

**The Significance of Transformational Leadership in Pursuing Gender Parity in
The Department of Social Development, Sekhukhune District in Limpopo
Province**

by

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DECLARATION

I, Kgonthe Melisa Mokomane declare that this research titled “The Significance of Transformational Leadership in Pursuing Gender Parity in the Department of Social Development, Sekhukhune District” hereby submitted to the University of Limpopo, for a degree of Master of Business Administration has not been previously submitted by me for a degree at this or any other university; that it is my own work in design and in execution, and that all material contained herein has been duly acknowledged.

Kgonthe Melisa Mokomane

Date

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ABSTRACT

This study drew attention to the influential role the transformational leadership constructs can play in increasing women representation in decision making structures of the Department of Social Development (DSD). The DSD's Sekhukhune District in Limpopo Province was used as an area of study. The aim of the study was to investigate the significance of transformational leadership in pursuing gender parity in the DSD's Sekhukhune District. The study followed an exploratory research design and implemented a qualitative methodology. A total of 10 DSD managers were targeted. Furthermore, a purposive sampling was used and interviews were conducted as the method of data collection. The data collected had been analysed thematically.

The results revealed that although there have been improvements of more appointed women managers within the organisation. There were still more women managers than men managers within the organisation. However, most men occupy senior management positions while most women occupy the lower managerial positions. Most managers were not inspired to perform more than they were expected giving the reason that, they lack resources and their efforts often go unrecognised. Most managers found political appointment discouraging towards fair promotions. Nevertheless, there were enough women who possess required leadership skills.

Conversely, there were no programmes that support women participation and empowerment in issues relating to gender parity. Leadership training, transformational leadership, provision of resources and salary acceleration were common suggestions to pursue gender parity. The study recommends that the DSD Sekhukhune District leadership should adopt and implement transformational leadership, change political appointment, appoint leaders with relevant qualifications, establishing a functional gender mainstreaming office within the DSD Sekhukhune District, adequate budgetary support and specialised training of staff shall assist in closing the gender parity gap.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

1. CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION OF THE STUDY	1
1.1 INTRODUCTION	1
1.2 BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT OF THE STUDY	4
1.3 PROBLEM STATEMENT	4
1.4. AIM AND OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY	4
1.4.1 Aim of the study	4
1.4.2 Research objectives	4
1.5 RESEARCH QUESTIONS	5
1.6 DEFINITION OF TERMS	5
1.6.1 Leadership	5
1.6.2 Transformational leadership	5
1.6.3 Gender	6
1.6.4 Parity	6
1.7 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY	6
1.8 OUTLINE OF THE CHAPTERS	6
1.9 SUMMARY	7
2. CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW	8
2.1 INTRODUCTION	8
2.2 TRANSFORMATION LEADERSHIP DEMYSTIFIED	8
2.3 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK	11
2.4 UNDERREPRESENTATION OF WOMEN IN SENIOR MANAGERIAL POSITIONS	12
2.5 MENTORING AND COACHING	14
2.6 CHALLENGES FACED BY WOMEN IN LEADERSHIP	14
2.6.1 Women networks	14
2.6.2 Disparity between types of employment for men and women	15
2.6.3 Career choice	16
2.6.4 Women increasing in the labour market	16
2.6.5 Breaking the glass ceiling	17
2.6.6 Dual roles of women	17
2.6.7 Women stuck between rock and hard place	19

2.7 POLICIES THAT PROMOTE GENDER EQUALITY	20
2.8 BENEFITS OF HAVING WOMEN REPRESENTATION IN LEADERSHIP POSITIONS	22
2.9 CHALLENGES FACED BY ORGANIZATIONS WITH REGARD TO ACHIEVEMENT OF GENDER EQUITY TARGETS	24
2.9.1 Domestic and cultural practices	24
2.9.2 Limited pool of women who possess the required skills	25
2.9.3 Women not taking ownership	26
2.9.4 Gender bias in hiring	27
2.9.5 Occupational jealousy	28
2.10 STRATEGIES OF ADDRESSING GENDER PARITY	28
2.10.1 Right base approach	28
2.10.2 Women’s participation	29
2.10.3 Implementation of policies	30
2.10.4 Affiliation in women movements	31
2.11 SUMMARY	31
3. CHAPTER THREE: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY	33
3.1 INTRODUCTION	33
3.2 RESEARCH DESIGN	33
3.3 TARGET POPULATION	33
3.4 SAMPLING METHOD AND SAMPLE SIZE	34
3.5 DATA COLLECTION	34
3.6 DATA ANALYSIS	35
3.7 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS	35
3.7.1 Ethical clearance	35
3.7.2 Permission to conduct the study	35
3.7.3 Informed consent	36
3.7.4 Confidentiality	36
3.7.5 Access to Results	36
3.8 LIMITATION OF THE STUDY	36
3.9 SUMMARY	36

4. CHAPTER FOUR: RESULTS OF THE STUDY	37
4.1 INTRODUCTION	37
4.2 BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION	37
4.2.1 Gender of respondents	37
4.2.2 Number of years' experience in the organisation	38
4.3 OPINIONS ON GENDER PARITY WITHIN THE DEPARTMENT	38
4.4 CHALLENGES THE DEPARTMENT FACES IN ACHIEVING GENDER PARITY	40
4.4.1 Respondents level of inspiration	40
4.4.2 Opinions on performance of women in leadership positions	40
4.4.3 Employee family responsibility	41
4.4.4 The pressure of meeting cultural expectations within the organisation	42
4.4.5 Cultural norms and beliefs within the organisation	42
4.4.6 Women who possess the required leadership skills in the organisation	43
4.4.7 Opinions of efforts made by women on climb the leadership ladder within the organisation	44
4.4.8 Views on bias in hiring women for leadership positions within the Organisation	45
4.4.9 Perceptions on support by women who hold leadership positions	46
4.4.10 Opinions on the organisation promotion of women into leadership positions	46
4.4.11 Legislation and Policies by the Organisation	47
4.4.12 Organisational support programmes for women participation in issues relating to gender parity	47
4.5 PERCEIVED ROLE OF TRANSFORMATIONAL LEADERSHIP IN ACHIEVING GENDER PARITY	48
4.6 SUGGESTIONS ON HOW DSD SEKHUKHUNE DISTRICT CAN SUCCESSFULLY ACHIEVE GENDER PARITY ISSUES	49
4.6.1 Leadership Training	49
4.6.2 Provision of Resources	49
4.6.3 Salary Acceleration	49
4.7 SUMMARY	49

5. CHAPTER FIVE: CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS	51
5.1 INTRODUCTION	51
5.2 SUMMARY OF RESULTS	42
5.3 CONCLUSION	53
5.4 RECOMMENDATION	53
5.4.1 Adopt and implement transformational leadership	53
5.4.2 Change deployment based on political affiliation	53
5.4.3 Appointment of leaders with relevant qualifications to the organisation	53
5.4.4 Establishing a functional gender office within the DSD Sekhukhune District	53
5.4.5 Department-wide awareness campaign	54
5.4.6 Appointing a gender transformation champion	54
5.4.7 Adequate budgetary support	54
5.4.8 Specialised training of staff	54
5.4.9 Suggested future research	55
5.5 SUMMARY OF THE STUDY	55
REFERENCES	56
APPENDIX A	63

LIST OF TABLES

Table 4.1: Years of experience within the organisation	38
Table 4.2: Gender profile by headcount	39
Table 4.3: Implementation of legislation and policies	47

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 4.1: Gender of Respondents	37
Figure 4.2: Performance of Women in Leadership Positions	40
Figure 4.3: Bias in hiring women for leadership positions	45

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION OF THE STUDY

1.1 INTRODUCTION

The chapter outlines the background and context in which the whole study is based. Apart from outlining the problem statement, research questions, purpose and objectives of the study are presented withal. The rationale as well as the significance of the study are also detailed.

1.2 BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT OF THE STUDY

Gender parity appears to be a profound matter that is calling for attention, especially in developing countries such as South Africa. Jacobsen (2011) attests that gender inequality pervades the world and some alternates *viz.* the issue of sexist nouns in the work field and feminine contempt have to be ameliorated to rectify the anomaly. Conversely, Chiloane-Tsoka (2010) states that women are more at a disadvantage especially in developing countries; where they have limited access to communal resources, are under-represented in public decision making bodies and have limited bargaining power in markets - often with lack of opportunities to improve their socio-economic rank. Whence, some of the contributing factors could be the cultural, religious and societal norms that narrow gender specifications to preconceived connotations. Those include the notion that women are weak, need men's assistance and that they come second.

In that case, the amended constitution of the Republic of South Africa has been appended with the promising equal scaling of men and women. It is penned: "The state may not unfairly discriminate directly or indirectly against anyone on one or more grounds, including race, gender, sex, pregnancy, marital status, ethnic or social origin, colour, sexual orientation, age, disability, religion, conscience, belief, culture, language and birth." However, change has taken place at a snail's pace. It is against the background that the research proposes some of the hypotheses of transformational leadership as one of the interventions to be considered in addressing gender parity in the Department of Social Development (DSD), Sekhukhune District.

Patel, Knijn and Van Wel (2015) consent that evidence from various sources argue that women generally come more easily to the critical leadership skills needed in this new, post-heroic model of leadership where communication, emotional intelligence, collaboration, negotiation, entrepreneurship, coaching and mentoring are necessary. Ergo, South African organisations have to evolve to benefit from the expertise that is brought about by diverse workforce, especially women.

The research is optimistic in bridging the knowledge gap pertaining to transformational leadership as one of the possibilities of advancing gender egalitarianism. Coffman, Gadiesh and Miller (2010) view that women enter the workforce in large numbers, but over time, they steadily disappear from the higher echelons of the organisations' hierarchical structures because organisations are still not convinced about the business case for gender emancipation. Thus, men still occupy most senior positions in organisations. There seems to be a limited information on why women are not given equal opportunities as their male counterparts in organisations - and if organisations are resisting change or not.

According to Jacobsen (2011), limited research has been conducted on the role that both men and women play in uplifting others in various organisations. That is probably due to that numerous men are still at the apex of the work context and in command. In the same vein, there are women who are in leadership positions and who are strategically placed to advance the progression of the less privileged women.

Mfeketo (2009) cited by Kanjere (2016) states that consent women are most capable to take up women issues in their organisations. For instance, women in South African parliament play an active role in mobilising women's rights and have ensured that the passage of several key pieces of legislation aim at protecting women's rights. That is backed by the emergence of the Choice on Termination of Pregnancy Act (Act No 92 of 1996), the Domestic Violence Act (Act No 116 of 1998), the Maintenance Act (Act No 99 of 1998), the Recognition of Customary Marriages Act (Act No 120 of 1998) and the Criminal Law (Sexual Offences and Related Matters Act) Amendment Act (Act No 32 of 2007), to cite a few of examples. The legislations and many others paved a way for the recognition of women's rights and implementation thereof.

Many women in the leadership positions are also able to serve as role models to the aspirant young women. Women play an imperative role in the development process; contributing to the development efforts, especially in the face of scientific and practical challenges (Global Network for Rights and Development 2014: 47).

Gender parity is essential as it ensures that males and females are given equal opportunities and remunerations for their expertise. It also ensures that individuals are well represented in all the ranks in an organisation, irrespective of their gender. Noteworthy is that organisations and society benefit when equality is enhanced as prospects of the economic growth are improved. Accordingly, Chen (2015) buttresses that gender equality serves as an important component of an effective economic and human development strategy.

