 Diversity of skills

Similarly, the diversity of skills was identified by participants as a factor that contributed towards the achievements of an organisation through the progression of women into decision making roles. Participants made reference to the importance of diverse planning skills brought about by having the presence of women in leadership teams. In her comments about the ability of women to bring structure into an environment, one participant said "Though we have always said that women make better administrators and I think it is because of them being organised and structured and so forth". Another participant added that the diversity of skills brought about by women could influence the approaches in which products or services were sold by organisations. She said,

The more women there are in this environment, the more support we give each other, the more diverse the environment can be. The more business we can do in this environment because we have diverse thinking. We have diverse planning skills. We have diverse approaches to how we sell whatever product or service that the business is selling.

The views of other participants are presented below.

You are also going to need to have different thinking in your planning, not thinking planned only as things are seen by one particular gender. So I'm always encouraged by anyone who is looking to be diverse.

It has been proven that profitability does improve so they are missing out on those additional profits and just from a more balanced and diverse work force.

5.8.1.4 Gender balanced teams enable team cohesion

Gender balanced teams allow us to know each other better as teams. There is some complementarity with the whole balance. So the boys that are married work with other women or girls in the office so I think they get sensitive, generally to some of those issues. Girls as well, hopefully, they have got partners, I just think there is some social education that happens with those dynamics. Because too much of one sometimes we get lost in our own world and we think our view is a dominant view which is their view. Balancing I always find is richer. You've got different perspectives, you've got different strengths, people bringing different views in and, as long as the views are not pulling away from what we want to achieve, then we are ok.

These were the views of a participant who felt that there was value in having a healthy gender balance in leadership teams. She highlighted the benefit from a social cohesion perspective where working together with different genders could help team members deal differently with their household matters because of the different views brought about by the diversity of their teams. The different perspectives and strengths brought about by a diverse team certainly led to a more cohesive team, the participant believed. Similarly, another participant highlighted the importance of gender balanced teams in dealing with emotional intelligence (EQ) dynamics within teams:

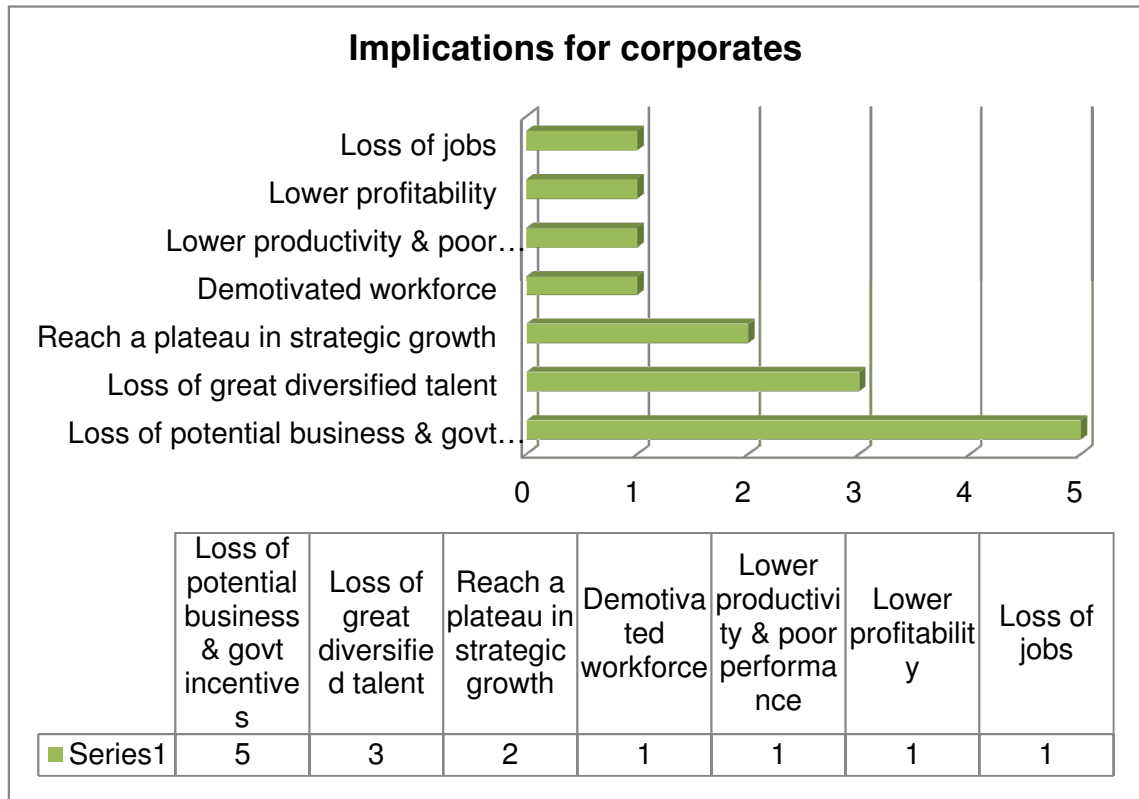
So, I think the males tend to bring the non-hormonal, sort of straight to the point. The ladies sort of break their ego. So it's nice to have the mix and I think it keeps the cattiness out of being an all-women's team.

5.8.2 Implications of NOT promoting gender-balanced leadership for corporates

Legislation in South Africa, through the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa in 1996, paved the way towards correcting inequalities and continued discrimination in the South African labour market (Papacostantis & Mushariwa, 2016), however corporate South Africa still faces an underrepresentation of executive and senior female leaders as evidenced by the results of Research Question 1. To this end, corporates who do not meet the legislative requirements of the country face several implications such as the loss of business and government subsidies. Furthermore, organisations that do not realise the full potential of female leaders stand to lose the value brought about by a diverse workforce. In answering the question of implications for organisational performance for those corporates who were not working towards advancing women, participants highlighted various factors which were grouped into themes and are

represented in Figure 6 below.

Figure 6: Implications for corporates



Participants were of the view that organisations that were not making an effort at advancing women were at a disadvantage.

5.8.2.1 Loss on potential business and government incentives

There were two participants who had strong viewpoints, one in the telecommunications industry and another in the motor manufacturing industry. These organisations rely heavily on government business given the nature and scale of their businesses. The participants expressed their views in the following way:

Basically improves the BEE score and we are in a regulated industry. For instance, you can't get spectrum. It's difficult to get government deals. Put this way, for us breaking or shattering glass ceilings is a business imperative. It's not just a moral imperative. In a regulated company or industry like telecoms you won't get government business. Government is one of the biggest customers.

Within the next two to three years we might actually close shop, because the government is tough on that now. Extremely tough. And ... as I said to some

extend in the beginning that probably we need to get to that point where those incentives are pulled out, are withdrawn.

They are forgetting that, by next year, if we are not even a level 8, the plant can shut down. The 3000 people sitting there can be sitting without jobs.

Yes, remember that if you are not hitting those targets and you are not a level 8, we lose all those incentives. That's probably half a billion that we get on an annual basis from incentives. We are losing probably all our contracts to Region South. From here to Nigeria. We will lose all those contracts because those are dependent on governments putting in a good word for us.

5.8.2.2 Loss of diverse talent

The loss of diverse talent was similarly a factor that emerged as a consequence for organisations that do not grow and keep their female talent. As alluded to in section 5.8.2, gender diverse leadership teams come with benefits. Participants articulated their views in the manner indicated below:

So with that, what we've got in the organisation at the moment is highly specialised blue thinkers, by blue I mean analytical. What we need going forward is really people that are able to think about things at a broader level so think about the societal influences, think about individual influences as a result of that and start making changes at a societal level.

Yes, I think they are missing out, hey. They are missing out from the value that women bring to the organisation. It has been proven that profitability does improve so they are missing out on those additional profits and just from a more balanced and diverse work force.

5.8.2.3 Reach a plateau in strategic growth

Strategic growth was considered one of the areas in which organisations could suffer, with participants highlighting their perspectives as follows:

I think that, in a South African context, and [the organisation] within that context at the moment, I think it will reach a plateau if we don't start getting females into leadership roles and my reason for saying that is that if you think about [the organisation's] strategy to become a bit more client centric etcetera.

We need more women to drive it because as much as the men predominantly are still breadwinners, that is changing drastically, women are the people who make the decisions in the households so what we do need is more women to

drive the strategies within the organisation from operational to strategic to make sure that we are able to speak to the right things that we are able to see things our consumers actually want because our true consumers are actually the women.

Implications of that is you will never, you might have someone that is there that is absolutely amazing and would be awesome, for example, let's say the next CEO or whatever and because that person is overlooked.

