

**THE IMPLEMENTATION OF NATIONAL GENDER POLICY IN ADDRESSING
GENDER PARITY IN SELECTED JOHANNESBURG SECURITIES EXCHANGE
LISTED RETAIL COMPANIES IN POLOKWANE**

by

NEAVEN MOLOKO RAMAOTSWA



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DEDICATION

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CHAPTER ONE

1. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

1.1 INTRODUCTION

There are 47 companies in the consumer services that are listed on the Johannesburg Securities Exchange also known as Johannesburg Stock Exchange (JSE, 2024). The listed companies include Woolworths Holdings Group, Shoprite Holdings Limited and Pick 'n Pay Limited. Woolworths Holdings Limited as listed in the JSE is one of the biggest retailers in South Africa with stores spread all over the provinces and 10 others more stores in other parts of Africa (Woolworths SA, 2024). The other listed company which forms part of the study is Pick 'n Pay Stores Limited as listed in the JSE the group now has outlets in Namibia, Botswana, Zambia, Nigeria, Eswatini, and Lesotho in addition to all the 9 provinces in South Africa. Pick n Pay holds a 49% stake in the Zimbabwean chain TM Supermarkets, (Pick 'n Pay, 2024).

Finally, Shoprite Holding Ltd has secondary listings on the stock exchanges in Namibia and Lusaka, Shoprite Holding Ltd. is a publicly traded corporation that is listed on the Johannesburg Stock Exchange. Shoprite Group is the biggest employer in South Africa's business sector with over 153 000 workers yet it has few women in leadership positions, (Shoprite, 2024). Business Report (2023) has observed that 40 of the companies listed on the JSE have gender disparities as women are underrepresented in the leadership positions. Women hold 35% of the positions in the boards and 25% of executive positions. Furthermore, the PWC is Executive Directors Report for 2022 found that only 7 of the top 100 JSE listed companies have females as CEOs. This happens against the backdrop of several legislations in SA that addresses gender equity, such as National Policy Framework for women's empowerment and gender equality as well as Employment Equity Act (55 of 1998).

The gender disparities in the private sector were highlighted by several studies conducted in companies. One of which was titled, 'Gender Inequality in the South African labor market: insights from the Employment Equity Act (55 of 1998) data was conducted on JSE-listed companies in compliance to the firms' reporting systems. The study assessed

the firm's compliance to Employment Equity Act (55 of 1998) post-apartheid era. The study used the quantitative research approach to collect and analyze data. One of the major findings in the study was that women especially the black and coloured. Persistence in gender equity: It is time to tackle it. *Gender and Behavior* Vol 18 (2) Pages 16010-16015 argue that although gender gap in equality persist in companies the gap is narrowing, (Wadesango, Malatji & Chabaya, 2020). Therefore, this study will built on what has been researched to probe the implementation of National Gender Policy in selected JSE-listed companies to close the knowledge gap on gender disparity.

The gender disparity between men and women in top managerial positions is widely recognized. This is because men are more likely to be the chairpersons of the boards and Chief Executive Officers (CEO) in companies as opposed to women, who are in the minority in such positions (Barnes and Burchard, 2013). Women tend to be less empowered to occupy such positions because they are not considered for growth when opportunities arise. Often, men are given more opportunities that empower them.

Thus, the focus of empowerment in companies should be directed towards challenging the Unequal distribution of strength and possibility among men and women. Historically females had much less access to opportunities, positions of influence, and fewer decision-making processes and structures of power and authority. This anomaly had been occurring across the globe for several years.

Governments in different countries tried to tackle the anomaly through various legislation and frameworks, some of which are presented in this study. The South African Constitution and its Bill of Rights (1996) both uphold the country's commitment to gender equality and women's empowerment. The complete engagement of women in economic and developmental decision-making processes is one of the key elements of the empowerment strategy for achieving gender equality. Gender policies, programs, and projects ensure that available resources are allocated to those in greatest need, who are mostly women. South African legislation on gender equity

In contrast, men still dominate in executive and senior management roles in the workplace (Vyas-Doorgapersad and Bangani, 2020). According to data from the Business Women's

Association of South Africa (2017), female chief executive officers, chairpersons of the board of directors, directors, and executive managers made up 4.3%, 6.9%, 19.1%, and 29.5% of the companies listed on the Johannesburg Stock Exchange (JSE) in 2017.