Meanwhile, global challenges need an integrated leadership, they cannot be solved by one sect of leaders. European Commission (EC) (2010) affirms that women are problem solvers and are excellent in multi-tasking. That being so, it is significant that women be given an opportunity to contribute towards the solutions which can make a difference in the current period of life. Women could add value to the organisations because they are multi-tasked and may perceive the world differently as opposed to their male counterparts. They also bring an element of diversity which is much needed in organisations that need to operate beyond the narrow confines of traditional labour force and leadership.

Women in the lower ranks should indeed know that it is their responsibility to get promoted in a highly competitive environment. They should constantly upgrade their skills, network and be ready to sell their competences. Chen (2015) disputes that women often complain about the glass ceiling but more often it is their fault when they do not get promoted. They simply do not ask for a promotion or a raise in a salary as often as men do. It is believed that if they continue to put more effort into their work and be loyal to the organisations, they will be recognised and get promoted. Unfortunately, that strategy does not always work. Women should learn to be vocal about their achievements, be visible and be as demanding as their male counterparts. Nevertheless, organisations still have the responsibility to ensure that women are empowered (Acar 2015).

The study therefore, anticipated to conduct an empirical investigation at the DSD to their commitment and (or) progress with regard to the implementation of gender equality targets

and whether transformational leadership can assist in transporting the rate at which women are being helped to advance into managerial positions. The study investigates if there will be initiatives in place to advance female mobility into top positions.

1.3 PROBLEM STATEMENT

Kazmi, Naarananoia and Takala (2013) perceive that there is no emotional commitment to gender uniformity in organisations, rather it is viewed as another “box to tick”. Hence, organisations are doing little to advance women into leadership positions. The Commission on Gender Equality (CGE, 2015) stated that men still have more institutional and social power, more access to all sorts of resources-including those needed for basic physical survival and that men still have more opportunities to develop themselves than women.

Consequently, inequality alludes to the fact that there is inadequate transformation that is taking place in organisations to embrace women leadership. Organisations deprive the country of leadership expertise that could have been tapped from women leaders. Furthermore, girls that are still growing will not have enough mentors or role models to emulate and, as such, the vicious cycle will continue. The central concern of the study is that management positions of the DSD Sekhukhune District are predominantly male-dominated and previous efforts to improve the office’s gender consistency performance have failed to yield meaningful and divine fruits.

1.4 AIM AND OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

1.4.1 Aim of the study

The aim of the study was to investigate the significance of transformational leadership in pursuing gender parity in the DSD Sekhukhune District.

1.4.2. Research objectives

The objectives of the study were as follows:

- a. To find out if the DSD Sekhukhune District of Limpopo Province has achieved its gender equity targets;

- b. To investigate whether the department is perceived to be committed to the achievement of gender parity;
- c. To explore whether the participants perceive transformational leadership as one of the strategies that can be utilised to pursue gender parity.

1.5 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

Research questions guide the investigation. For the purpose of the study, the following research questions were posed:

- a. Has the DSD Sekhukhune District of Limpopo Province achieved its gender equity targets?
- b. Is the department perceived to be committed to the achievement of gender parity or not?
- c. Do the participants discern transformational leadership as one of the strategies that can be utilised to pursue gender parity?

1.6 DEFINITION OF TERMS

The following key concepts are defined:

1.6.1 Leadership

This is a process where one person, the leader, exerts some influence on his or her followers in order to achieve desired goals. Leadership is also defined as: “a process whereby an individual influences a group of individuals to achieve a common goal” (North house 2010:3).

1.6.2 Transformational leadership

Daft and Benson (2016: 573) define transformational leadership as: “a leaders distinguished by a special ability to bring about innovation and change by creating an inspiring vision, shaping values, building relationships and providing meaning for followers”.

1.6.3 Gender

The socially constructed characteristics of women and men such as norms, values that individualise them (Giddens 2006).

1.6.4 Parity

According to Jacobsen (2011), parity refers to equal treatment of both males and females in any given environment and circumstances. For the purpose of this study, gender parity will be used interchangeably with gender equity, which is defined as a process of both males and females benefiting fairly without being discriminated against based on sex (Giddens 2006).

1.7 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

The study represents an indispensable endeavour in promoting gender parity in the workplace. It envisions that the manner in which women are being patronised and discriminated be halted. Moreover, it assists in reviewing and (or) developing women-friendly or centric human resource policies for the DSD. Strategic management and corporate strategies governance will hopefully benefit from some of the pointers included. Again, it educates the DSD employees concerning a perpetual equality of males and females and it indicates whether the department fulfils its mandate based on gender parity. The study provides recommendations which aim to assist the DSD to further develop the employees.

1.8 OUTLINE OF THE STUDY

The following is the structure of the study:

Chapter 1 - The chapter intends to introduce and give a background of the study. It provides the aim, objectives and methodology that are followed under conduct.

Chapter 2 - The chapter presents an in-depth literature review. The thoughts cover all the contextual information about gender and gender parity as well as the significance of transformational leadership. Relevant legislations are also outlined.

Chapter 3 - The chapter explains the method followed to collect data for the study and the method for research data analysis.

Chapter 4 - The chapter outlines the research results from the collected data.

Chapter 5 – Finally, the chapter illustrates the summary of results, study conclusion and recommendations.

1.9 SUMMARY

This chapter has given the contextual background of the study and most importantly, the outline of the whole study. Those pave the way to the narrowed focus that the researcher will revolve around. Whence, the rest of the chapters have been briefly summed for the interests of the thesis statement of the holistic study in accord to the topic.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 INTRODUCTION

Literature review is an evaluative report of studies found in the literature related to the selected area (Cetin & Kinik, 2015). This chapter presents various empirical studies that have been conducted in the field of gender parity and transformational leadership. Existing policies on gender equity are also outlined along with the challenges that with women who are in leadership positions are faced.

2.2 TRANSFORMATIONAL LEADERSHIP DEMYSTIFIED

Transformational leadership was introduced by the political scientist, MacGregor Burns (Zlem & Omer 2015). He believed that transformational leaders motivate their subordinates to achieve beyond their call of duty through inspiration. According to Burns (2010), through transformational leadership - both leaders and subordinates become motivated, intellectually stimulated, innovative and visionary. The fear, greed and hatred gets overthrown and replaced by great ideas and high moral values. In so doing, subordinates realise the importance of carrying out their tasks more effectively and beyond the call of duty.

The word “transform” basically refers to a change for the better (Munevver and Sehkar 2015). Transformational leaders change personal values of subordinates to support the vision, mission and goals of the organisation by creating conducive environment; where rapport can be established and trust be attained (Stone, Russell & Patterson 2004). Transformational leaders alter subordinates through bettering their working conditions. Leaders who follow transformational leadership style aim to transform subordinates and creating a climate commonly accepted in organisations. In addition, a transformational leader delegates tasks and allows followers to improve themselves in a task-related decision-making process whilst gaining personal experience. As a result, transformational leadership has become the approach of choice. In many ways, transformational leadership has captured the attention of leadership researchers (Lumby & Azaola 2013).

Burns (2010) denotes transformational leadership as a leadership form which is represented by the traits such as charisma in addition to the shared vision between leaders and followers. Literature explains that Bass (1985) further developed the concept of Burns, with a belief that transformational leadership allows employees to acknowledge the tasks, explore high mutual trust, encourage team work and sacrifice their personal interest for the benefit of the organisation to achieve more results.

Besides, Bass (1985) further proposed that leaders do not only influence employees' completion of tasks given to meet organisational goals but also on employees' needs, values, moral, confidence, self-esteem, beliefs, vision, perceptions and emotional impacts. Transformational leaders create visions, help employees to have high morale, assist employees to be able to solve problems and have inputs in their work (Burns 2010). The leaders are passionate and enthusiastic. For that reason, employees become motivated and realise their worth within the organisation. Remarkably, employees improve with time and become better employees with high ethical, discipline and confidence (Avolio, Zhu and Ko 2004).

According to Li and Tian-Bao (2006), transformational leaders allow employees to give opinions without fear, challenge their own thinking, become empowered, be creative, innovative and they encourage employees to embrace the diversity and variety of creative ways to solve problems. A large volume of research indicates that empowered employees are active, committed, energetic, innovative and positive at all times and tend to have higher level of job satisfaction (Bass & Riggio 2006). Again, Izlem and Omer (2015) witness that managers are task driven while leadership is known to be a force capable of motivating employees to inspire them to do more than they are expected.

Li and Tian-Bao (2006) insist that transformational leadership involves inspiring followers to commit a shared vision and goals for an organisation or unit. It further challenges them to become innovative problem solvers, and to develop followers' leadership capacity via coaching, mentoring, and provision of both challenge and support. Transformational leaders pay attention to the needs and the potential of subordinates to develop them. The leaders establish a supportive system whereby individualism is highly acknowledged and respected. Continued interaction with subordinates is encouraged to intellectually nourish both the leader and subordinates.

Kazmi, Naaranoja and Takala (2013) cited Bass (1985) report that transformational leaders motivate subordinates to achieve higher performance and beyond limits. It could be suggested that in areas of work where transformational leadership reigns, there is a vision of equal determination amongst employees. They gain and retain the muse to prolong their outstanding performance in the respective ranks. To some extent, employees go an extra mile for perpetual obligations pertaining to the work field.

Transforming leaders seek potential motives and pursue to satisfy higher needs in subordinates. Consequently, leadership is recognised as a mutual relationship that converts subordinates to leaders and leaders into moral agents. The concept of moral leadership is proposed as a means for leaders to take responsibility to inspire subordinates to motivate others. Burns (2010) adds that leaders are neither born nor made; instead, leaders evolve from a structure of motivation, values, inspiration and goals. Such climate enables leaders to be transformational in organisations.

Generally, the dynamics of transformational leadership involve followers that have a strong personality identification with the leader, a shared vision for the future, and the ability to work collectively for the benefit of the group (Kelloway, Barling, Kelley, Comtois, & Gatién 2003). The dynamics help subordinates make a positive transformation in themselves. In addition, transformational leaders are role models; they are respected and admired by their subordinates. Interestingly, subordinates learn a lot from their transformational leaders and later aspire to be as such. It is therefore, notable that leaders have a clear vision, a sense of purpose and they are willing to take risks (Bass 1998).

Kelloway *et al.* (2003) hint that leaders display intellectual stimulation when they help their subordinates develop new ideas, motivate them to take alternative routes to problem solving and take a closer look at all possible solutions. Recently, the changing business environment requires organisations to transform in order to stay relevant in the business world. It is tremendous that women's participation in the labour force has increased worldwide and increasing their human capital (Charles 2011). In terms of health and education attainment, most countries have seized the gap between men and women. However, World Economic Forum (2014) cited by Schwab and Sala-i-Martin (2015) penned that it is unfortunate that the gap between men and women in leadership remains widely transparent.

Despite that, the government and organisations have taken a number of initiatives and action to amend the gap between men and women in leadership positions. Equal opportunities stressed in the legislation increased the number of women representative in different occupational sectors, yet the gap in leadership attainment has not been halted (Klettner, Clarke & Boersma 2014). McDonald and Westphal (2013) express that an increase in women qualification was expected to attain gender parity within organisations and government bodies. Unfortunately, gender disparity still exists.

Women across the globe are not treated equally as compared to the male contestants. It is indeed observable that women are not entrusted with the role of leadership. They can rather be appointed as deputies when the situation calls for a woman (Lambani 2013). To analogise, South Africa still doubts the notion of a female president.