5.9 Conclusion on findings

The results of the five research questions came out in support of the existing literature on the advancement of females into executive and senior roles within organisations. In addition, the findings provided insights on the how women can contribute meaningfully towards their own advancement by shifting their attitudes and debunking the societal and gender stereotypes of women leaders. Also, of particular interest from the findings, was the view from participants about the role that genders play towards the improvement of organisational performance. Contrary to what most of the literature reviewed highlighted, participants of this study believed that it is the skill of leadership and not gender that has an impact on organisational performance. In Chapter 6 the research results and findings from Chapter 5 will be discussed in further detail and a framework proposed in order to assist corporate organisations improve their women advancement approaches.

Chapter 6: Discussion of Results

6.1 Introduction

This chapter discusses the research findings from Chapter 5 in detail. Furthermore, the research findings are linked to the literature reviewed in Chapter 2 in order to answer the research questions identified in Chapter 3. Existing literature was used along with the in-depth interviews to form the basis of the study which related to the advancement of women executives into senior roles in corporate South Africa. Insights gained through the findings of this research are compared to the theories presented in the literature review (Chapter 2). The research findings will be used to contribute to an improved understanding of the approaches that can be adopted by corporate organisations towards the advancement of women. They will also be used to make recommendations to minimise factors inhibiting the promotion of women to senior positions. The applicability of the results and literature in relation to this study are explored in the sections below.

6.2 Discussion of Results for Research Question 1

To what extent are corporates moving towards the promotion of women into leadership positions?

Research Question 1 sought to explore as well as reflect on the level of progress made by corporate organisations towards the advancement of female executives into senior roles. In addition, it investigated what participants believed are the drivers behind the organisations' decisions to advance women to the top. As argued by researchers, both globally (Dworkin et al., 2012; Bierema, 2016; Robertson et al., 2016; Fitzsimmons & Callan, 2016; Adams et al., 2009) and in a South African context by Hofmeyr and Mzobe (2012), the number of women who hold senior executive positions remains significantly low.

6.2.1 The extent to which corporates are advancing women into executive and senior roles

The data obtained from the interviews confirmed the already existing split views represented by literature explored in Chapter 2. Some of the concerns that were raised by Hofmeyr and Mzobe (2012) emphasised that the same issues that have emerged over the past 20 years still appear to hold women back. As a result, little progress has taken place. In support of these views, the interviews showed that participants noted

the slow progress towards the advancement of women into senior roles. During the analysis process, four key themes were identified by participants and ranked using enumeration to get a view of the number of times a theme was mentioned by participants as displayed in Table 4.

The most significant theme that was identified by participants in answering interview Question 1 is that there is shift towards the advancement of women into senior leadership roles. One participant said:

I must say that I've really seen, especially over the last five years, a huge shift towards an intentional effort to appoint women in portfolios in the executive role.

This finding is in support of the views of Adams et al. (2009) who state that, while there is sluggish progress globally, steady progress is being made. Another participant said, "there are definitely a lot more women in senior roles that what there are men" which is consistent with the work of Saab (2014) who found that developing countries, particularly BRICS countries – Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa – have the highest figures of women in leadership roles.

The slow rate of progress came out strongly in the views of participants who said that, while their organisations were working towards the promotion of women into senior executive roles, the progress was still slow. Some further believed that more could be done. This finding supports the work of Hofmeyr and Mzobe (2012) who state that, despite all the efforts of some corporates, women were still underrepresented in organisations.

Similarly, the dominance of males in the participants' industries was cited as a challenge in answering the question. Participants noted that the dominant presence of men in senior roles meant that it was difficult for women to rise into these roles. As one participant put it,

There is still an over-concentration of white males at middle-senior management level so that ultimately impacts, you know, the extent to which there is space for females to actually grow within that space.

Holland and Cortina (2013) attributed the dominance of males in senior roles to discrimination which is still prevalent in the corporate world. On the subject of gender discrimination, Hofmeyr and Mzobe (2012) state that there is evidence that gender

discrimination is a factor that slows down the progression of women into senior executive roles, particularly in male dominated industries such as mining, construction and engineering. In support of this view, one participant said, “obviously the oil industry, it’s still very white male”.

6.2.2 Drivers for the advancement of women in corporate organisations

This research set out to understand what drove corporate organisations to advance women into senior roles. In particular, whether companies did this based on intention, which would be driven by the strategy to grow women, or they were being forced by legislation. Interview question 2 sought to answer this part of Research Question 1. As illustrated in Table 6, several drivers were identified by participants as those utilised in their organisations. The top four drivers are discussed below:

6.2.2.1 Intentional (strategic objectives)

Participants explained that their organisations intentionally created opportunities for females to advance as part of the strategic objectives of the company, as one executive said,

I’ve seen more executives making decisions around appointing business managers within their portfolios to intentionally create an opportunity for females, specifically, to get exposure to businesses.

The CEO of an organisation who also happens to be female confirmed this view and added, “We’ve actively searched for having those kinds of numbers because we just wanted to be able to ensure that we promote women.” The emphasis, she said, was that

we become a vehicle for women to come in and support the junior, middle management and senior management and our approach has always been that we don’t only bring them into the job but we also mentor them into the position they are going to grow into.

Robertson et al. (2016) confirmed that organisations have had to rethink the way forward in respect of addressing the gender imbalances in senior leadership. They stated that companies have had to relook at the approaches they adopt and question whether those approaches are capable of progressing women in their organisations. This is confirmed by a finding by one participant who confirmed that

the focus has been very aggressive on transformation and the key driver for

transformation is the promotion of transformational females in the [organisation] and I must also stress the reason why it's a key driver is because the [organisation] is lacking in numbers ... there has been a lot of focus on my side of also recruiting transformational females because that is the strategy of the organisation that comes from the top.

Another participant suggested that the advancement of women in her organisation had been formalised as part of the strategy. She expressed her view as follows:

I like the fact that it was formalised and it was communicated in a particular strategy, a definite target set and then one can track how are we performing then a concerted effort could be made.

This shows that the benefits of formalising women advancement plans as part of the organisation's strategy, can be measurable.

6.2.2.2 Legislative push

Participants were concerned that their organisations' actions to advance women were forced by Employment Equity (EE) legislation. One participant said that, despite the legislation, they were still unable to implement any changes towards the advancement of women. He explained this as follows:

We've been driven by legislation and, as much as we have been pushed and pushed, it's still not happening. I think up until we get to a point, this year ... For example, here, you need to be a level 6 contributor. Now, for this year, we know for a fact that we will be dropping to a level 8 and then, for us to maintain that level 8 next year, we have to.

This finding is consistent with the work of Hofmeyr and Mzobe (2012) who confirm that legislation has limited success due to the low commitment to employment equity from the leaders of organisations. They further state that the reasons for the failure are that there is a culture in some organisations, which is largely dominated by white males, that resists transformation. In addition, it is believed that there is inadequate regulation and control of the implementation of employment equity.

6.2.2.3 Both legislative and intentional

Further highlighting the key drivers of organisation, one participant stated that they were driven by both intentional reasons but also confirmed that there was a legislative reason. He said,

So, our attitude as an organisation towards women and women empowerment is that it is as much an autonomous thing that we do as well as also an interventionist thing that we do. So, in other words, when we do have vacancies, people in senior places, we automatically are biased towards the BEE score card ... and, at the same time, we are told that you will have to look for women. The mandate is clear, we want black and we want women.

Another participant said,

I think it's both. I think, in some instances with some individuals, it could be because of legislation, but I also see a lot of passion with other individuals that they are passionate about it. So it would be unfair to sort of like put it in one category, I think it's both.

6.2.3 Conclusion to Findings for Research Question 1

The research findings indicate that more corporate organisations are making the shift towards the advancement of women into senior roles. To a large extent, it appears that corporates are intentionally moving to progress women as part of their strategic objectives. It is still unclear though why companies are not able to progress at an accelerated rate. Indications are that, while companies have strategic objectives to advance women, they are still struggling to implement their employment equity plans for reasons that were not confirmed by this research. In addition, while progress is acknowledged by the research findings, it appears a lot more can still be done. Of particular interest from the results of Research Question 1 is the indication that most senior roles within corporates are still occupied by males. It is evident that companies need to actively find innovative ways to deal with the dominance of males in leadership roles.

The research findings further show that drivers of companies to advance women are largely intentional. While some organisations are driven by employment equity legislation to promote women into senior roles, it is evident that there is not enough regulation and control of the legislation. Furthermore, it is inferred from the results that legislation alone is not enough to drive companies to make that shift. What is common from the findings however is that, regardless of the drivers of the advancement of women, implementation is still a challenge for most organisations.

6.3 Discussion of Results for Research Question 2

6.3.1 Approaches being adopted by corporates towards the successful advancement of women into senior roles

Research Question 2 sought to investigate what approaches were being adopted by corporate organisations in order to fast track the progression of women into senior roles given the legacies of colonialism and issues of transformation, particularly between men and women in South Africa (Statistics South Africa, 2015). Participants were encouraged to share their experiences of what they had observed within their organisations regarding the promotion of women into leadership roles. The second part of Research Question 2 sought to understand which of the approaches adopted by corporates had yielded benefits. Through the data analysis, it was also possible to assess which of the approaches adopted were most effective and the direct benefits of each one.