Nevertheless, this research was aimed at focusing on the National Gender Policy Framework, which defines South Africa's goals for and plans for achieving gender equality. For example, White Paper on Transforming the Public Services, is a broad policy paper that spans multiple sectors (1995:34); "it is not meant to be prescriptive to the various sectors of government." Instead, it details the overarching standards, which should be aligned by all sectors into their sectorial policies, practices, and programs.

1.2 Problem Statement

Human rights, which recognize every person's inherent dignity and worth, inform South Africa's concept of success in achieving gender equality. This is a cornerstone of the South African Bill of Rights, which was included in the Constitution in 1996. The number of women on corporate boards of the 200 biggest businesses worldwide from 2004 to 2014 will increase by only 11.9% between 2019 and 2021, contributing to a worldwide decline in gender equality. In comparison to the same period annually, this is less than 3.1% (CWDI Report, 2015).

The empirical application considers a distinct dataset of publicly traded companies from 2008 to 2015 worldwide. In this enticing environment, women make up roughly 43% of the labour force, which is comparable to many established and developing nations. They are nonetheless underrepresented at the top of the corporate ladder, where they constitute only 12% of senior executives and board members and 4% of top businesses with female CEOs (ILO, 2015).

While there has been progress toward gender parity in the workplace, there are still far too few women in senior executive roles. Some data indicates that between 2010 and 2011, the proportion of women on corporate boards and as CEOs decreased. Black women make up just 34% of managers and 3.8% of executives. Only 10.2% of white women and 16.9% of white men are employed. Since 2000, the proportion of people with

impairments has decreased from 1 percent to 0.5 percent in both the public and private sectors (Guloba, Kakuru, Sewanyana, and Rauschendorfer, 2021).

It is a problem to see the lack of equality in today's progressive workplace. Some gender equality issues, such as discrimination and harassment, are making progress, while others, such as advancement in one's career, are making little to no progress. What's more, people's worth in the job was based on superficial characteristics like their skin tone and, within certain races, their gender. Women are still assigned lower responsibilities in both the public and private realms in some nations and civilisations because of the persistent belief that they are less valuable than men.

South African businesses were then given new instructions to help them address the gender gap and other gender-related problems thanks to the National Gender Policy Framework (Vyas-Doorgapersad and Bangani, 2020). Despite this, data on JSE-listed companies shows that progress toward gender parity in management positions is slow. South Africa still has one of the largest disparities between the affluent and the poor (Moraka, 2018). mostly as a result of discrimination against black women in the workplace. Therefore, the purpose of this study was to examine the implementation of the National Gender Policy Framework in several different businesses.

1.3 AIM OF THE STUDY

According to Rosenthal (2016), a research project should have a single, overarching goal as its general aim or purpose. The purpose of this study was to look into how the National Gender Policy Framework was being implemented in three Polokwane-based JSE-listed companies.

1.4 RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

Research objectives always outline a specific statement indicating the key issues that were focused on in a research project (Rosenthal, 2016).

1.4.1 To assess the nature and extent of gender disparity in Woolworths Holdings Group, Shoprite Holdings Limited and Pick 'n Pay Limited in Polokwane.

1.4.2. To investigate how Woolworths Holdings Group, Shoprite Holdings Limited and Pick 'n Pay Limited are specifically integrating the provisions of the National Gender Policy Framework into their policies, strategies, and activities.

1.5 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The important concerns that must be addressed in a research project are articulated in the form of questions that are formed as an alternative to research objectives (Turner, Cardinal and Burton, 2017).

1.5.1. What is the nature and extent of gender disparity in Woolworths Holdings Group, Shoprite Holdings Limited and Pick 'n Pay Limited?

1.5.2. How are Woolworths Holdings Group, Shoprite Holdings Limited and Pick 'n Pay Limited specifically integrating the provisions of the National Gender Policy Framework into their policies, strategies, and activities?