2.3 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

According to Hamieh and Usta (2011: 6), socialisation is explained as the process of social interaction by which people acquire the behaviours essential for an effective participation in the society. On that occasion, when a child is born in any society, he or she will adopt the habits of the society as a way of living. It may be suggested that socialisation exposes the child to the knowledge, norms, values and beliefs accepted by the society.

Giddens (2006) indicates that socialisation is the initial process that each individual is exposed to. It is furthermore expatiated that socialisation influences how people see and interpret the world. Before an individual can have a point of view, he or she will first have to behave in accordance with what is learnt to be the correct manner of living. To some extent, through the process of socialisation within the family, in educational institutions and other social spheres, boys and girls play different roles in the society which they are conditioned according to their sex.

Moreover, the society rewards or punishes the behaviour in both girls and boys to compel them to conform to the established cultural norms. At times, women occupy positions that are claimed to be of innate predispositions within the society. The conditioning and stereotyping could easily have an effect of questioning women's capability perform certain tasks within the society. Practised time and again, stereotypical thinking towards women may solidify and

become difficult to uproot from the mental frames of people (Njogu & Orchardson-mazrui 2007).

Gender disparity derives from social and cultural socialisation processes. In patriarchal societies, girls and women are classified (but not always consciously) as less valuable, weak, economically less imaginative, too emotional, need protection and not suitable for public leadership roles (Valerio 2009). From an early age, boys and girls are socialised differently in most societies. Boys are made to believe that they are in charge or dominate while girls are made to believe they must be submissive and caring in nature. That thought is imbued upon children at an early age. For instance, boys are being told that they cannot be defeated by girls in any ridiculous fight.

Such beliefs are carried out and displayed in the workplace later in their lives where men want to be in the forefront and women follow. Girls are subjected a set of social and cultural expectations which they must conform to. Socialisation plays a fundamental role as personal choices are made based on gendered disparity lessons kept throughout the life span (Izlem & Omer 2015).

Valerio (2009) elucidates that socialisation encourages men and women to adopt gender roles and hold them as personal ideas for themselves or see them as the righteous ways of living. Gendered expectations determine the different treatments towards men and women and they also dictate what and when should be done by whom. The expectations prevent men and women from attaining equitable treatment yet putting a burden on women discrimination and marginalisation.

2.4 UNDERREPRESENTATION OF WOMEN IN SENIOR MANAGERIAL POSITIONS

Hoobler, Lemmon and Wayne (2011: 151) reckon that women at lower and middle management positions have improved. However, the same cannot be said about senior management positions. Whence, it is stated that women take a slow pace in breaking through the glass ceiling when it comes to senior management positions. That is due to the concrete wall barrier which makes it harder for women to break through (Valerio 2009).

Hoobler *et al.* (2011: 151) reveal: “Underrepresentation of women in senior leadership is problematic for several reasons”. As stated in the article, lack of women in the senior management indicates that those who are at a lower management; who are envious to the senior management positions are untenable. Since men are at senior positions, responsible for recruitment, attainment and development, it will take long to have women in the senior positions.

Hoobler *et al.* (2011) commented that when enough women are in the pipeline, they will eventually hold senior management positions which may be equal to men. In contrast, Steward (2006) observes there were many women who graduated with higher degrees yet only a few women hold senior management positions. Women have gained the requisite experience and education, yet not in senior positions.

Hutchings and Michailova (2014: 28) explicate that Human Capital Theory contests that people are awarded for their previous investment in education and training. The theory could suggest that women have less human capital to contribute in the labour market. Johnson, Crosnoe and Elder (2001) and Coffman, Gadiesh and Miller (2004) align with Hutchings and Michailova (2014: 28) by stating that indeed managerial women are educated and trained just like their male counterparts yet when qualified, women are still disadvantaged. The scarcity of women in senior positions makes it more difficult for others to imagine themselves in higher positions (Valerio 2009).

Altman *et al.* (2005) explain that within the contemporary evolving world, legislature assists women to penetrate into the managerial position. They are slowly moving from lower and middle management level positions to senior positions. Thus far, women are under-represented in the senior management level (Nielsen & Huse 2010). As a result, transformational leaders could bring out the best in every of their followers.

Noteworthy is that the followers become more committed and satisfied. In Hickman’s thought (2010: 77), subordinates are the essence of the organisation and the full involvement enables their abilities to be used for the organisation’s benefit. Furthermore, employees’ individual needs and personal developments are encouraged. Chances are, it is possible that transformational leadership can assist women to attain senior positions.

2.5 MENTORING AND COACHING

According to Hickman (2010), transformational leadership involves inspiring followers to cherish and share their potential, aligning it to the vision and goals of the organisation. In this case, transformation leaders stimulate followers intellectually. That involves lifting their moral and developing innovative problem solvers through coaching, monitoring and support. An individualised consideration component, as outlined by Hickman (2010: 78), stresses that colleagues and subordinates can develop their potential successfully through individual coaching and monitoring.

Additionally, contingent reward has been found to be effectively used to motivate employees to achieve higher levels of development and performance. Employees agree on what needs to be done with actual rewards offered in the exchange of satisfactory work carried out. Contingent reward could be transactional when the prerequisite is in a form of an extra remuneration. However, it can be transformational when the obligatory reward is psychological such as praise and acknowledgement. Hickman (2010: 84) cited Brown and Trevino (2003) revealing that employees of transformational leaders engage in less deviant behaviours than leaders who were liked yet not transformational.

2.6 CHALLENGES FACED BY WOMEN IN LEADERSHIP

2.6.1 Women networks

Most of highly qualified and experienced women may not apply for senior positions due to cold feet. When women are underrepresented in senior positions, it could be implied that there are a few of experienced women mentors for them in lower positions within the organisational hierarchy. On that account, women encounter difficulties in networking (Tharenou 2005). According to Hickman (2010), women experience challenges of having less time to socialise with colleagues and building professional networks. Women managers spend more time and efforts into socialising and networking with outsiders than their masculine counterparts. Again, networking is more necessary to management career advancement than in skilful informal traditional managerial performance. Though when there is ample time, women find it difficult to network if they are in a meagre figure within the same corporation. For this reason, breaking into masculine networks makes it harder.

It is very critical for women to network and have mentors around themselves. Women's careers become more hindered as there is lack of mentors, or even exacerbated, no mentors at all. Mentors have the ability to assist women expatiate, develop self-confidence, increase their visibility and encourage their career advancement. When women have a few or no experienced women in senior positions who are mentors, they tend not to apply for senior posts as they do not feel prepared (Valenrio 2009).

2.6.2 Disparity between types of employment for men and women

Women suffer from prejudice and a wide disparity that exists between genders. It appears to be a custom that men are being frequently enrolled in careers that would destine them to vast opportunities of financial gain (Hill 2015). To be more explicit, some professions such as a Policeman and Fireman initially segregate women and discourage them from the freedom of pursuing such niches. Instead, women opt for Health and Social Development departments as the sector of employment.

According to Travis, Gomez and Barak (2011), women are expected to solve work-related conflicts by compromising and negotiating with others whilst men are viewed to be assertive, ambitious, competitive and it is believed that confrontation appears to be common in the men's manner of resolving conflicts. For that motive, masculine-femininity studies has led a goal to achieve and aggrandise equality between men and women. Chin and Trimple (2015) cited Ghei and Nebel (1994) elongating that effective managers use both the masculine and feminine approaches for conflict management - depending on the circumstances.

Women are associated with communal qualities that express caring, helpfulness, and kindness, friendliness, sympathetic (Hickman 2010). They are occupationally discriminated against as they are predominant in jobs of inferior status, with fewer women present in the managerial positions. Glass cliff discrimination has been defined as the phenomenon that women are more likely to be chosen for positions associated with deteriorating rather than increasing performance and that men are more likely to be chosen for leadership positions that are associated with increasing rather than deteriorating performance (Hills 2015: 50).

2.6.3 Career choice

According to Hoobler *et al.* (2011: 152), men and women are different. Men prefer high stakes environment of senior management while women choose security and lesser challenges. Those are explanations stated in the role that testosterone plays in male risk-taking and the role that oxytocin and empathy play in women's career choice. Women tried to reach gender parity and sadly, their genetic makeup won out in the end. The differences in career achievement are motivated by natural variations between men and women. Workplace social problems have been recognised to be a contributory factor to lack of ascendancy to senior positions.

Hoobler *et al.* (2011) indicate that individuals tend to associate male characteristics with leadership positions. Unfortunate is that women are not considered to have good leadership skills and are not suitable for senior management positions. In that belief, women get sidelined into functions such as administrative services and human resource management and not into positions where they can take responsibilities for the loss and gain of the organisation.

2.6.4 Women increasing in the labour market

According to Robinson (2014), cited by Hills (2015), women in the South African Parliament have increased from 2.7 per cent to 27 per cent immediately after 1994 elections. In 1999, women in parliament increased to 30 per cent, 33 per cent in 2004 and 44 per cent after 2009 elections. It can be argued that the South African legislature has become the most reproductive in the world, amongst others. During the mid-1960s, women grew into the knowledge-based and service economy reaching 40% workforce, at the time, Nursing, Teaching and Social Work were the only professions emphasised (Schmid & Patel 2016).

According to Valerio (2009: 14), there are more women than ever before in the workplace since the year 2008. Statistics prove that recently most graduates are women. However, highly educated proportion of workforce is overlooked as possible in the senior management resource. For that reason, women may be discouraged to use their time and energy to acquire more skills and abilities as the knowledge does not benefit them in terms of promotion in the workplace. Disturbingly, Hickman (2010: 441) highlights that even in occupations such as

Nursing, Librarianship, Teaching and Social Work dominated by women, men ascent to higher position rapidly than women.

2.6.5 Breaking the glass ceiling

Caligiuri and Cascio (2008) cited by Hutchings and Michailova (2014) attest that gender stereotyping and patriarchy prevent women's capabilities from being recognised and from having their efforts acknowledged. According to Hutchings and Michailova (2014), it is evident globally that although women try to advance into greater opportunities to pursue managerial careers, discrimination and contempt serve as the barriers to their advancement. South African organisations have to transform so that they can benefit from the expertise that is brought about by a diverse workforce, especially women.

Ginige, Amaratunga and Haigh (2007) denote that gender stereotypes result in a segmentation between men and women within the organisation. Smaller percentages of women within the organisation have lower chances of reaching the top. Despite the rising number of women within the labour market, women still face difficulties in reaching the top, particularly in male-dominated organisations. Contrarily, in female-dominated organisations, men still hold top prestigious positions.

Labyrinth is another metaphor used to refer to the long hardship towards striving for success. For women who aspire to be at the apex of the leadership ranks, routes do exist; yet with plenty of twists and turns. The routes are not simple and direct (Hickman 2010). The toughness of the route taken by women to occupy the corner office is revealed by introducing the catalyst who coined the term concrete ceiling in 1999 (Chin and Trimple 2015). The metaphor stands to emphasis the difficulty of penetrating through to the top and prestigious ranks.

2.6.6 Dual roles of women

In some cases, women managers are forced to choose between professional duties and family matters. In that manner, their careers are being affected by domestic roles. Family-work conflict bias has been found to be the reason for women's underrepresentation in the senior management (Hoobler *et al.* 2011). According to Hoobler *et al.* (2011: 152), family-work

conflict bias refers to just being women signal at work. It is further mentioned that women managers are transparent in way that their family matters will interfere with the work, irrespective of whether (or not) the woman actually has children of a certain age. The family-work conflict seems to be blatant contemporarily. By the way, women head the majority of the single parent households. They also remain responsible for greater parenting duties in most of the two-parent households - therefore, not forming part of the ideal manager who is always available to stay late, come in early and sacrifice for the company at the expense of the family's attention.