Approaches identified by participants were ranked according to the frequency of responses provided. The approaches were ranked and presented in percentage form as shown in Figure 4 of this document. The top three ranking approaches were deemed the most significant. The approaches are discussed below:

- Career growth and exposure
- Coaching and mentorship programmes
- Training and development
- Talent management

Seven out of the 43 mentions referred to the importance of intentionally allowing for career growth and exposure within the organisation. This is in direct reference to creating space for women to advance in the organisation through various strategic interventions such as identifying the talent and then giving females with potential the exposure to growth opportunities. This result is in support of Fitzsimmons and Callan (2016) who devised a framework that emphasised that valuable career capital accumulation unlocks more opportunities for capital accumulation. Career capital accumulation, in this context, refers to having opportunities for growth and access to influencing decisions at work. The opportunities that are unlocked by career growth, also referred to as capital accumulation, are access to a promotion or more responsibility which provides an environment to accumulate new capital and opportunities to develop, test and refine senior executives around the subjects of

leadership, self-efficacy, strategy, acumen, integrity and stewardship (Fitzsimmons & Callan, 2016). A participant supported this view by stating that

with giving me the exposure in terms of the business management element is also to say that, with time, I will be able to take over the senior portfolios, seeing more executives making decisions around appointing business managers within their portfolios to intentionally create an opportunity for females.

Coaching and mentorship programmes, were the second most significant approach emphasised by participants. Participants indicated that they believed that mentorship was a vehicle for professional growth in addition to technical expertise. A participant articulated this view by stating that

you can have the certificate and you can have the technical experience but you always going to mentor saying this is how you are supposed to grow yourself professionally. This is how you are supposed to carry yourself. This is how you manoeuvre in this particular space or that particular space, which a lot of successful males have, are those kind of mentors. The ones who really shoot up to the top will always tell you that I had this person as my mentor who took me through, not only the business side of things but also the personal grooming and development side of life and so therefore I've become a whole person and understood things that have been said in meetings and have been able to negotiate in a particular manner and I've been taken through by a particular individual who had a particular interest in my growth. We really also are very big advocates of that kind of behaviour and that kind of operation.

This finding is consistent with the findings of Dworkin et al. (2012) who said that the best way to get around organisational barriers is to engage in targeted mentoring programs. Furthermore, a body of research suggested that mentoring provides benefits such as career advancement, promotion decisions, increased wages and job satisfaction (Dworkin et al., 2012; Fitzsimmons & Callan, 2016; Allen et al., 2006).

Training and development was identified as an important aspect for the advancement of women. Participants highlighted the importance of on-the-job training as well as formal training by saying that

[the] focus is to make sure to sit down with the more junior people and to teach them how to publish and then what I also do is I also focus on experiential training ... and then what I also do is that every person in my team is required

to go on formal training so you can upgrade your skills because the [organisation] is focused on thought leadership.

The literature was consistent with this finding. The Women's Leadership Institute (WLI) (2015) distinguished between formal and informal approaches to training and cited the importance of training as a formal approach driven by policy to ensure alignment with performance management while informal training was believed to provide job challenges. Similarly, Hofmeyr and Mzobe (2012) mentioned that a marginal number of companies provide training given the lack of progression of women into executive and senior leadership roles and the value brought about by training.

Similarly, talent management was cited by participants as being a significant approach towards the growing and retention of local female talent within corporates as represented in Figure 4. In support of this approach, a participant said,

... so today the view is, we have got to actually develop people within the organisation so that they are ready to take over in those positions. So what you would have seen is that there is quite a lot of this movement taking place. We've seen quite a number of the existing talent being promoted into senior positions and then we've restructured accordingly as we've now got these new channels to service.

Participants also highlighted the importance of ensuring a female pipeline at all times as there was a risk of losing talent that was already grown in-house. The talent could be lost to other divisions of an organisation, particularly global organisations or to external companies. As in the case of one participant, who said that

we are part of an organisation that has suddenly become a global organisation and South Africa for all the things that we also do wrong have quite a talented workforce that is in demand everywhere. So it's been made very clear to us that, as the organisation grows globally, the talent is going to come out of South Africa.

This shows that growing talent consistently is of the essence. The finding on talent management is in line with literature as noted by Dezsö and Ross (2012) that organisations that did not pay attention to talent management issues faced potential risks such as trailing behind their competitors in attracting, growing and retaining the best employees to become the future generation of leaders.

6.3.2 Approaches adopted by corporates towards the advancement of women that yielded benefits

The second part of Research Question 2 sought to ascertain the benefits of the approaches adopted by corporate organisations towards the advancement of women. The results from the interviews are presented in Figure 4 where the benefits were tied back to the approach that was adopted in order to achieve that result. Furthermore, Figure 5 presents the effectiveness of each of the approaches that were adopted by corporate organisations. The top two ranking approaches were chosen based on the number of benefits yielded by each approach and the rankings, based on benefits brought about by each approach differ from the rankings presented in Figure 4, which were based on most frequent mention of the approach.

Based on the analysis performed for this question, the top two ranking approaches were:

1. Mentorship and coaching programmes which yielded the following benefits:
 - a. Character building
 - b. Confidence building
 - c. Career growth

2. Support networks for women which led to:
 - a. Opening up networking opportunities
 - b. Setting measurable targets.

In line with the literature, according to Allen et al. (2004) and Rosser (2005), that mentoring is one of the key drivers for women to advance into senior roles such as CEO roles, participants believed that mentorship and coaching programmes were the most effective approaches used to improve the opportunities for the development of women. This is because they give women confidence and build character to improve their career growth within their organisations. In support of this view, participants said

... some changed jobs, got promotion because they know themselves and they influence themselves differently.

I have seen tremendous growth from people who had gone through the programme.

This finding is consistent with the work of Fitzsimmons and Callan (2016). They say

that mentorship can be categorised into two distinct functions, career development and psychosocial functions. Career development functions are those that include “coaching, sponsorship, exposure, protection and the provision of challenging career assignments”, while the psychosocial functions are those that encompass “encouragement, friendship, advice, feedback, helping individuals develop a sense of aptitude, confidence and effectiveness” (Fitzsimmons & Callan, 2016).

Support networks for women were considered the second most significant approach by participants based on the benefits they produced. In supporting their views, a participant indicated that

I think what I can mention was that the value we found was that when there were certain topics that Exco needed, let's say an opinion on or advice on, they would approach the leadership of this women's network or the people that were driving it. So, for example, there are a lot of engineers in needing to find female engineers. Again the organisation approached the woman network.

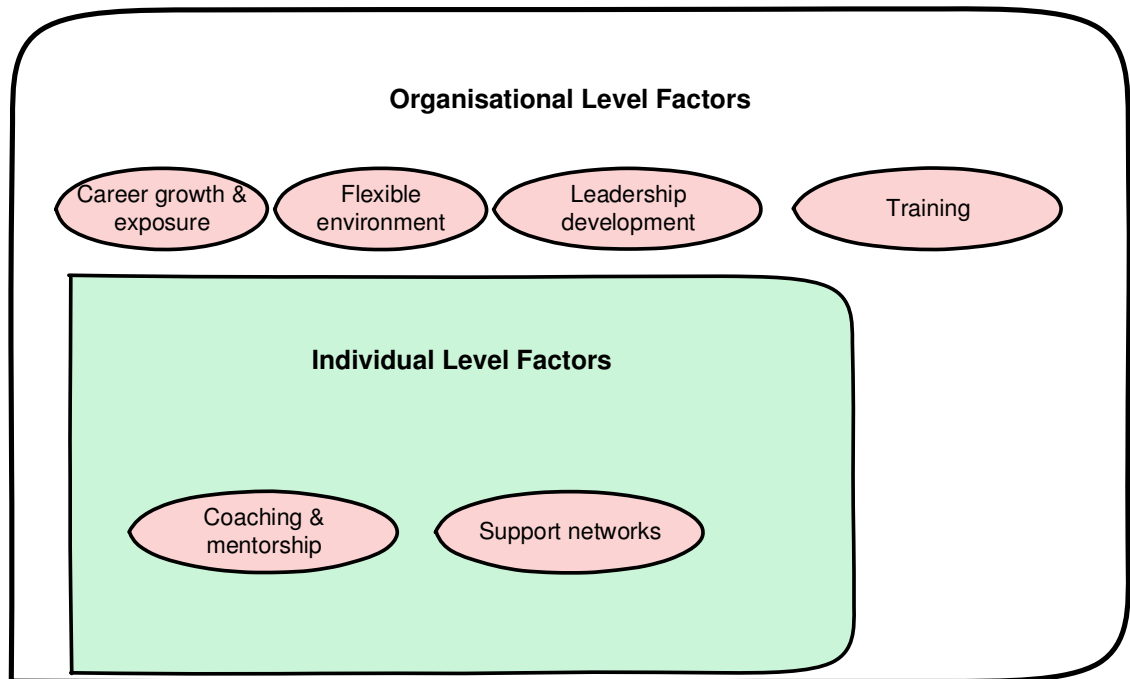
This finding is consistent with the work of Ely et al. (2011), which highlighted that the formation and alignment of an individual's informal network could provide opportunities in leadership as well as shape the developmental process of individuals. In addition, they pointed out that informal networks can shape a career course by generating access to career paths, focusing referrals and information flow, building a reputation and creating influence, providing protection, political advice and support, and increasing the prospect and speed of advancement. Other benefits pointed out by participants were the improvement in advancement of women, employee motivation and unlocking potential.