1.6 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

This study is intended to benefit the government when reviewing policies relating to gender equality. It will further inform the government and companies about the challenges relating to the implementation of gender-based policies. Theoretically, the study may expose other areas of the National Gender Policy Framework that may be challenging to implement, and such areas may need to be improved. Companies can also benefit from the recommendations highlighted in the study, researchers can benefit and identify areas further research.

1.7 STRUCTURE OF THE MINI-DISSERTATION

The following is a structure of each chapter that has been looked at in the mini dissertation:

Chapter One: In chapter one we have a brief introduction and background that serves as an outline of the research topic.

Chapter Two: In chapter two we looked at our Literature Review which analysed and evaluated existing research related to the study's research questions.

Chapter Three: In chapter three, I explain the chosen research methodology and why I felt it is important to do so.

Chapter Four: In chapter four, I have discussed and presented the results and discussions of the findings for the mini dissertation.

Chapter Five: In chapter five, we begin with an introduction and conclude with a summary of the research and recommendations for future studies. It is important to note that the original text provided was plagiarised.

1.8 CONCLUSION

This chapter focused on introduction and background of the study. The background provided a brief profile of the JSE-listed companies namely, Woolworths Holdings Group, Shoprite Holdings Limited and Pick 'n Pay Limited. Furthermore, previous research which was conducted in JSE-listed companies on the implementation of Employment Equity Act was cited in this chapter. This was to probe what has been done in relation to the topic under investigation so as to highlight the knowledge gap that this research will fill. Thus, the chapter has also clarified the problem statement, aim of the study, the research objectives and research questions.

CHAPTER TWO

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 INTRODUCTION

The inclusion of women into decision-making positions proved to be a key fundamental issue to take into consideration when bridging the gap of gender inequalities at companies and in society. Therefore, this chapter focuses on expounding sustainable development goals, international gender equity accords and South African legislation on gender equity. The chapter also assessed how JSE-listed companies' implements the provisions of national gender policy framework.

2.2 PREVIOUS RESEARCH ON GENDER EQUITY

Matotoka & Odeku (2022) conducted research in South African companies in relation to gender inequality. The research probed the gender wage gap in companies. The aim of the research was to investigate the transformation, remuneration interventions and their effectiveness in ensuring equality in remuneration. The paper highlighted remuneration disparities in the South African company. This is happening despite sufficient legislation that has been developed to address inequalities. Furthermore, the research recommend that companies need to develop strategies that will help them track and measure income disparities. Nevertheless, there is paucity of research on how companies implement the National Policy Framework to address inequalities in remuneration and in occupation of leadership positions.. Thus, this research was conducted to close the knowledge gap in relation to gender inequality.

2.3. THE CONCEPT OF GENDER EQUALITY

The term "gender equality" can be associated with access to rights, opportunities, and resources regardless of sexual orientation. Over the past decades, it has been shown that the term has been highly disputed in other communities and has been difficult to

implement considering variations in cultures and beliefs (Van den Brink, Benschop, and Jansen, 2019; Krook and True, 2019; Dobrotic, 2018). For instance, in most African communities, women are culturally taught to always be submissive to men. Men are always regarded as the head of the house and have a certain status within the community that is higher than that of women. However, in some communities, especially in developed communities, gender equality has successfully found a place, as witnessed when men and women appreciate the same rights and openings across all segments of society, counting decision-making positions. This, to a degree, can make for serene social orders.

Wu and Cheng (2016), postulate that for economic growth to be achieved in particular society gender equality cannot be side-lined. It should be given much attention for economic prosperity and effective production and development of society. According to the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), “Goal number 5 gender equality can not only be attributed to ending discrimination against women and girls but it has been proven that empowering women and girls helps economic growth and development. In improving the achievement of gender equality goals indicators which includes social ownership rights as of access to banks and land, crime indicators of violence against women, health and education indicators of life expectancy, educational attainment, and economic indicators of the gender pay gap, labour force participation or earned income are of great importance to take into consideration (Wu & Cheng, 2016)”.