To overcome family-work conflict bias, Hoobler *et al.* (2011: 153) outline that awareness of the problem should be at the forefront. Most companies spend a large amount of money on the development of women for management positions, yet companies do not come into terms with the lack of women at the senior managerial positions. Whence, managerial coaching on the pitfall of common biases should be rendered.

Women who bring their children to the nearer sites of childcare facilities may make their roles as mothers more noticeable to their managers. That may require the women's work schedule flexibility to accommodate family responsibilities - which might conflict with the ideal manager's expectations (Hoobler *et al.* 2011: 154). When women have the responsibility to balance dual roles, one role tends to be prioritised, (Hutchings & Michaila 2014). Schmid and Patel (2016) support that many women managers are not inducted and have not received a training on their promotion to the managerial position. When a woman is being assertive, subordinates assume that for being cheeky yet they would adhere to what is being said if it comes from a male manager.

According to Schmid and Patel (2016), the care giving roles of women in the family, for the sick and elderly, for those with physical and mental challenges and in communities as volunteers, remain invisible to social planners and policy makers. It alludes to the contribution of women, who are the primary carers in most instances as well as to social reproduction. Feminist authors have shown how a large commitment in childcare limits women's full participation in socio-economic life. Much of domestic work and childcare is unpaid and it is mostly conducted by women. Gendered norms about caring being 'women's work' receive little or no recognition of how women commit much of their time to have the

duties done. For that consideration, the care work done by women is being taken for granted and it continues to remain invisible to the policy makers.

Budlender (2008) exhibits that women spend more time on care work than men in South Africa, which is not unusual internationally. He further estimates statistically that women spend 4 hours of unpaid care work at home as compared to men, who spend 1.5 hours. Gender roles are upheld whereby men are viewed to be the heads and breadwinners of households while women are being narrowed to all domestic works and childcare (Patel, 2010). Thus far, gender roles have led to how job roles are being distributed across the world.

Chin and Trimple (2015: 199) state: “Gender continues to be socially constructed in a society; specifically, there are different gender roles expectations and responsibilities for women and men”. Women managers experience pressure of meeting the expectation of being caring, in and out of their homes. On the other hand, men managers focus on their careers and they often argue that some of the family matters are beyond their control. That leaves them with no pressure experienced (Chin & Trimple, 2015).

The focus on the restructuring of domestic work and childcare could be a positive developmental movement as encouraged by organisations such as Sonke Gender Justice Network that promotes fatherhood. However, such organisations do not take single parents into account, which has become a reality in South African families. Not only do children are being cared for but relatives, the sick and elderly persons are included. Hutchings and Michailova (2014: 24) back that gender boundaries, among other challenges faced by women result to a tension between family and marital relationships; which could then result to women halting their careers to prioritise their marriages. Women begin to be doubted once they become mothers as they sacrifice for their families more than men do.

2.6.7 Women stuck between rock and a hard place

Hickman (2010: 442) considers that women leaders find it difficult to be accepted in the leadership positions. It is further expatiated that women find themselves not being tolerated for any reaction that they portray. Some men characterise women as not being energetic enough and not being intellectually fit enough to reign. When women leaders appear to be assertive, it would be perceived to be an incorrect manner for them to speak and they are at

times referred to as '*control freaks*'. But for the same motive, men are being labelled as '*passionate*' beings. Attention needs to be given to the fact that women's assertive behaviour seems to lessen their chances of getting a job or escalating the chances of advancing their careers (Hickman 2010).

2.7 POLICIES THAT PROMOTE GENDER EQUITY

Hoobler *et al.* (2011) perceive that organisational policies enable women to have more family responsibility leaves such as a paid maternity leave. That leads to men working more hours than women do. Indirectly, organisational policies that aim at benefiting the women have unintended consequences of stigmatising the women's career path. Valerio (2009) buttresses that even in the 1960s, it was acceptable for women to work but they would be requested to stop seize from during pregnancy; so as to stay at home and raise their children. Consequently, in the same year - contraceptives were introduced, and as such, pregnancies were being reduced and planned, which brought more women into the workforce.

Valerio (2009) argues that the challenge of maintaining dual roles does not only affect women. She further explains that most recently, younger generation of fathers are being involved in domestic responsibilities and the upbringing of their children. It may be suggested child-caring is no longer women's work as men are also involved. Despite that, most men are seemingly struggling to integrate leadership positions and being a father simultaneously. Even though the father's time with the children has increased, mothers are still being assumed for childcare responsibilities.

Hickman (2010: 444) opines that people do not realise that mothers' childcare has increased as compared to the previous generations -in spite of the fact that fathers have begun to be accountable for their children at home. Though fathers are involved in some of the domestic work, conflict has not yet eased for women.

Governments all over the world have been continuously engaging in discussions on the best approach to be used in increasing the women's representation in leadership positions (Egan 2015). Hence, major efforts have been imposed by legislation on gender quotas. Additionally, organisations are being encouraged to include women in the decision making team whilst

non-complying organisations, in their annual report, must provide reasons why they had fallen short and explain what they are planning to do.

Hills (2015:154) delineates that since 2013 there have been developments in Germany. In that manner, the legislation is being adopted to promote equal participation of both men and women in managerial positions, as well as in private and public services. Moreover, it is unfolded that Australia, Britain and Sweden governments have to impose quotas if organisations do not appoint more women managers voluntarily. Noteworthy is that South Africa has performed well in the global movement in terms of closing the gender inequality gap (Egan 2015).

The Women Empowerment and Gender Equality (WEGE) Bill (2013) has been seen as the prospective law in South Africa that aims at urging all organisations, corporations and government departments to have at least 50 per cent of women in their decision-making bodies. The key objective of the WEGE Bill is to introduce measures to empower women (with or without disabilities) and female children. Pursuant to Section 9 (2) of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa (1996, 7), it is elucidated: “Equality includes the full and equal enjoyment of all rights and freedoms. To promote the achievement of equality, legislative and other measures designed to protect or advance persons or categories of persons, disadvantaged by unfair discrimination may be taken.”

The Constitution of South Africa, Act No. 108 of 1996 acknowledges equality between men and women. Being equal before the law means that all laws must not unfairly discriminate against anyone. Everyone is entitled to equal rights and freedom. There should be an equal representation in legislative bodies (bodies that make the laws). In that way, it can be assured that all the different needs of the people in the country are being respected. The right to: “equal protection before the law”, means that people have the right to the same opportunities and have equal access to resources, which would allow them undergo a similar pattern of steps.

South Africa has a perpetual history of discrimination pertaining to race, gender and disability. That has denied the discriminated an access to opportunities for better education, employment, promotion and financial gain. The Employment Equity Act. No. 55 of 1998, has two main objectives *viz.* to ensure that the workplaces are free from discrimination and that

the affirmative action measures are being implemented. That is to ensure that suitably qualified persons from designated groups have equal employment opportunities and are being equitably represented in all the occupational categories and levels in the workforce of a designated employer.

In other words, the aim of the above mentioned Act is to regulate how people within an organisation are being gratified in terms of their skills, roles and remuneration in a fair and a non-discriminatory manner. The Employment Equity Act. 55 of 1998 introduces an affirmative action for designated groups. The law emphasises that discrimination on the basis of sex, race, skin colour, religion and national origin is intolerable when it comes to employment.

It is penned that the purpose of the Employment Equity Act is to: “achieve equity in the workplace, by a) promoting equal opportunity and fair treatment in employment through the elimination of unfair discrimination; and b) implementing affirmative action measures to redress the disadvantages in employment experienced by designated groups, to ensure their equitable representation in all occupational categories and levels in the workforce.” While much progress has been made in overcoming the apartheid policies and in adopting the new macro social policies with high impacts, shortfalls still exist in implementing the policies (Patel 2015).

2.8 BENEFITS OF HAVING WOMEN REPRESENTATION IN LEADERSHIP POSITIONS

Stewart (2006) affirms that organisations with women in leadership value the diversity of thoughts and experiences. That ultimately becomes a good reputation for the organisation. For that matter, appointing women in leadership positions would a good and a smart business idea as well as a proactive image for the organisation. Lambani (2013: 102) sponsored the idea by outlining that females who are managers in their niche areas, are most reliable and they perform way better than their male contestants. He proceeds to point out that women managers consult when they are stuck, when they do not understand certain things and furthermore, when they are in need of confirmation of certain views in dubious circumstances.

On the contrary, male managers are likely not to be able to disclose information when they encounter challenges. That may be due to the motive that they believe to be leaders and are of the view that women cannot outsmart men. Women managers have the ability to perform all tasks given. They might even go further to take their work to home in order to make sure that it is complete and on the time set. Women take pride in the work they have accomplished effectively and timeously, that may be attributed to the fact that they want to prove that they can do exactly what men can do and, to some extent, perform far better men (Stewart 2006).

It becomes more beneficial to the organisation to have women leaders as they have the ability to multi-task. They can work on a number of tasks at once, which speeds up the service delivery and an achievement of multiple goals simultaneously. Unlike men, women can achieve more things in a short period of time. In addition, women are often attentive listeners, they do not interrupt when they are being spoken to. Mostly, women managers do not only listen to their superiors, they also listen to their subordinates. Though conflict at work cannot be totally avoided, women leaders should be seen as complementary figures rather than seen as potential competitors in the organisations (Tharenou 2005).

In whatever way, Acar (2015) perceives that women face many challenges prior to attaining leadership positions and even after that. Recently, most women have been thriving towards breaking through the glass ceiling to be appointed in the leadership positions. Not fortunate enough, they still face challenges after breaking through the glass ceiling. Haslam and Ryan(2008) and Bruckmuller, Ryna, Rink and Haslam (2014) cited by Acar (2015: 224) suggest that the challenges such as the absence of mentoring and coaching, work-family challenges, and glass cliff discrimination seem to be preventing women from rising in the corporation, based on their gender.

2.9 CHALLENGES FACED BY ORGANISATIONS WITH REGARD TO ACHIEVEMENT OF GENDER EQUITY TARGETS

Despite the fact that South African legislation is recognised worldwide to be against gender disparity, organisations still deprive women from the opportunity to reign while considering the following:

2.9.1 Domestic and cultural practices

Valerio (2009: 11) insists: “Whether you are a man or woman, you are affected everyday by decisions made by leaders in organization”. Evidently, the decisions are dominantly made by men who hold leadership positions. Historically and culturally, most of the decisions have been made by men, and as such, many aspects that consider women are being left out. Valerio (2009) also attests that most women have achieved educational levels and have entered the workforce in large numbers. Nevertheless, women believe to be more qualified and more ambitious than their male oppositions for the higher positions (Linehan 2000). Noticeably, women’s escalation in the leadership positions is noted to be evolutionary instead of being revolutionary, *i.e.* to be decreasing even in exacerbation.

Although the Constitution of South Africa guarantees the right to equality, established cultural norms and beliefs are often at an odd state with the country’s constitution. The government and judicial system have endlessly upheld the rights to women against oppressive cultural practices. But women still continue to be oppressed by a number of cultural norms and beliefs practised, and to some extent, religious practices as well (Valerio 2009).