6.3.3 Conclusion to Findings for Research Question 2

The research findings indicate that mentorship and coaching programmes as well as support networks for women had the greatest influence as an approach to facilitate the advancement of women executives into senior roles. These were followed by career growth and exposure, creating an enabling environment, training and development as well as leadership development programmes. While talent management, succession planning and a focus on recruitment were identified by participants as approaches adopted by their organisation towards the advancement of women, there was no evidence to support the fact that these approaches work. As such, Figure 7 below illustrates a summary of the research findings for Research Question 2, which are the approaches adopted by companies who have succeeded in advancing women into

senior leadership roles.

Figure 7: Summary of research findings for the effective approaches adopted by organisations



 Effective approaches

6.4 Discussion of Results for Research Question 3

Research Question 3 sought to understand the factors that inhibit the promotion of women into executive and senior leadership roles for both individuals and organisations. Even though the progression of women into senior roles is slow, steady progress is being made. More women are rising into senior and executive roles within some corporates as evidenced by the results of Research Question 1. This is also in support of the work of Adams et al. (2009) who confirm the appearance of cracks in the so-called “glass ceiling”. However, women still face a number of barriers that inhibit their progression. These barriers have consequences for both individuals and organisations therefore it is important to identify these inhibiting factors to allow corporates to circumvent them.

6.4.1 Factors that inhibit the promotion of women into executive and senior leadership roles

The top three ranking factors as identified by participants and as represented in Table 7 are discussed below:

6.4.1.1 Gender stereotyping and societal influence

With a total of nine mentions, gender stereotyping and societal influence were highlighted as a key factor hindering the progression of women into senior roles. Fitzsimmons and Callan (2016) believed that the categorisation of people by their masculinity or femininity provides the basis for the classification of “others” (see section 2.4.1.2). This kind of behaviour is socially made, induces mental associations and is learned. In addition, they assert that categorisation, accompanied by gender stereotypes, encompasses beliefs that shape the behaviours of gender groups towards one another. This, according to Glass and Cook (2016) leads to the association of management being male and may lead to decision makers viewing women as less capable and proficient leaders than men.

The results support this literature as participants described how the roles performed by women were perceived to be soft and not value adding. Participants said that there were

very specific male-dominant views and perceptions of women in working space. [Women] are perceived as soft or not necessarily adding value or being a bit dismissive. It's very gender specific stereotypes that I think plays out and also realising that sometimes, in order to get people to move along with you, you need to meet them where they are at.

Adding to that, participants confirmed that some roles were deemed less suited for females confirming the notion by Glass and Cook (2016):

They tend to take the stereotypes we say these jobs are tough for women even when women are designed for to do those jobs.

6.4.1.2 Male domination

Male domination was cited eight times as a key inhibiting factor towards the progression of women. There were several perspectives from which participants considered the male domination barrier. Some participants considered senior males intimidating while others raised the issue of “boys clubs” where males who had been with the organisation for a long time had formed networks that were difficult to infiltrate. Participants, when raising the point about male intimidation and how female voices were not heard in a male dominated environment, said, “... but when somebody, a male, then spoke exactly what I said, then that project was accepted but just because he is a male”. This result was in line with the observations of Hofmeyr and Mzobe

(2012) who highlighted that some women felt that their voices or opinions are not heard and that they tend to agree with their male counterparts even when they disagreed.

In addition, participants said

I think that there is this brothers' or the boys' club, if I can put it like that. And again, a lot of the guys that have been here for a long time, they kind of team up to look out for each other and we going anywhere and you'll find, even in meetings, they are overbearing and what they say goes. So I do find and, funny enough, if I compare it to my previous company, there was a boys club there but not as dominant as it is here.

This research finding is consistent with the work of Hofmeyr and Mzobe (2012) who pointed out that industries such as mining, engineering and construction were still male dominated industries. This gender discrimination has negative consequences such as the exclusion of women from key functions, decreased productivity, disengagement and lower job satisfaction (Fitzsimmons & Callan, 2016). The findings are in support of Ibarra and Petriglieri (2016) and Ely et al. (2011) who determined that male domination is inflated by the existence of male networks that consist of high power men who lean towards channelling career and growth opportunities for their male subordinates who, they believe, have the confidence to succeed over the women. This leaves women in organisations with fewer leadership opportunities and they therefore become less visible than their male counterparts.

6.4.1.3 Self-limiting beliefs

A total of seven participants maintained that the self-limiting beliefs of women and their lack of confidence were significant factors in the slow progression of women into senior roles. As participants stated

I think for me, when it comes to the promotion of women, I think we tend to be our own worst enemy in the sense that 1) before you even say put your hand up, you question yourself a thousand times whether am I really up to this or should I be doing this?

Streifel (2015) noted that women are said to perceive themselves as having limited power. The self-limiting beliefs of women, according to Hofmeyr and Mzobe (2012), are due to factors such as gender stereotyping, lack of mentoring and lack of access to networking opportunities resulting in emotional and psychological impacts on women which leave them with feelings of self-doubt and a lack of confidence.

A male participant stated

I still believe that one of the most difficult struggles of women empowerment is women themselves. Because the level of consciousness and pushing is not as hard as it should be. I know it comes from a man saying that but, as a man, I can say when we are pushing for these things, it can't just be men pushing it for women. Women have to be pushing it more for themselves.

This result was found to be consistent with Sturm et al. (2014) who emphasised that the lack of self-worth and self-confidence in women is, to a certain extent, to blame for the lost opportunities to develop career capitals around strategy, stewardship and leadership that women encounter. Cultural beliefs were also highlighted by Ibarra and Petriglieri (2016). They used a term called “impossible selves” which describes cultural perceptions linked to behaviour and leadership identity that many junior females found impossible to achieve. This leaves them with feelings of uncertainty and lack of self-worth and they end up not having the aspirations to take up challenging senior roles.

6.4.2 The attitudes of women in organisation’s when dealing with the factors that inhibit the promotion of women into leadership roles

Interview question 6 allowed the participants to reflect on the attitudes of women in corporate organisations in response to the inhibiting factors presented in Table 7. Participants identified five different types of attitudes that were displayed by women who felt they were being overlooked for promotions in their organisations. In analysing the data for this interview question, enumeration was used to determine the ranking of the attitudes mentioned as represented in Table 8. The top two ranking constructs are a reflection of both the positive and negative responses displayed by women and are discussed below:

6.4.2.1 Defeatist attitudes

Four of the participants expressed that, when faced with challenges of career growth and progression, some females displayed defeatist attitudes and consequently accepted failure. As a participant explained:

I have come across different people, I have come across people. So you get people who say ‘the writing is on the wall and I accept that this is where I begin and this is where I end’ and ‘I think that the saddest thing for me is that some women actually accept the mediocrity of what’s being imposed on them as their reality and they’re willing to live within it’.

Consequently, some of these females leave their organisations as another participant confirmed “then people don’t stay with the organisation”.