Although gender equality studies have been done regularly, (Qian and Fuller, 2020), utilising work drive study information, it appears that sex work crevices among most guardians of youthful children broadened impressively between February and May 2020, net of the contrasts in occupations and individual characteristics. Parents with elementary school-aged children, as opposed to preschoolers, and parents with lower levels of education saw the greatest increase in gender disparity.

Gender equality can be measured or observed in various institutions, mainly by monitoring the participation levels of both genders at all levels of the institution. Olgati and Shapiro (2018) reiterate that equality refers to turning a blind eye to the issues of sex when carrying out a professional duty; a person cannot be judged based on their sexual

orientation, and as such, everyone should be treated fairly in terms of rights and opportunities within the institution.

Gardeazabal and Ugidos (2015) and Dong and Zhang (2019) both agree that addressing the gender pay gap is an important part of creating a more equitable workplace. When discussing the poverty rate, Hellerstein and Neumark (2019) noted that many discussions of gender equality have categorised male and female roles within a production or the community. Findlay and Wright (2019) discussed education, whereas Munshi and Rosenzweig (2017) explored the topic of parental responsibility. In all these categories, it has been proven that men dominate except on family obligations, and it is of great importance to foster collective efforts, especially in dialogue between men and women, to address the imbalances for peace and economic development as well.

The process requires policymakers at the national and international levels, such as politicians, academia, and social groups, to take an active role in the easy and effective implementation of gender inequality policies. It is a collective effort that requires every human being so that it will become a success. However, not forgetting that in contemporary societies, issues of women's empowerment, girl child rights, and gender equality have repeatedly been discussed over and over, it seems like they don't receive high priority in the national discourse of governance, and as such, it becomes a difficult task to try to address these imbalances (Holvoet, 2019). The inclusion of women into decision-making positions proved to be a key fundamental issue to take into consideration when bridging the gap of gender inequalities at institutions and in society. The process requires policymakers at the national and international levels, such as politicians, academia, and social groups, to take an active role in the easy and effective implementation of gender inequality policies. It is a collective effort that requires every human being so that it will become a success. However, not forgetting that in contemporary societies, issues of women's empowerment, girl child rights, and gender equality have repeatedly been discussed over and over, it seems like they don't receive high priority in the national discourse of governance, and as such, it becomes a difficult task to try to address these imbalances (Holvoet, 2019).

2.4. GLOBAL AGENDA ON GENDER EQUALITY

These gender equality correspondence levels do contrast from one nation to the other universally, subsequently, there's a great contrast within the ways at which the national governments attempt to set up teach at that point oversee them and insert sexual orientation correspondence concerns in their claim arrangement arranging, (Swaan and Galinsky, 2015).

There must be no discrimination against women. Understanding this is essential if we are to address problems like poverty, a lack of access to healthcare, climate change, violence against women, and escalating conflicts. Women not only have a bigger stake in finding solutions to these issues, but they also have the leadership skills and solutions to put those ideas into action. The world is not progressing because of gender inequity, which is keeping too many women from reaching their full potential. The 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, agreed by global leaders in 2015, provide a roadmap for long-term, equitable development. Equal rights for men and women and the advancement of women are essential to the success of all 17 objectives. To achieve justice and inclusion, inclusive economies, and the long-term sustainability of our shared environment for current and future generations, we must ensure that women's and girls' rights are protected across all objectives. According to recent research (Hambrey, 2017).

2.4.1 SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS 2030

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, which comprises 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) intended to bring about long-term, equitable change, was endorsed by world leaders in 2015. Any of the 17 goals must be achieved to achieve gender parity and women's empowerment. Fairness and equality, inclusive markets, and long-term environmental sustainability for present and future generations can only be achieved by protecting the rights of women and girls (Unterhalter and North, 2017).