Black-burn and Jarman (2005) witness that South Africa has a rich heritage and a diversity of cultures that are unique among other countries – giving a good identity and traditional recognition. Hopelessly, the cultural beliefs and gender stereotypical notions upheld by men who are in the decision-making state prevent women from attaining leadership positions. Society judges men through their career advancement. Most communal rules view that women are being unreasonable and are not conformists when they are in the process of their career advancement (Hutching & Michailova 2014). That being so, it is said that they are

being less fit for domestic responsibilities which seems to be a taboo in most African cultures for a woman to neglect her tasks at home.

Cultural factors influence individual perceptions and organisational culture (Chin & Trimple 2015). For instance, the Sepedi proverbs such as *Tša etwa pele ke ye tshadi di wela leopeng*; meaningfully interpreted as ‘if women lead the way, the whole nation falls’, reveal that women are not traditionally and culturally meant to be in the forefront. The proverb does not promote women’s leadership. It may also reflect how women’s leadership is not being supported and given recognition. When women show behaviours that are outside the prescriptive of the gender norms such as commanding men and giving ground rules, they tend to be disliked (Valerio 2009: 80). For that reason, women encounter resistance in leadership. When it comes to leadership behaviours, people are more exceptive to men’s behavioural latitudes. That includes the unfair decisions and unfair treatment as well as the reckless management that is being depicted amongst the leadership of men.

Moreover, it has been outlined that men are most likely to demonstrate *laisser-faire* leadership. They tend not to involve women until problems become severe. In contrast, women encourage and promote appropriate behaviour. For the recent and evolving global organisations, a transformational style could be suitable. According to Chin and Trimple (2015), female managers are often expected to take charge and lead as their male colleagues - yet at the same time, they are expected to be caring and nurturing as culture depicts them.

Furthermore, females are expected to impress others as good leaders and as good ‘women’ also. The challenges of having to overcome the biasness of being labelled as ‘too masculine’ or ‘too feminine’ lead women managers to a relatively androgynous style that incorporates both masculinity-feminine approaches. Liff and Ward (2001); Wahl (2003); Hearn, Jyrkinen, Piekkari and Oinonen (2008) cited by Jyrkinen (2014: 176) back: “senior managerial positions are traditionally held by older men, and many women’s careers stagnated in middle management already at an early stage”.

2.9.2 Limited pool of women who possess the required skills

As Heyns and Rothmann (2016) mention, there are limited women who have the required leadership skills and the talent to effectively operate in the corporate environment. In that

case, most women in organisations do not qualify to be aggrandised to the management level as they might have not yet acquired skills that will enable them to be probable managers. In a contesting manner, women who have invested in their education, spending years building their careers and, therefore, are fit to be in the management profiles tend to develop the desire to follow or have already followed the entrepreneurship path. Valerio (2009: 15) attests that those talented women start their own businesses: “where their entrepreneurship skills allow them flexibility and freedom.

2.9.3 Women not taking ownership

Hills (2015: 164) shows that women are being supported by the legislature and the government has a number of programmes aiming at developing women and achieving gender parity. However, women are not doing enough to climb up the leadership ladder and command respect in the boardroom. Women argue less for the higher salaries or performance reviews and they neither aggress over promotions as compared to men. Most women are fearful of removing the obscuring obstacles and are not confident enough to break barriers. Ultimately, women hold themselves back in their careers. Fischlmayr (2002) cited by Hutchings and Michailova (2014: 22) report that women knowingly behave in accordance to stereotypical expectations and they portray low self-esteem.

Challenging and changing the existing structures, institutions, practices, customs, norms, values, attitudes, and beliefs - where they are barriers to the achievement of women’s rights; transformational leadership can be employed to transform any organisation in order to achieve gender parity. A transformative approach recognises all contributions. No matter how trivial they may seem, as steps in a transformative process, the necessity of women setting their own agendas in all decision making processes is being recognised. Decision making is too important to be left to men solely, women should take part too (Hutchings & Michailova 2014).

Whilst influencing the public policy and political processes such as parliaments, voice and participation in the households - decisions are also critically significant and have direct impacts on the wellbeing of women and girls as they grow. Similarly, decisions made in private enterprises such as business strategies including investment or staffing, can have a

significant impact on women's employment and career advancement opportunities (Valerio 2009).

2.9.4 Gender bias in hiring

Hills (2015) cited Hmurovic (2012) explaining that women that are qualified are being evaluated less positively than equally qualified men when applying for the jobs that are stereotypically believed to belong to men. Moreover, it has been discovered that in some cases, leadership hiring criteria are being adjusted to advantage men. Heyns and Rothmann (2016) furthermore reveal that there is biasness in hiring women for leadership positions.

Valerio (2009) illustrates that the notion: "it is too risky to employ women as they will leave their job to raise children", has contributed to gender biasness in hiring. Furthermore, Acar (2015: 225) mentions: "gender stereotypes are commonly described along lines of agency and commonality". Agency involves traits such as aggressiveness, dominance, self- confidence and actions of a leader. Women face gender biasness in hiring through stereotypes - resulting in unequal treatment.

To add more, Acker (2010) outlines that the stereotyping and prejudice of women result in an unequal treatment. Furthermore, women experience problems in establishing a rapport and they lack support as managers. In the same year, Hickman (2010: 441) elaborated that men still have benefits of faster promotions and higher wages. Hence, it is noted that promotion comes slowly for women as compared to their male counterparts with similar and equivalent qualifications.

Egan (2015) explains that men are in the decision making positions and are affecting women's careers. Managers (decision makers) depend on the interview, whether they like the applicant and their gut of reaction. For that reason, it may be argued that men give recommendations that favour themselves. Hickman (2010: 444) opinionated: "Decision makers often assume that mothers have domestic responsibilities that make it inappropriate to promote them to demanding positions".

2.9.5 Occupational jealousy

Hills (2015: 165) as quoted, expresses: “Anyone who has not experienced jealousy at the office is either lying or in deep denial”. In some instances, men tend to assist women to get to the top positions yet other women tend to be jealous amongst themselves. Occupational jealousy is highly common amongst women in organisations. According to Bacchi (2000), the White Paper on Affirmative Action in the Public Service (1998) calls for gender sensitive programmers. Little was said about men in the developmental welfare, but shared responsibilities between men and women in the domestic spheres and in other areas of socio-economic life were proposed.

2.10 STRATEGIES OF ADDRESSING GENDER PARITY

Transformational leaders can do more with followers than setting policies and making key decisions (Hickman 2010). There are significant national and regional variations in gender relations and countries may vary in their approaches on setting their own targets for advancing gender parity. Every country has its own way of organising policies and resources to meet its commitments to the achievement of gender parity. The following are some of the ways in which organisations may combat gender disparity:

2.10.1 Right based approach

Bowles (2012) elaborates that the achievement of women’s rights is a complex socio-economic and political process. It demands a diverse, positive, and sustained change in the policy, practice, resource allocation, attitude, belief, and power relationship. Together the changes will have the potential to lead to the imagined transformed societies, where women can achieve their basic human rights.

Transformational leadership capacity is being built in order to achieve or change situations. It challenges structures and perceptions that justify and prolong gender disparity. And it further seeks to ensure that leadership actions contribute to parity, human rights, justice, and peace (Hickman 2010). Nevertheless, transformative leadership supports women in realising their basic human rights through a transformational change. That will create a fundamental and a

long lasting improvement in women's lives from generation to generation. Transformative Leadership encourages women to voice out and assert their rights (Duchr & Bono 2006).

Schmid and Patel (2016) voice that South Africa's welfare policy approach can be summarised as the rights based with a strong focus on social and gender justice. The Constitution additionally promotes the right to equality and it guarantees human rights to all the citizens. Welfare policy has been advocating and the achievement of gender equality in all spheres; reducing discrimination, violence against women and in meeting women's needs as caregivers. Women should be aware of their rights in order to attain gender parity.

2.10.2 Women's participation

Transformative leadership advances women's participation in every form of structure, either formal or informal. The advancement of women's leadership has been traditionally focusing on increasing women's participation. That is an important strategy, as evidence suggests that increasing the participation of women makes a significant difference for the women and the society at large (Bowles 2012). The visibility of women in public offices encourages a greater engagement and the involvement of women at lower levels. It also helps to shift the people's perceptions of what or who a leader is. Noteworthy is that it additionally challenges the idea that not only men can be leaders. It gives women the confidence to apply for higher positions.

Power within refers to a person's sense of self-worth, self-confidence, and his or her conviction of what is legitimate. It includes the ability to recognise individual uniqueness while respecting others. It may also refer to the capacity to envisage and to become optimistic. Power within women plays an important role in realising the importance of their participation to transform an organisation towards attaining gender parity (Duchr & Bono 2006). Transformational leadership requires every individual within the organisation to value the significance of gender parity, embrace and commit to achieving it.

An organisation which has a transformative leadership that is strongly rooted in its internal practice, has plenty of chances to better equip itself annihilate gender disparity. That would deliver gender parity wherein gender stereotypical thinking and deeply held beliefs about gender identity can be uprooted (Bowles 2012). Duchr and Bono (2006) voice that women's

participation has the probability of limiting gender disparity. For example, if a policy specialist believes that women are weak and should not lead, that would mean the policies implemented by such a specialist will have a high probability of women being discriminated against. For that rationale, policies that lack women's participation are likely to fail to achieve parity.

McDonald and Westphal (2013) suggest that when leadership is not transformative and inclusive, important voices may be excluded from the decision making body. Transformational leadership makes it possible to have different voices and opinions from a male and female perspective incorporated, whenever possible. An organisation that puts women's rights at heart creates a productive environment for growth and development of both the men and women leaders including the subordinates within the organisation. Gender discrimination, disparity and harassment in the workplace will then become easier to walk over.

2.10.3 Implementation of policies

Duchr and Bono (2006) prospect that no country in the world has yet achieved gender parity, but there are policies in place to assist in overcoming the calamity. The implementation of transformational leadership approach and policies that promote gender parity begin with women themselves. Women have to transform themselves as individuals in order to become better leaders who practise and promote gender parity. It can be possible through that kind of holistic approach in which meaningful and long lasting transformation in gender relations can be achieved.

Bowles (2012) argues that an effective implementation requires gender responsive accountability systems that would enable women to hold public authorities to be answerable for their commitments. The discussion of policies is not sufficient, it is the implementation of policies that plays a major role in the growth and development of democracy.

Although there are myriad of legislatures accessible for all organisations, most organisations seem to be ignorant. In some organisations, there are developments of employment equity

plans and still are not being implemented. Generally, some organisations do not put much effort into implementing available legislature and policies in place (Hills 2015).

2.10.4 Affiliate in women movements

Hutchings and Michailova (2014) proclaim that transformative approach can be used to strengthen women's capacity to mobilise their movement. Gender responsive' accountability reforms are crucial in ensuring that organisations which do not comply with the law are being held accountable. In so doing, the women's movement can shape public policies, prevent abuse of their rights and demand the redress in areas where abuse occurs. The key to making accountability systems work for women is the strength of the women's collective action, either within women's rights groups or within broader associations such as Trade Unions (Linehan 2000). For that motivation, an environment of civil and political freedom is necessary.

Women's capacity to influence the decision making, whether in public or private institutions, is intimately linked with their capabilities. Having a voice and participating in the processes and decisions that determine their lives is an essential aspect of their freedom attainment (Hutchings & Michailova 2014). Voice and influence in decision making has an intrinsic value. As a sign of the individual's and the groups' enjoyment of the democratic freedoms and rights, the importance of serving the instrumental function in ensuring that the group's specific interests are being advanced would be visible.