6.4.2.2 Ambitious

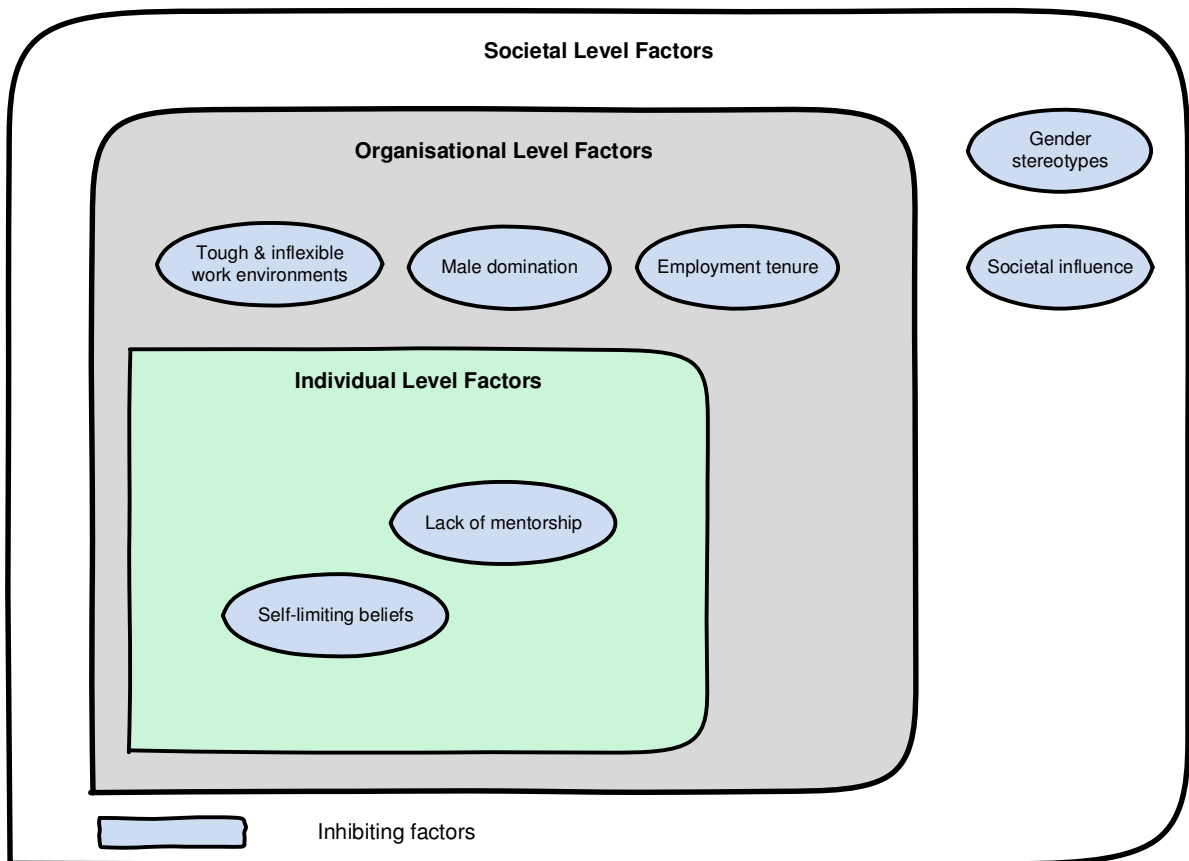
On the other hand, three participants stated that women displayed positive attitudes despite their perceptions of being overlooked for career growth and promotion opportunities by their organisations. Instead of being discouraged, these women were said to find a way of overcoming the barriers they faced and looked for different avenues to advance themselves within their organisations. As one participant explained,

... and then you get women who actually find a way of surpassing what they perceive to be the glass ceiling by exploring different avenues.

6.4.3 Conclusion to Findings for Research Question 3

The research findings support the three core themes that were identified from the framework devised by Fitzsimmons and Callan (2016). These core themes were identified as being the forces that limit the accumulation of career capital required for women as well as impede the advancement of women into executive and senior roles. These themes are societal, organisational and individual factors. As evidenced by the findings in section 6.4.1, the top three ranking inhibiting factors identified by participants are gender stereotyping and societal influence, male domination, and the self-limiting beliefs of women. For simplicity reasons, these inhibiting factors are mapped against the themes that emerged from the literature as illustrated in Figure 8 below:

Figure 8: Inhibiting factors



6.5 Discussion of Results for Research Question 4

Research Question 4 sought to understand the potential benefits and drawbacks, particularly for women that resulted from the promotion of women into senior roles. Table 9 illustrates the three key benefits that were identified by participants as the most likely to produce benefits for women.

6.5.1 Benefits for women

The results from the interviews as represented in Table 9 identified three significant benefits of having a greater number of females in leadership roles. The benefits are discussed below.

6.5.1.1 Availability of role models

According to the findings, the availability of role models was the most significant benefit believed to be realised as a result of having a larger percentage of females in corporate organisations. Role models, in this context, refer to individuals, particularly females who occupy leadership positions. In order for individuals to learn new roles, they need

to identify with role models and experiment with temporary identities using internal company standards and external feedback (Ely et al., 2011). The findings support this view with participants sharing their beliefs that women in senior roles serve as a catalyst to advance other women.

Participants articulated their views by stating that the availability of role models assisted other women to challenge their own thinking, gave them encouragement and the belief that if another woman could do it, they too could do it. As one participant put it,

... yet they make it work. It challenges you to think differently about your circumstances and what you sometimes think are inhibitors and you sometimes you want to give up and you sometimes think that this view of what the world want me to realise you realise that their challenges are far greater than yours ... yet they still and they still get it done so what are the things that you need to do differently in order to get it done as well?

Consistent with the findings, Pereira (2012) describes the role model effect as the influence and the change in awareness that results from people seeing women in charge.

6.5.1.2 Support networks for women

The importance of support networks was highlighted by participants. Participants expressed that the presence of females in leadership positions resulted in more support being provided for other women in the organisation, in particular, women who were further down the organisational hierarchy. One participant stated, “women who are successful, in my understanding and perception, bring up other women and collaborate with them”. This is consistent with the work of Ely et al. (2011), who found that informal networks played an important role in the progression to becoming a leader. They further stated that informal networks can shape a career course by creating access to jobs, facilitating referrals and information flows, building a reputation and creating influence, providing protection, political advice and support, and increasing the prospect and speed of advancement.

Hofmeyr and Mzobe (2012) pointed out that support networks for women facilitated the creation of an enabling environment in which they can share ideas and experiences in order to help them relate to one another. This is supported by the views expressed by

one participant, who said of informal networks in organisations,

They would choose their top 20 performers and you will actually go into a full day forum with these senior leaders that were women. If there was a Spring Day, they would go and choose people and you would be able to go and interact with them.

This statement confirms that support networks for women indeed encouraged dialogue amongst women.

6.5.1.3 Compassion and empathy

Participants highlighted that female leaders had a leadership style that was accommodating to the needs of other women, in other words, they understood the challenges faced by women and supported them in various ways. In addition, participants pointed out that some women leaders understood and supported the choices of women who had no desire to occupy senior roles but were happy to work in their current positions because of family responsibilities. As one participant said,

... so what I have seen in women in senior roles is many times, they have a lot more compassion and empathy for many of the things that women do go through. So at the [organisation], for instance, the Executive Director is very, she's got a lot of compassion for women, for instance, lots of women feel they don't want to push their career where I am and they don't want to push their careers and I have spoken to her about this. As long as they do x amount of work for x amount of money, they quite happy and they want to leave at a certain time.

6.5.2. Drawbacks for women

Through the use of selective coding, seven themes emerged which were identified as drawbacks for women as a result of the advancement of women into senior leadership roles. As illustrated in Table 10, using enumeration, the drawbacks were ranked according to the most mentions and those were considered the most significant. The four most significant drawbacks identified by participants are discussed below. In addition, the view that there were no drawbacks to the promotion of women was also ranked as significant; therefore it will also be discussed below.

6.5.2.1 Dual role of women as mothers (and wives)

Participants indicated that the multiple roles played by women as mothers, sometimes

wives and executives are significantly impacted by their promotion into senior roles. Women have to find the right balance between work and their home responsibilities. Participants said,

From a personal perspective, there are drawbacks for them [women]. You all have to find the compromise between home life and work life.

I've often thought that the one element that could suffer as a result of our empowerment could be the roles that we play as mothers.

This finding supports the work of Groyberg and Abrahams (2014), who remind us that there is a continued imbalance between men and women with respect to the sharing of domestic duties, with women taking on twice as much as their male counterparts. This, they state, limits the career growth and access to opportunities for women.

6.5.2.2 Reluctance to promote other women (the “Queen Bee” syndrome)

The reluctance of women to encourage the promotion of other women was a significant drawback identified by participants regarding the empowerment of women into senior roles. This phenomenon is referred to as “the Queen Bee” syndrome. As one participant said

I had a coaching session yesterday with a very strong black female that literally was boxed by another black female, because you don't realise there is this greater battle being played outside of yourselves that you start taking each other on and you don't realise that by letting another black woman lose, you're actually allowing a whole host of other black women to lose.

Derks et al. (2016) introduced the notion of the “Queen Bee” phenomenon. They state that “Queen Bees” have a tendency to distance themselves from women who are further down the organisational hierarchy than themselves, which legitimises gender inequality in organisations. The findings therefore support the work of Derks et al. (2016). In addition, Phakathi (2016) stated that “Queen Bees” are perceived to be protecting their territory which is a view expressed by one participant who said,

Women tend to feel very threatened by that one and that's a real problem. So, because a woman feeling threatened by another woman, they would much rather promote men and that's a challenge and for me.

6.5.2.3 Token appointments

Tokenism was identified by participants as a drawback for women. Tokenism, in this

context, is the act of appointing someone into a position in order to comply with legislation and, in the process, disregarding the capabilities and competencies of the individual. As participants said, some women were appointed into senior leadership roles when they were not ready and then lacked the support or guidance from their organisations. Participants said,

In terms of BEE [legislation] scoring, I've seen some very bad appointments being made. I've had a very close experience, where somebody that I found in my current work environment, and I didn't think they were ready.