One of the most powerful indicators of women's voice and influence is the size and strength of the women's movement. The critical character played by women's movements in building constituencies to legitimise and advance their rights has not only been connected to the effective policy making. The implementation of gender equality policies and social change have also been linked to good governance and stability (Bowles 2012).

2.11 SUMMARY

The chapter has managed to bring to the fore the views of other scholars on how transformational leadership can play an influential role in organisations. That pertains improving gender parity in the managerial positions operating in different cultural and

historical contests. Gender parity in the managerial positions is a battle that can never be won over a blink of an eye. The next chapter explains the method that was followed to collect data for the study as well as the method for the research's data analysis.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents the approach and the strategies that were adopted to collect and analyse the research data. The target population, sampling and methods that were used in the study are also demarcated.

3.2 RESEARCH DESIGN

In Babbie's view (2007: 72), a research design addresses the plan of the scientific inquiry whilst designing a strategy for finding out about a phenomenon. The study followed an exploratory research design. Since the researcher was interested in becoming familiar with the basic facts and concerns - based on the significance of transformational leadership in pursuing gender parity. Moreover, the study had implemented the qualitative research approach. Schumacher and McMillan (1993: 479) defined a qualitative research approach as: "primarily an inductive process of organizing data into categories and identifying patterns (relationships) among categories." The method was best relevant to the study because the researcher had considered an understanding, the thoughts and feelings gathered from the respective participants in the natural setting they were found.

3.3 TARGET POPULATION

The researcher had assumed that the DSD Sekhukhune District managers were aware of gender parity within their organisation. For that premise, the study had targeted the managers in the district - both males and females.

As seen in the DSD Sekhukhune District's database, there were thirty (30) managers categorised as follows:

- One (1) male Senior Manager;
- Five (5) Middle Managers (four males and one female candidate); and
- Twenty four (24) Junior Managers (eight males and sixteen females).

The (30) managers are a total targeted population for the study.

3.4 SAMPLING METHOD AND SAMPLE SIZE

Kumar (2010) proposed that sampling refers to a few members of the population who are selected to participate in a study. Usually, a sample is selected using the probability sampling or the non-probability sampling method (Bell & Waters 2014). However, with the probability sampling method - each members of the population stood an equal chance of being selected. In the non-probability, the participant selection process was going to be done at the discretion of the researcher (De Vos 2011).

De Vos (2011: 56) exhibited the advantage of probability sampling, being that, since each member of the population stood an equal chance of being selected, cases of sample bias were being significantly minimised. Whence, the study had employed the non-probability sampling method. The major advantage of the non-probability sampling method was that it had put the researcher in a firm control of the sample selection activity (Kumar 2010).

For the purpose of the study, the purposive sampling was used. In that manner, the researcher used judgment and knowledge of the gender and leadership environment. That knowledge helped to narrow the study to the choice of only informants that were deemed to possess gender information of national importance and interest (Merriam 2009: 45). The significant drawback of a purposive sample was that the probability of the researcher could have a biased interpretation of data. However, the researcher had reserved detailed notes in order to secure that the data needed was being recorded. Recording helped to prevent errors or misinterpretation of data. As already mentioned, the study sampled a total of ten (10) managers, five (5) males and five (5) females to outstandingly understand the DSD Sekhukhune's position in accordance to the subject matter.

3.5 DATA COLLECTION

Interviews were used as the method of data collection for the study. An interview guide with open-ended questions was developed and used (see Appendix A). The structure of the interview guide was divided in two sections. Section A was aimed at capturing the biological information of the respondents in order to understand the kind of people the information was

assimilated from. Section B was structured to achieve the objectives of the study. The interview guide focused on the significance of transformational leadership in pursuing gender parity in the DSD Sekhukhune District. Appointments were made with the respondents and face-to-face interview were conducted. Moreover, all interviews were conducted at the respondents' workplace. Again, all respondents were asked the same questions.

3.6 DATA ANALYSIS

The data collected was analysed thematically. Braun and Clarke (2006: 79) viewed thematic analysis as a method for identifying, analysing and reporting patterns within data. The researcher had adopted and followed the six steps by Braun and Clarke (2006) to analyse data. The six steps are as follows, familiarising yourself with your data, generating initial codes, searching for themes, reviewing and naming themes and producing the report. Following these steps ensured clarity and rigour in analysis process. The emphasis was on pinpointing, examining and recording patterns from the data that were gathered. Themes were used to categorise and describe data.

3.7 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

The general view was that when conducting a research, the researcher needed to fulfil certain ethical objectives in order to be on the safer side of the law (Kumar 2010). The following steps were taken to ensure that the study was conducted in an ethical manner:

3.7.1 Ethical clearance

Ethical clearance was sought from the University of Limpopo's Ethics Committee before conducting the study.

3.7.2 Permission to conduct the study

Permission to conduct the study was requested from the provincial office of the Department of Social Development prior to conducting the study.

3.7.3 Informed consent

The purpose of the study was explained to the respondents and they agreed to participate. They were also informed that their participation was voluntary, without any numeration and they were allowed to withdraw at any time from participating.

3.7.4 Confidentiality

The information collected was kept confidential prior, during and after the collection of the data. Respondents were assured that their names would not be revealed to anyone so as to avoid other people from identifying them. Confidentiality was also made to make sure that participating in the study did not harm the respondents in any way.

3.7.5 Access to results

Kara (2015) contended that researchers have a responsibility to report their findings resulting from public findings in a full, open and timely fashion to the scientific community. Results of the study will be available to interested stakeholder.

3.8 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

The data were gathered from ten (10) of DSD Sekhukhune Managers, one district amongst five within the Limpopo Province. Findings may only be used as a guide for similar departments and may not necessarily be generalizable.

3.9 SUMMARY

This chapter provided a description of the research methodology that was being followed. The research design was discussed, target population, sampling, the data collection was highlighted and the purposes were enlightened. The ethical considerations were taken into account as well as the limitations of the study. The next chapter shall, provide the findings and data analysis from the ten (10) interviewed DSD Sekhukhune managers.

CHAPTER FOUR

RESULTS OF THE STUDY

4.1 INTRODUCTION

In this chapter, data collected was transcribed and analysed. Through a review of the interview notes and findings of the study, an analysis by a means of identifying themes within the interview notes was established and interpreted. That entailed attaching the significant meaning to the identified themes. The primary focus of the study was to explore how committed the DSD Sekhukhune District is to gender parity. The opinion, on whether transformational leadership could be used to accelerate the integration or mainstreaming of more women into influential leadership positions was required. This chapter presents the findings from the data collected, starting with the biographical information of the participants.

4.2 BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION

This section presents a summary of biographical data concerning the respondents' gender and years of experience within the organisation. Individual and 10 face-to-face interviews were conducted.

4.2.1 Gender of the Respondents

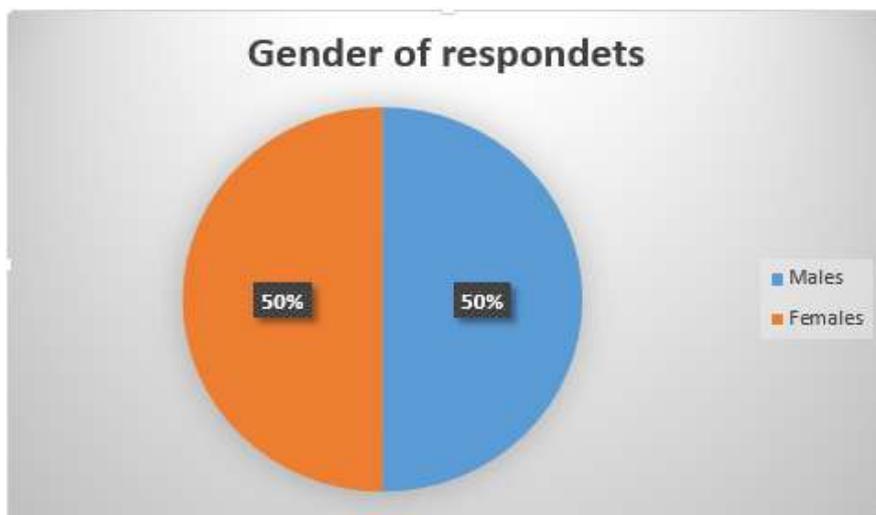


Figure 4.1: Gender of Respondents

As portrayed in figure 4.1 above, 50% of the respondents were males and 50% were females. The results illustrate that there was a balanced gender representation amongst the respondents. The balance was of paramount importance as it gathered both men and women's perceptions in terms of transformational leadership equally.

4.2.2 Number of Years' Experience in the Organisation

Table 4.1: Years of experience within the organisation

Number of years' experience in the organisation	Number	Percentage in %
5 – 8	5	50
9 – 12	3	30
12 – 15	1	10
15+	1	10
Total	10	100

Table 4.1 above indicates that none of the respondents who had participated in the study had been within the organisation for less than five years, the majority of the respondents (50%) had been working for about 5-8 years within the organisation and the least had, at least, 12 years and more. The implication that the majority of the respondents had adequate work experience to participate in the study and give informed responses was not doubted.

4.3 OPINIONS ON GENDER PARITY WITHIN THE DEPARTMENT

This section presents the opinions on the departmental progress and commitment towards pursuing and achieving gender parity within the DSD Sekhukhune District. The study wanted to find out opinions of the respondents on the progress that was being made towards achieving gender parity within the organisation. Then later, find out if transformational leadership could be one of the strategies that would be used to achieve gender parity targets within the department. Table 4.2 below provides a summary of the profile as reflected in the department's 2012-2016 HR database.

Table 4.2: Gender profile by headcount

Year (s)	2012		2013		2014		2015		2016	
Position	M	F								
Senior Managers	1	0	1	0	1	0	1	0	1	0
Middle Managers	4	1	4	1	4	1	4	1	4	1
Junior Managers	7	9	8	16	8	16	8	16	8	16
Total	12	10	13	17	13	17	13	17	13	17

Key: M - Male; F – Female

The above table illustrates that in the year 2012, slightly more men as compared to women were in the management positions. For the past 5 years, only 1 female was appointed to the middle management position. That speaks volumes about the department’s inability to aggressively push for more female representation in its decision-making structures.

The appointment of women in junior management positions in 2013 could be understood within the context of an increased pressure exerted by many gender activists. Judging from the gender disaggregated figures extracted from the department’s HR database, it could be concluded that the war against gender disparity in the department is far from over.

Nonetheless, in 2013, women increased from 45% to 57% within the management positions. Although there were more women within the management positions, men held senior positions. The finding aligned with Hickman (2010: 441), who stated that although professions such as Librarianship, Teaching and Social Work are dominated by women, men ascent to higher positions. The department is perceived to have a slow progress in empowering women to the leadership positions. Respondents were then asked about the challenges that hindered the progress towards achieving gender parity within the organisation.

4.4 CHALLENGES THE DEPARTMENT FACES IN ACHIEVING GENDER PARITY

The following were challenges of the DSD Sekhukhune District towards achieving gender parity as described by the respondents:

4.4.1 Respondents' level of Inspiration

At least 30% of the respondents indicated that they were inspired to perform even more than they were expected. Those respondents stated that their passion, dedication and enthusiasm were what made it possible for them to perform extraordinarily. Moreover, they explained that a “thank you” from a person they had assisted became a huge satisfaction to them. Nevertheless, 70% of the respondents stated that they were not inspired to perform more than they were expected. They further reported that the experience hindrances to their work such as lack of resources and no increment of salary level were factors of demotivation. It was also elaborated that performing up to what they were expected to required too much effort. To buttress, one of the respondents answered as follows:

“...in an environment based with limited resources and low salary levels, it becomes impossible to perform beyond expectations”.