... women get into leadership positions and they are not ready and they mess it up so you end up having a quantity of women but not the quality of the leadership.

Consequently, they fail in their role, which further perpetuates the negative stereotypes about the capabilities of women to lead. This finding is consistent with the work of Fitzsimmons and Callan (2016) who confirmed that, as well as the challenges faced by women, there are pressures associated with their jobs and the perceived inability of women to cope under stressful conditions.

6.5.2.4 Self-identity and individuality

Participants identified that sometimes women attempt to alter their behaviours in an effort to fit the part and lose their authenticity in the process. As one participant put it,

there is a view that women have to be like men when they are in corporate for them to be successful. I think it's wrong. A lot of them have to change their behaviour to try to be iron women.

DeRue and Ashford (2010) asserted that crafting and internalising a leader identity is crucial to the process of becoming a leader. They suggested that the progress of women may be hindered by persistent yet understated forms of gender bias which tend to obstruct the identity work required by women to assume leadership roles. The finding is consistent with the work of DeRue and Ashford (2010).

Adding to this argument, one participant pointed out that women tend to inflate the male behaviour they attempt to mimic:

Women became more like men than men were; you still find that today where you find women that are like that and that for me is so bad because I think you are missing out on so much of who you could be if you just allow yourself to be

who you are.

In light of this finding and the work of Derks et al. (2016), the consequence is that some organisations may relax their gender equality policies because they do not recognise the value of the different perspectives brought about by having “feminine” leaders.

6.5.3 Conclusion to Findings for Research Question 4

The research findings confirm that, while it may be arguable that there are no drawbacks to the advancement of women, participants identified various disadvantages from the promotion of women into senior roles. Using the number of themes that emerged for each category, there were seven drawbacks identified by participants versus only three benefits. It is therefore inferred that, on an individual level, there are more drawbacks for women than there are benefits. Furthermore, the results indicate that the drawbacks are as result of a combination of societal, organisational and individual level factors which confirms that these factors may influence women in isolation or in combination.

6.6 Discussion of Results for Research Question 5

Research Question 5 sought to understand the benefits for organisations that came about as a result of the promotion of females into senior roles resulting in a healthy balance in leadership teams. The second part of the research question (interview question 10) was also aimed at understanding what potential consequences would be faced by corporates who do not promote gender-balanced teams.

6.6.1 The benefits of promoting gender-balanced leadership for corporates

Several themes came about during the analysis process through the use of selective coding. Enumeration was used to establish the number of times each code was mentioned. These themes were then ranked in order of significance according to the number of times they were mentioned by participants as represented in Table 11. The top three benefits are discussed below:

6.6.1.1 Diverse way of thinking and decision making

I think that you get even more diversity when you think of a group of women with all different perspectives and a group of men with different perspectives; be it culturally, be it tribal, be it whatever, but if you can get a group of people together with such differing views that they are actually able to contribute and build on the way in which you articulate where you are headed and their views

around strategy as an example, you will be able to achieve so much more.

These are the words of a senior executive who sits on a diverse executive committee in her organisation. Her experience of diversity is not only limited to gender but extends to cultural diversity, as she explains. From her views, it is evident that her personal experience is that gender diversity is significant for the successful running of an organisation. This finding is consistent with the work of Post (2015) who posited that there are numerous benefits to the promotion of gender-balanced teams at all levels of the organisation in order to leverage diverse perspectives brought about by men and women. As other participants said,

... you are not only just getting one gender's view or one gender's approach. You are getting a multi-view or multi-dimensional approach to things.

If you bring women into power in organisations you allow them to make decisions, you allow them to allocate resources, you allow them to take bets, take accountability. Whether we like it or not, truthfully speaking, women would better understand women than men would understand women.

It is inferred that decision making is improved due to the diversity of thinking brought about by gender-balanced leadership teams.

6.6.1.2 Performance and delivery culture

I think that there is a benefit of having a woman in a leadership role because in that I read a quote by, I think it is William Goulding, that says that the greatest disservice that woman make to themselves is thinking that they are equal to men while the reality is that we are so much more because we have a tendency to duplicate whatever is given to us. So with that, I think that women are able to look at things for what it is and also look beyond the peripheries of what analytical and factual data presents and tap into the emotion of, not only people, but also circumstance that is able to mobilise people to achieving outcomes.

Dezsö and Ross (2012) suggested that an organisation's behaviour and performance are an image of the function of its top management, which is the decision-making team. As such, they stated that, whatever improves the task performance of the most senior management, should improve the overall performance of the organisation. The finding of this interview question is consistent with the work of Dezsö and Ross (2012). Confirming the delivery culture brought about by women in his team, one participant

said

... for example in my department, we are ... I have most of my leadership team is 75% women. My direct reports, it's females and all the projects we are delivering are projects I'd say to some extent I'm going to change the way we do business globally as [the organisation].

6.6.1.3 Diversity of skills

A study on overall leadership effectiveness by gender performed by Zenger Folkman (2011) discovered that, at all levels of organisations, women excelled in leadership competencies. To support this view, the findings, through the perspectives of participants, articulated the same views. One participant highlighted the importance of diverse planning and the ability of women to bring structure into an organisation. She said,

The more diverse the environment can be, the more business we can do in this environment because we have diverse thinking. We have diverse planning skills. We have diverse approaches to how we sell whatever product or service that the business is selling ... though we have always said that women make better administrators and, I think, it is because of them being organised and structured and so forth.

This finding is also consistent with a recent body of research that suggests that female leaders possess other skills which are beneficial to the organisation such as better innovation, extensive consumer outreach and improved corporate social responsibility records (Dezsö & Ross, 2012).

6.6.2 Implications for corporate performance

Interview question 10 sought to investigate what the implications would be for corporates who did not work towards the advancement of women. The respective factors that were identified by participants as potential implications were ranked according to the frequency of responses. The results, as illustrated in Figure 6, were, to a large extent, the views of those participants who felt that their organisations were lagging behind when it came to the progression of women into senior roles. The top three ranking factors were considered significant and are discussed in detail below:

6.6.2.1 Loss of potential business and government incentives

Participants cited loss of potential business, the loss of jobs and government incentives as significant potential implications faced by their businesses in the event they do not meet their legislative obligations to ensure gender equity at the senior levels of their organisations. Legislation in South Africa stipulates that companies seeking a license or concession from government, for example in the banking, mining, telecommunications and import/export industries, are required to comply with the Broad-Based Black Economic Empowerment (B-BBEE) codes. B-BBEE is an initiative by the South African government aimed at addressing the historical imbalances of the country, gender inequality being one of them. Consequently, most organisations are expected to comply with this legislation.

While some participants highlighted that their organisations were compliant with the legislative requirements, some participants indicated that their organisations were non-compliant and faced the risk of losing potential business, in particular, government business. When asked about his organisation's non-compliance, one participant said that

within the next two to three years, we might actually close shop, because the government is tough on that now ... Remember that if you are not hitting those targets and you are not a level 8 we lose all those incentives; that's probably half a billion that we get on an annual basis from incentives. We are losing probably all our contracts to Region South, from here to Nigeria. We will lose all those contracts because those are dependent on government putting in a good word for us.

The work of Papacostantis and Mushariwa (2016) is consistent with the findings and it can be inferred that, despite the legislative requirements and potential risks faced by companies, not enough is being done towards the advancement of women.

6.6.2.2 Loss of diversified talent

Participants identified the loss of diverse talent as the second significant repercussion faced by corporates who did not promote gender-balanced leadership teams. Their perspectives were directed at talent that was overlooked, stating that if that talent was not unlocked, corporates will never realise the full potential of an individual. One participant said,

the implications of that is you will never, you might have someone that is there

that is absolutely amazing and would be awesome, for example, let's say the next CEO or whatever and because that person is overlooked.

Participants further highlighted the importance of a diverse gender-balanced team and pointed out that they believed women brought value to organisations that could potentially improve profitability. As one participant put it,

Yes, I think they are missing out, hey. They are missing out from the value that women bring to the organisation. It has been proven that profitability does improve so they are missing out on those additional profits and just from a more balanced and diverse work force.

This finding is consistent with the work of Dezsö and Ross (2012) who argued that the leadership of women brought about an improvement in information management and decision making of teams purely as a result of diversity. They further confirmed that the scarcity of women in top leadership positions could have implications for corporate organisations.

6.6.2.3 Reach a plateau in strategic growth

Similarly, participants pointed out that they believed the strategy of a company will potentially suffer if there is no inclusivity of women in leadership. As a participant put it,

I think that, in a South African context, and [the organisation] within that context at the moment, I think it will reach a plateau if we don't start getting females into leadership roles and my reason for saying that is that if you think about [the organisation's] strategy to become a bit more client centric etcetera.

This means that the company will be static over a period of activity. Companies are required to remain agile in their strategies in order to compete in their respective areas of competence. This finding is supported by Dezsö and Ross (2012) who asserted that the implications for companies with non-gendered balanced teams are more than social and ethical implications. They suggest that a company's competitiveness may suffer because of a lack of gender diversity.

Larkin et al. (2012) highlighted further benefits brought about gender diversity. They posited that women have an ability to understand the complexities of an organisation and, as such, are able to bring different insights into the boardroom and that embody the diversity of the company's consumer base. Zenger Folkman (2011) and Dezsö and Ross (2012) confirmed that it was the nurturing, more cooperative nature of the

feminine management style that brought a significant contribution to the strategy, particularly for companies who relied on innovation.

6.6.3 Conclusion to Findings for Research Question 5

The research findings indicate that there is value for corporate organisations brought about by the promotion of gender-balanced teams from many aspects of the organisation. Women leaders were found to bring about an additional set of skills that influence the overall performance of an organisation as well as drive the performance and delivery culture of an organisation. It was also evident from the results of Research Question 5 that there are serious consequences for organisations that do not advance women into senior roles. Specific key factors were identified for the management of corporate organisations to implement the required changes to meet the diversity requirements. More importantly, it was shown that they can benefit from the value added by female talent as well as avert negative consequences.

6.7 Conclusion

Insights on the advancement of women into executive and senior roles gathered from the interview participants provided new understanding on the approaches that can best be employed by corporate organisations to advance women. In addition, a deeper understanding of the most significant factors that impede the advancement of women was obtained. These insights have been used as building blocks of the model for the advancement of women which will be presented in Chapter 7.

Chapter 7: Conclusion

7.1 Introduction

In this chapter, the model for the advancement of women into executive and senior roles is presented based on the insights gathered from interview participants as discussed in Chapter 5 and Chapter 6. Based on these findings, recommendations for corporate organisations are presented. Finally recommendations for future research are discussed.

7.2 Synthesis of Research Findings

The research pulls together the base literature that has preceded it and integrates the findings of this research with new knowledge gathered through the interview process. Participants provided rich insights that were directly linked to the five research questions presented in Chapter 3.

The research findings presented in Chapter 6 are consistent with existing literature. The study does however contribute to the broader theory around the advancement of women into senior leadership roles. The first contribution is to the relationship between the slow progress towards the advancement of women and the presence of male domination in senior leadership roles in organisations. As participants stated, male domination is a cause for the slow progression of women into senior roles. In addition, the findings of this research confirmed the existence of “old boys clubs” and cited the difficulties of accessing these networks. Furthermore, the research found that, regardless of the driver for the advancement of women in organisations, it appears that organisations are struggling to come up with action plans that can effectively be implemented.

It is therefore crucial for managers to find a way to break into the challenge of male domination and find ways to be inclusive of female leaders. This needs to form part of an action plan with set targets.

The second contribution of this study relates to the approaches that have been adopted by corporate organisations towards the advancement of women. Companies who have succeeded with implementation of approaches to the advancement of women have highlighted which of those approaches have been most effective. Coaching and mentorship programmes as well as the availability of support networks emerged as the

most effective approaches that have allowed organisations to successfully advance women into senior leadership roles. These two approaches are specific to addressing the individual level factor needs of women to advance into senior roles. While talent management, succession planning and a focus on recruitment were identified by participants as approaches largely adopted by their organisations towards the advancement of women, there was no empirical evidence to prove the benefit brought about by these approaches. It is inferred that organisations focus only on organisational level factors and neglect the individual level factors, yet there is interdependence between individual level and organisational level approaches to successfully advance women.

Managers should therefore allow the space for mentorship and coaching in their organisations and encourage the presence of support networks for women to share their experiences.

The third contribution of this study relates to the factors that inhibit the advancement of women into senior leadership roles. The insights gathered from participants indicate that factors that inhibit the advancement of women into senior leadership roles operate at the combination of individual, organisational and societal level factors. Inhibiting factors operate at the societal level where the existence of gender stereotypes and societal influence, while male dominance was identified as a factor operating at the organisational level and lack of confidence was operated at the individual level. Efforts to address the inhibiting factors need to be focused across the three levels – individual, organisational and societal.

The fourth contribution of this study relates to the drawbacks faced by women as a result of being promoted into leadership roles. It appears that the promotion of women into senior roles brings about more drawbacks than benefits for women on an individual level. The dilemma faced by women therefore is not about making the choice between being a corporate leader versus being a mother (and wife), but rather about finding the correct balance between the two with the support of their organisations. It is inferred that the influence of society still plays a role in perpetuating the problem. Furthermore, when some women are appointed into senior roles, they feel threatened and are faced with the “Queen Bee” syndrome which prohibits the progression of other women (by women themselves) or were appointed into positions that they were not ready for as a result of tokenism. This leads to a high risk of failure, which is likely to discourage other women from wanting to progress into more senior roles.

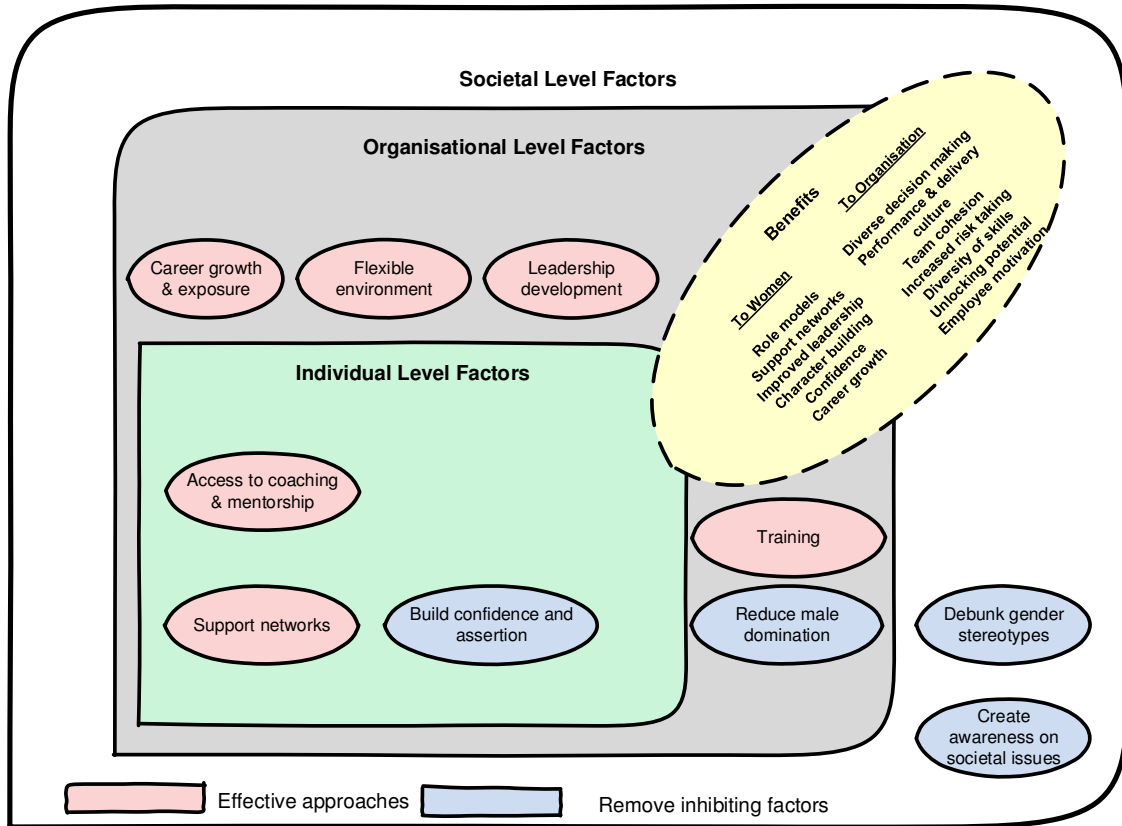
From this study, it is concluded that the advancement of women into executive or senior roles brings about more benefits for the organisation than it does for women themselves. Managers should therefore focus their efforts on both the individual and organisational level factors in order to arrive at an optimal solution for both the individual and the organisation.

7.3 The model for the advancement of women into executive and senior roles

7.3.1 How the model for the advancement of women was developed

The model for the advancement of women was carefully put together through the integration of themes and constructs that were identified in Chapter 5 and further explored in Chapter 6 of this report. The core of the model is based on the approaches that corporate organisations adopted towards advancing women into senior roles. The approaches that were proved to have yielded positive benefits for these organisations form the base of the model. In addition, the inhibiting factors that were identified by participants of the study as being the significant barriers to the progression of women were layered onto the model in order for organisations to address this issue from both perspectives. Figure 9 below illustrates the analysed and combined data.