4.4.2 Opinions on performance of women in leadership positions

Figure 4.2 below presents the opinions of the respondents when they were being asked how they felt about the performance of the women who were already in leadership positions within the department.

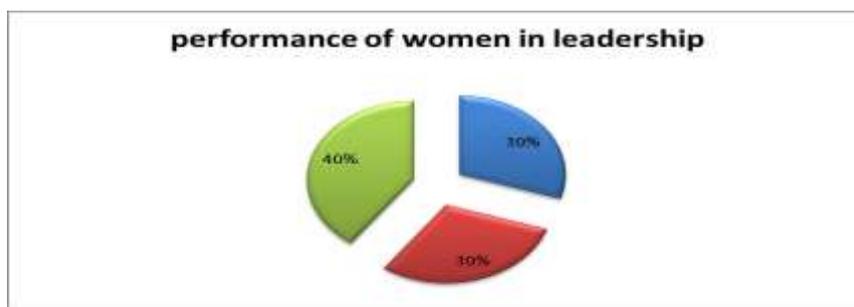


Figure 4.2: Performance of women in leadership positions

Respondents had mixed thoughts about the performance of women who were already in leadership within the organisation. Firstly, 30% of respondents were of the view that women performed equally as men and they (respondents) thought that women were doing just fine. Secondly, an equivalent of 30% highlighted that there were pros and cons in the performance of women leaders. Most women in the organisation were preoccupied with top management desire yet they neglect career development - that resulted in poor performance. Lastly, a larger amount of 40% of interviewees strongly perceived that women within the organisation performed inadequately, could not manage their positions, were incompetent and showed lack of leadership knowledge.

4.4.3 Employee family responsibility

All 100% of the respondents agreed that all employees, both males and females could be negatively affected by the interference of family responsibilities in the workplace. They all affirmed that women were being affected more as they could take, from days to months away from work while men only took hours to days away. These results corresponded with what had been discovered by Hoobler *et al.* (2011: 154), revealing that organisational policies enabled women to have more family responsibility leave such as a paid maternity leave which could paradoxically lead to less working hours than the male counterpart. It due to the reason that Hoobler *et al.* (2011) elaborated: family responsibilities interfered with the ideal manager's expectations.

One of the respondents mentioned in the below statement:

“For women it happens as it is understandable as they are the pillars of their families. Nonetheless, truly speaking, family responsibility interferes with their work. Moreover, when an employee goes to maternity leave, the nearest present employee have to take over from her work and still carry on with his/her own work. It is just too much work.”

It could implied that although family responsibilities affect all employees, women are mostly affected.

4.4.4 The pressure of meeting stereotypical role expectations within the organisation

Minority of the respondents 20% reported that they did experience pressure of meeting the role expectations within the organisation. They further stated that those roles had been normal and had become part of their organisational culture. It had also been outlined that men had their own perception of ideal women leader - as sensitive, understanding and helpful, which pressured women to act as expected. On the other hand, majority of the respondents (80%) stated that they did not experience any role pressure, they instead experienced political pressure. The responses may imply that the role expectation pressure was experienced and to some extent, it had been normalised and not felt anymore.

Again, one of the respondents elaborated below:

“....this can and often does create ethical conflicts i.e. being caught in the middle of whose rights and needs should take priority over those of others. Political forces dictate what you should do, mostly at the expense of what you are mandated to do by the professional body.”

4.4.5 Cultural norms and beliefs within the organisation

A total of 50% of the respondents agreed that the cultural norms and beliefs did prevent the organisation from attaining gender equity. They (respondents) expressed that patriarchy had been existing for ages and it had been based in both the men and women, mentality. That had suggested: gender parity could not be attained anytime soon. Women found it acceptable to be subordinates to men at any given place including the workplace. That behaviour had left men to be seen as superior. For that view, men without much struggle, were given more power and resources than women - thus giving men a wide range of opportunities to succeed in leadership positions. The results pointed out that stereotypical thinking had put women at a disadvantage as they were not exposed to the same leadership opportunities as men.

The other 50% of the respondents were of the view that political interference had a greater impact on failing to attain gender parity. Some respondents stated as follows:

“Political appointment is an issue here. Most men are actively participating in politics which will mean we will still have men in senior positions...” (Respondent 1)

“Yes, they do have an impact but not as effective as political interference...”
(Respondent 2)

“...political interference is just a problem.” (Respondent 3)

4.4.6 Women who possess the required leadership skills in the organisation

The majority of the respondents 70% were of the view that the organisation had enough women who possessed the required leadership skills. Even so, among the majority, 50% of the respondents reported that women who exhibited leadership skills had left the department or were on their way out of the department. That may imply a decrement, in years to come there will be very few women who possess required leadership skills. Although 20% of the respondents agreed that there were women with leadership skills, they also mentioned that such women were not inspired to break the glass ceiling – instead, they manoeuvred to another destinations; where they could get freedom to develop further, ascend to higher positions and become more innovative.

The results aligned with what had been outlined by Powell and Graves (2003) stating that women who had invested in their education, spending years building their careers and who had fitted in the management profiles; had a desire to follow or had followed an entrepreneurship path. Furthermore, the minority of the respondents, to an amount of 30%, disagreed that there were enough women who possessed the required leadership skills.

The results indicated that the DSD Sekhukhune District had lost talents and skills as officials became entrepreneurs or had changed jobs for better positions that recognised their academic achievements.

4.4.7 Opinions of efforts made by women to climb the leadership ladder within the organisation

Most of the respondents (70%) mentioned that women were not doing enough to succeed to climb up the leadership ladder as most of them did not show any interest in ascending levels within the organisation. The responses given in, the process of the study, indicated that women got discouraged from even aspiring to leadership positions.

Below are some of the expressions from respondents:

“No. as a woman, often I must function in a work environment characterised by political pressures. This environment weakens and stresses me a lot.” (Respondent 1)

“...I’m sorry I would rather be at my position than to be ordered and dictated like a child...” (Respondent 2)

“No. High portfolios are still male dominant and it does not paint an inspiring dream picture for a woman to build herself into a future leader.” (Respondent 3)

Nevertheless, a few of the respondents (30%) thought that women were doing enough to climb up the leadership position. They also said that there were more women who were career oriented. The results pointed out that women at subordinate level possessed very strong leadership prerequisites. Those were some of the women who believed in career development for the betterment of good leadership and corporate governance.

4.4.8 Views on bias in hiring women for leadership positions within the organisation

Figure 4.3 below illustrates that 80% of the respondents reckoned that biasness existed in the hiring of women into leadership positions:

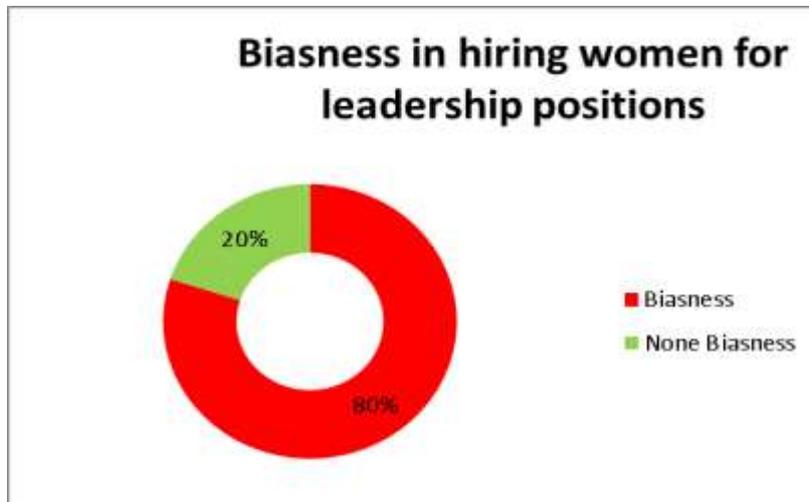


Figure 4.3: Bias in hiring women for leadership positions

The respondents explained that since the organisation employed and frantically promoted employees due to their political affiliation, qualifications were not taken into consideration. Most women in the organisation blamed the political interference for the inability to had not met the gender parity targets. They further added that women who adopted masculine styles of leadership (directive and assertive behaviours) tended to be disliked and their probability of being appointed as leaders faded. Such women also risked into not getting a promotion when they were too direct and did not act as expected by those in power. The sentiment showed the fact that stereotypes about the roles of women were still being maintained.

Likewise, 20% of the respondents thought that hiring was made fair and women were being encouraged to apply. The outline could suggest that with most men in the senior positions, it left them with a major choice to make decisions about women and they reckoned they (the men) were best suitable. Possibilities were that women should not become threads towards them.

4.4.9 Perceptions on support by women who hold leadership positions

All (100%) of the respondents agreed that women who held leadership positions prevented other aspiring and (or) emerging women leaders from achieving the leadership positions. Women were mainly hired in junior management positions. That opinion was being supported by some of the respondents who gave the following responses:

“Yes. They are arrogant, oppressive, they do not allow change, and they are against innovation. They are very jealous and manipulative” (Respondent 1)

“I am not inspired, our women superiors have no life, it is like they are channelled with a remote control” (Respondent 2)

The results indicated that both men and women were not inspired to attain leadership positions within the same organisation. Thus, it became a hindrance for aspiring women leaders from attaining leadership positions.

4.4.10 Opinions on the organisation promotion of women into leadership positions

Most of the respondents (90%) thought the organisation was not doing enough to promote women into leadership positions. The respondents stated that although there were women in leadership, in junior positions to be precise; they still did not think that the organisation was doing enough. Most of the respondents mentioned that the same people had been in the same positions for so long. It could be argued that they did not witness any form of improvement, promotion or advancement. For instance, the statement below was uttered by one of the respondents:

“No. There are programmes to empower women with basic socio-economic skills with a very limited budget, which only cater for accommodation and catering on the day of the workshop. It is not practical and cannot produce tangibles results.”

Few of the respondents (10%) perceived that the organisation recognised women and it developed them. The response might imply that although there were women in the leadership positions within the organisation, it was promoting women at a snail pace and as such, it needed to improve. Moreover, the structural changes were of necessity to give women equal access to education, training and income-earning opportunities. That may fill the high portfolios that supposedly belonged to men.

4.4.11 Perceived implementation of gender equity legislation and policies by the organisation

As illustrated in table 4.3 below, 60% of the respondents reported that the organisation implemented legislature and policies. An example that more women were in the leadership positions, unlike years before, where males were dominant in all positions; was provided. However, 40% of the respondents mentioned that legislation and policies were only implemented when they suited those in power. The respondents argued further that if the Employment Equity Act was being implemented accordingly, women would had escalated from the coordinator, supervisory, and assistant roles to the middle and senior management roles and have power to make decisions. The responses are illustrated below in table 4.3:

Table 4.3: Implementation of legislation and policies

Policies and Legislation Implemented well	Percentages (%)
Yes	60
No	40
Total	100

The above table indicates that the respondents contemplated that the implementation of legislation and policies was taking place slowly within the organisation. The results aligned with Bowles (2012) and Patel (2015). The duo suggested that while much progress had been made in overcoming apartheid policies and in adopting the new macro social policies with high impacts, shortfalls existed in implementation.

4.4.12 Organisational support programmes for women participation in Issues relating to gender parity

All (100%) of the respondents affirmed that there were no women programmes or forums within the organisation. The results indicated that it would be most difficult for women to be heard and be promoted when there was no existence of women movement. According to

Hutchings and Michailova (2014), transformative approach could be used to strengthen women's capacity to mobilise their movement. In that case, it could be stated that women within the organisation would miss the opportunity to correct acts that did not comply with the law within their workplace.