Figure 9: The model for the advancement of women into executive and senior roles
(Source: Author's own figure)



7.3.2 Explanation of the model for the advancement of women

There are six key approaches that produce benefits towards the advancement of women in organisations. They are all significant and operate interdependently at the individual and organisational levels. Each approach has a certain set of benefits that were discussed in section 5.5.2. These approaches are deemed sufficient to work on the individual aspect of women's growth, for example, facilitating the career growth of women, building their confidence and characters, creating networking opportunities and unlocking potential. Similarly, there is benefit for the organisation such as the advancement of women and employee motivation. In addition, there are six inhibiting factors that were identified as being significant for slowing down the progress of women into executive and senior roles in organisations. The six inhibiting factors were subsumed into larger themes and were identified to operate interdependently at the individual, organisational and societal levels and are discussed in section 6.4.1.

The model for the advancement of women is therefore established using the approaches applied by organisations and supported by working towards removing the

factors that inhibit the progression of women into executive and senior roles. The aim of the model is to address all aspects that lead to the slow progression of women in corporates. According to the findings presented in section 5.5.1, most corporate organisations appear to be focusing their efforts on approaches that focus on the organisation in isolation. Given that the factors that inhibit the progression of women into senior roles operate in isolation or in combination with individual, organisational and societal factors as described by Fitzsimmons and Callan (2016), this model therefore suggests that the advancement of women be addressed by covering all three aspects.

Addressing the inhibiting factors and applying approaches collectively to address the individual, organisational and societal aspects related to the advancement of women will see benefits being realised for both women and organisations. It must be acknowledged that society plays a role in influencing the norms and beliefs of people however organisations face the challenge of only being able to influence the societies within their reach, that is, their employees and clients.

7.4 Recommendations for Managers

The data collected and findings from Research Questions 1-5, demonstrated that, while organisations appear to be actively working towards the advancement of women into executive and senior roles, they are grappling to find effective solutions to the problem of the slow progression of women to the top. It is inferred from the findings that organisations, which have action plans in place, are not able to implement them effectively. It also appears that the focus on addressing the issue of women advancement is approached in isolation of the individual, organisational and societal level factors. It is therefore recommended that managers employ the model that was developed during this research for the advancement of women.

Managers should target applying the approaches and addressing the inhibiting factors addressed by the model. As such they need to:

- invest resources and time into the accumulation of valuable career capital for women collectively at the societal, organisational and individual levels. As represented by the results, a strong focus should be made to the individual development of women, particularly towards building their self-confidence and assertion. This can be done effectively through the use of mentorship, both formal and informal and through the use of support networks.

- ensure that correct and suitable persons are appointed into senior roles through facilitating career growth and allowing for exposure to more challenging work. The role played by talent management will be key to ensuring that the correct talent is grown and retained within organisations alongside the use of training and leadership development initiatives.
- employ a system of accountability in order to ensure that targets are clearly set and measurable. Organisations, in which the advancement of women forms part of the strategic initiatives, must ensure that key KPI's (key performance indicators) are aligned accordingly in order to hold managers accountable for the advancement of women into executive roles.

7.5 Recommendations for Future Research

The topic of gender equality and, in particular, the promotion of women into senior roles has been researched extensively however there is little empirical evidence on the success or failure rate of approaches employed by corporate organisations towards the advancement of women. This research project aimed to uncover insights on the approaches adopted by companies that have succeeded in progressing women into senior roles as well as to unpack the challenges faced by both women and organisations towards the advancement of women into senior roles.

Recommended areas for future research are presented below:

1. There is a need for research to be conducted into how organisations can effectively address the problem of male domination at the senior levels of organisations while leveraging the already existing talent.
2. Research into the impact of women advancement on the families of women, in particular, children and spouses can be investigated further.
3. The attitudes of women in response to the lack of their progression into senior leadership roles and the underlying causes of those attitudes can be explored further.
4. Finally, the effectiveness of the “Model for the advancement of women” could be validated in companies that are known to have made good progress towards the advancement of women into executive and senior roles.

7.6 Research Limitations

As earlier mentioned in section 4.10 of this report, qualitative research is subjective in nature and, as such, is at risk of being influenced by several biases (Saunders & Lewis, 2012). The following aspects were identified as limitations of the study:

- The sample was limited to senior executives who were categorised as CEOs, executive managers, management directors, general managers or senior line managers. The views of individuals at the junior and middle levels of the organisations could have contributed to the study by understanding the topic from their perspective.
- The researcher was not formally trained to conduct expert interviews, which could potentially have impacted the interpretation of the results as analysis remains debatable because of its enquirer-dependent nature (Patton, 2002).
- The sample was limited to individuals from companies located in Johannesburg and Pretoria, Gauteng, South Africa. On this basis, geographical bias could have influenced the participants' responses.
- The sample was selected from only eight different sectors. In most instances there was only one representative from each of the sectors which implies a certain level of subjectivity in the participants' responses.

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Appendices

Appendix 1: Invitation to Participate in Research Study

Dear XXXX

I am writing to request an interview with you for my MBA dissertation. I am conducting research into the promotion of female executives into leadership positions in corporates in the Gauteng province. The aim of the study is to investigate the extent to which corporates are able to advance women into leadership positions. For those corporates who have succeeded, it is important to understand what it is they have done well and what has led to their success. Similarly for those corporates that have not fully advanced women, it will be important to understand the barriers they faced.

Your personal experience and views on the approaches adopted by corporates towards the advancement of women as well as the trade-offs between the advancement or non-advancement thereof of women into leadership positions will form the basis of the interview.

I would appreciate it if you would avail yourself for an interview with me. The interview is expected to last approximately an hour.

advancement or non-advancement thereof of women into leadership positions will form the basis of the interview.

Regards

Zanele Motsa

zanelemotsa@gmail.com

Appendix 2: Consent Form

Informed consent letter

The advancement of female executives in South African corporates: reflections on progress and implications for corporate performance.

My name is Zanele Motsa, an MBA student at Gordon Institute of Business Science (GIBS), University of Pretoria.

I am conducting research into the promotion of female executives into leadership positions in corporates in Pretoria and Johannesburg, Gauteng. The study attempts to establish whether more corporates are promoting females into leadership roles as well as the barriers to the advancement of women into leadership positions. Additionally, this study will also investigate how the advancement of women contributes towards corporate performance. Your personal experience and views on the approaches adopted by corporates towards the advancement of women as well as the benefits or drawbacks of having women in leadership positions will form the basis of the interview.

Kindly indicate your willingness to participate in this study by signing below. Additionally, your permission is requested for the use of an audio recorder to capture the content of the interview. The interview is expected to last for approximately an hour.

Please be informed that your participation is voluntary and you may withdraw at any time without penalty. Confidentiality and anonymity will be maintained at all times. All data will be kept confidential and the only people who will have access to the information obtained from you will be the researcher and her supervisor. If you have any concerns, please do not hesitate to contact me or my supervisor. Our details are provided below:

Researcher: Zanele Motsa

Email: zanelemotsa@gmail.com

Tel: 0833760380



Research Supervisor: Louise Whittaker

Email: whittakerl@gibs.co.za

Tel: 0824570892

Signature of participant: _____

Title of participant: _____

Date: _____

Signature of researcher: _____

Date: _____

Appendix 3: Interview Guideline

Questions to guide the interview

Career advancement of women	
1	In your opinion, how has your organisation fared in its approach to the advancement of women into leadership positions?
2	What drives the advancement of women into leadership roles within your organisation?
3	What approaches are being adopted by your organisation towards the successful advancement of women into senior leadership roles?
4	Please explain whether you believe the approaches used by your organisation to advance women into leadership benefit women and organisations in any way.
Inhibiting factors	
5	In your opinion, what are the factors that inhibit the promotion of women into leadership roles?
6	What are the attitudes of women in your organisation when dealing with the factors that inhibit the promotion of women into leadership roles?
Benefits of promoting gender-balanced leadership for women	
7	Explain what benefits you believe the promotion of women into leadership roles yields for women
Drawbacks of promoting gender-balanced leadership for women	
8	Do you perceive any drawbacks in the promotion of women into leadership roles? Please explain
Benefits of promoting gender-balanced leadership for corporates	
9	What are the potential benefits of promoting gender-balanced leadership teams for corporates?



Implications for corporates who are not promoting gender-balanced leadership teams

10	What are the potential implications of NOT promoting gender-balanced leadership teams for corporates?
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Appendix 4: Ethical Clearance Letter

Dear Mrs Zanele Motsa

Protocol Number: **Temp2016-01681**

Title: **Ethics Application**

Please be advised that your application for Ethical Clearance has been APPROVED.

You are therefore allowed to continue collecting your data.

We wish you everything of the best for the rest of the project.

Kind Regards,

Adele Bekker