4.5 PERCEIVED ROLE OF TRANSFORMATIONAL LEADERSHIP IN ACHIEVING GENDER PARITY

All (100%) of the respondents embraced transformational leadership as they believed that it might bring back their motivation, arise their morale, stimulate challenges, increase their innovations and make tasks achievable. Through transformational leadership, the respondents foresaw gender parity targets attainable. They also indicated that they were aware that transformational leadership was more based on the development of competencies rather than gender. One of them stated below:

“We are not saying we want women for the sake of having women in leadership position, at least let us be led by competent leaders of which I believe we have so many competent women within the organisation.”

The respondents, additionally, affirmed that as leaders of the district; they also believed that adopting transformational leadership would not only improve the working relation but also connect them with the subordinates. The connection was believed to bring a change on how managers and their subordinates thought, felt and acted towards gender parity issues. That connection might eventually had changed the organisational culture and made the department appealing to work from within. In so doing, talented and skilled employees would not had thought of leaving the department.

Furthermore, the respondents reckoned that the implementation of transformational leadership would assist them to know their subordinates and understand them holistically. Nevertheless, the respondents appeared to have sufficient trust in transformational leadership and believed that through it they could bridge the gender parity gap. The results indicated that managers acknowledged transformational leadership and the changes it could bring. For that

motive, transformational leadership may assist the DSD Sekhukhune District to attain gender parity.

4.6 SUGGESTIONS ON HOW THE DSD SEKHUKHUNE DISTRICT CAN SUCCESSFULLY ACHIEVE GENDER PARITY ISSUES

Below are the suggestions identified by the respondents and were believed to be the factors that could assist the organisation to successfully achieve gender parity:

4.6.1 Leadership training

The respondents suggested that leadership training should take place in order to assist the leaders to respond to the diversity of employees. The trainings would assist both men and women leaders to view their potential regardless of gender. In that way, gender parity shall be attained.

4.6.2 Provision of resources

Although leaders could be trained, if employees were not provided with valuable resources; it would make it impossible to attain the vision and mission of the organisation.

4.6.3 Salary increment

Respondents suggested that not only would they be inspired to be more productive at work, but would also study more to attract higher positions as they know they would be compensated for their contribution within the organisation. Unlike what was occurring currently, where no matter how heavy the qualification the candidates acquired, the salary remained the same.

4.7 SUMMARY

The chapter has presented the results from the data collected. It has been shown that although progress has been made towards achieving gender equity, the Department of Social Development still has a long way to go in terms of accelerating the integration or

mainstreaming of more women into influential leadership positions or decision making units of the DSD in the Sekhukhune District.

CHAPTER FIVE

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 INTRODUCTION

As presented in the erstwhile chapter (Chapter 4), the data analysis of the research was tabled, interpreted and the discussion of the results was provided as well. In this chapter (Chapter 5), an outline of the summary of results, conclusions and recommendations of the study are obtainable.

5.2 SUMMARY OF RESULTS

Below is a summary of results derived from Chapter Four:

- There were more men managers than women managers within the DSD, Sekhukhune District organisation – Limpopo Province. In that motive, there was the need for a productive intervention to be done in order to fast-track the empowerment of women into decision-making positions.
- Most managers were not inspired to perform more than they were expected to - given the reasons that they lacked resources, their efforts often went unrecognised and that they had reached the glass ceiling.
- Both men and women were being affected by family responsibilities. Although that occurs simultaneously, the women appeared to be vulnerable to more complex family matters as compared to men.
- Most managers found political appointment discouraging as opposed to a fair promotion. They, in fact blamed it on the failure incurred within the leadership positions.
- There were enough women who possessed the required leadership skills. The women were dominant in the junior management positions and they confirmed to be experiencing glass ceiling pressures.

- There had been improvements of employing more women managers within the organisation. However, the implementation of legislature and policies were not visible enough.
- There were no movements that supported women empowerment and participation in issues relating to gender parity. On that basis, women could not come together to raise their concerns about any of the issues that were affecting them.
- Leadership training, adoption of transformational leadership, provision of resources and salary increment were common suggestions to pursue gender parity. The suggestions were believed to be the factors that might assist the DSD Sekhukhune District to attain gender parity.

5.3 CONCLUSION

There are broad difficulties that women encounter in the department. Women are prevented by the glass ceiling and labyrinth from moving into senior leadership positions. The persistent stereotypes, cultural norms and beliefs, glass ceiling and political interference that view women as subordinates and auxiliary employees, must not be left unrecognised. That being so, from most of the respondents: political interference was reported to be the most exacerbated obstacle within the organisation.

Within the DSD Sekhukhune District, it has been found that the legislature and policies that empower women into leadership are, for some reasons, being neglected. However, much more work should be done to ensure that women are being provided with opportunities to equate their scale against men. Females dominate the DSD Sekhukhune District, yet their representation in the leadership positions is still opaque. The present male domination in the senior leadership positions has been existing even before the year 2012. The implication could be that over the past five years, there had been no change in the DSD Sekhukhune District management positions.

The DSD Sekhukhune District has not yet achieved gender parity targets. Patriarchy seems to be dominant in the leading ranks. Transformational leadership could be of significant importance to halt gender inequality.

5.4 RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the results of the study, it can be recommended that the DSD Sekhukhune District considers the following:

5.4.1 Adoption and implementation of transformational leadership

The DSD Sekhukhune District should adopt transformational leadership to motivate its leaders in all the levels. That might encourage the subordinates to achieve beyond their call of duty through inspiration. Transformational leadership would help to ensure that those in the leadership positions are always open and receptive to changes that are needed within organisations - including women empowerment.

5.4.2 Change deployment based on political affiliation

The disadvantage of deploying the personnel based on political affiliation in the DSD Sekhukhune District is that the leaders come from irrelevant fields of study or disciplines. Mostly, they are activists of the ruling political party. Some do not even have the qualifications for the department led. In that view, many pitfalls such as failure to understand the communication skills in that specific discipline, professional logistics, procedures and loss of the talents and skills occur. Amongst plenty of the pitfalls, gender parity gap proceeds being widened.

5.4.3 Appointment of Leaders with Relevant Qualifications to the Organisation

As the organisation absorbs mostly socially trained professionals, it shall become of paramount importance to audit the employees who are already in the leadership positions to verify if their qualifications are relevant for the appointed post. An accurate examination of academic achievement on relevant posts should be applied to impose the skills that are authentic to the respective positions.

5.4.4 Establishing a functional gender office within the DSD Sekhukhune District

The top management at the DSD Sekhukhune District is called upon to implement measured and affirmative mechanisms to increase women's representation in the top leadership

structures. Establishing a fully-fledged gender transformation office would go a long way in coordinating the promotion of more women in the organisation's top leadership structure. A transformational gender advisor, with a traceable track of record in gender issues, needs to be appointed to facilitate the establishment of the committee to work on closing the gap.

5.4.5 Department-wide awareness campaign

In order to generate adequate awareness and create a pro-women leadership environment, the DSD Sekhukhune District needs to organise sustained campaigns to sensitise all employees on the criticalness of gender transformation. The campaign should also be used to conscientise women to form their own movement that will assist them to network and connect in order to establish gender parity.

5.4.6 Appointing a gender equity transformation champion

Central to the success of the DSD Sekhukhune District, gender transformational strategy should be the ability to appoint a seasoned gender equity champion to drive all gender promotion and integration activities. The organisation's leadership needs to grant the champion some sort of a legitimate power, decision-making authority and financial resources to effectively speed and steer the new gender transformation discourse.

5.4.7 Adequate budgetary support

In order to improve the programme's implementation leverage and technical capabilities, the DSD Sekhukhune District leadership needs to avail sufficient funds to improve the operating and financial leverage of the proposed gender office. When the funding is being secured through tapping into the existing or new public-private partnerships, an advancement of the unit's administrative, supervision, quality assurance and monitoring objectives would be established and maintained.

5.4.8 Specialised training of staff

In order to put at a neutral mode of the playing field and create a gender friendly institutional environment, it is recommended that the selected members of the DSD Sekhukhune District leadership be sent to a specialised gender training through twinning arrangements with some

of the reputable universities that are known to run excellent gender transformation projects. The setup will go a long way in enhancing the proposed gender office's project implementation capacities.

5.4.9 Suggested future research

For the purpose that the study has managed to profile the gender dimensions of the DSD Sekhukhune District leadership structure, future studies might wish to focus on exploration of the views of the DSD's key stakeholders using its primary data.

5.5 SUMMARY OF THE STUDY

In the content of the study, an outline of the introduction and background of transformational leadership in pursuing gender parity were discussed. Likewise, all research questions were answered and the objectives of the study were successfully achieved. Furthermore, the literature reviewed has managed to bring, to the fore, the views of other scholars. The 'how?' question on transformational leadership can play an influential role in improving gender parity in the managerial positions of organisations. For that rationale, the qualitative research approach was employed.

Results posed that gender profile of the decision making structure of the DSD Sekhukhune District is predominantly filled with males. In other words, a small percentage of women are being represented in the senior management positions. The "*think manager think a male*" paradigm is very evident in the organisation. Moreover, the study has discovered that the organisation does not implement transformational leadership to pursue gender parity.

As illustrated, the results revealed that the DSD Sekhukhune District is far behind with regard to attaining gender parity targets. Political interference within the organisation has been noted to be on an alarming state, playing a role in widening the gender parity gap. The DSD Sekhukhune District's leadership is therefore, advised to adopt and implement transformational leadership in order to pursue gender parity. Noteworthy is that the generation adequate awareness campaigns on gender parity issues shall be of paramount importance.

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APPENDIX A
RESEARCH QUESTIONNAIRE

Title of research: The significance of transformational leadership in pursuing gender parity in the Department of Social Development, Sekhukhune District.

SECTION A: BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION

1. Gender of respondent : _____
2. Position/Rank : _____
3. Number of years' experience in the organisation: _____

SECTION B: OPINIONS ON GENDER EQUITY IN THE ORGANISATION

4. Are you inspired to perform more than you are expected to? Yes/No

Please explain your response:

5. What are your thoughts on the performance of women who are already in leadership positions in the organisation?

6. Do you think employees' family responsibilities interfere with their work?

i.e. attendance of parental roles and responsibilities

7. Do you experience pressure of meeting cultural expectations within the organization?
i.e. men expected to be assertive and female respectful

8. Do you think cultural norms and beliefs prevent the organization from attaining gender equity?

9. Do you think there are enough women who possess the required leadership skills in the organization?

10. Do you think women are doing enough to succeed to climb the leadership ladder within the organization, i.e. to be promoted to leadership positions? Yes/No

Please explain your response:

11. Do you think there is biasness in hiring women for leadership positions?

12. Do you think women who hold leadership positions prevent aspiring and/or emerging women leaders from attaining leadership positions? Yes/No

Please explain your response:

13. Do you think your organisation is doing enough to promote women into leadership positions?

14. Do you think that your organisation implements legislature and policies in place to achieve gender parity? Yes/No

Please explain your response:

15. Is there a women movement in your organisation that supports women participation in issues relating to gender equity? Yes/No

If yes, explain the role of the movement and how it functions.

16. Do you have any suggestions on how your organisation can successfully achieve gender equity issues?

17. Any additional comments/thoughts on this topic or on this study?

Thank you for your participation!