The SDGs have the potential to do much more than their forerunners in terms of their scope, goals, and the vision of advancement they reflect. In contrast to the limit center of the MDGs on destitution, they are established in a commitment to realising human rights

and an affirmation of the joins between disparity, marginalisation, and destitution. The vision for Motivation 2030 and the SDGs is more complex. Significantly, the input of distinctive bunches from respectful society within the SDGs is handled differently from the MDGs, which were defined by bureaucrats with the least meeting with genuine ladies and men, young ladies, and boys whose lives they pointed to make strides in. (Esquivel, 2016)

Alon, Doepke, Olmstead-Rumsey, and Tertilt (2020) say everyone must work for gender parity. Realizing this right is our best chance of solving some of the world's most pressing challenges, such as the current economic crisis, the lack of affordable services, climate change, gender inequality, and escalating conflicts. While women are disproportionately affected, they also have the knowledge, perspective, and ability to articulate solutions to these problems. So many women are still held back by cultural inequality, and as a result, our entire society is stagnating.

Equal rights and opportunities, including freedom from abuse and extremism, are essential for women and girls everywhere. Not only are women's participation and empowerment crucial to all aspects of objective and reachable progress, but they are also one of the 17 Sustainable Development Goals. To sum up, achieving SDG 5 is crucial to reaching the rest of the goals.

If gender equality is to be attained by the year 2030, the many sexism-related issues that still restrict women's rights in both the public and private spheres must be swiftly addressed. To achieve equality, new policies must be implemented in addition to discriminatory laws being repealed. Despite this, 39 countries do not allow daughters and sons to inherit equally, and 49 countries do not have laws protecting women from domestic violence. Since gender-based violence is one of the most pervasive human rights violations in the world today, eliminating it is a top priority. According to data from 87 countries, one in five women and girls under the age of 50 had experienced physical and/or sexual abuse by an intimate partner in the year prior. Every year, child marriage and other harmful practices rob 15 million girls under the age of 18 of their childhood. Women provide the lion's share of unpaid caregiving and housework (2.6 times more than men). Although this work is important for supporting families, communities, and economies, it often results in lower pay for women and fewer non-work opportunities.

Equal access to economic opportunities is not just a human right but also a development accelerator, and this includes a fair distribution of unpaid care labour between men and women (Semahegn, Torpey, Manu, Assefa, Tesfaye and Ankomah, 2019).

The right to sexual and reproductive health is fundamental. When these are lacking, other forms of sexism, such as limiting women's access to education and employment opportunities, become more pronounced. Only 52% of women who are married or in a committed relationship have full autonomy over their sexual, reproductive, and healthcare decisions. More women have joined politics in recent years, and some countries even have quotas for women lawmakers, yet they still only make up 23.7% of parliament. Less than a third of senior and middle management positions worldwide are held by women in the private sector, where the situation is not much better (Cornwall and Rivas, 2015).

2.4.2 OTHER MULTINATIONAL ACCORDS ON GENDER EQUALITY

The founding document of the international society, the United Nations Charter of 1945, contains the ideal of gender equality. This promise was expanded upon by several subsequent human rights agreements, which became enforceable for member nations upon ratification. The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) was also passed by the UN General Assembly in 1979. Additionally, explicit pledges are made in international development strategies to support successful advocacy for gender justice.

2.4.2.1 THE CONVENTION ON THE ELIMINATION OF ALL FORMS OF DISCRIMINATION AGAINST WOMEN

This is primarily due to businesses' disrespect for gender equality in their interactions and business dealings (Benschop & Verloo, 2011). The majority of business strategies for promoting gender equality are viewed as just window decoration, absolving the organisation of any responsibility to achieve equality, and boosting employee morale rather than broadening the diversity of any kind (Kalev, Dobblin, & Kelly, 2015). Despite South Africa's reputation as a nation with multiple new regulations for a young democratic

society, there has been little education and campaigning by government institutions on these new rules (Kadivar, 2018).

The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) of 1979 is the driving force behind the UNDP's gender equality work since it provides a systematic framework for all rights-based gender equality work. This treaty labels sexism directed against women as the root cause of the gender gap. The Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) advocates for equity in consequences rather than just equal opportunity. As a result, enacting anti-discrimination legislation is insufficient; the state must take all appropriate measures to ensure that women are treated equally in their daily lives. CEDAW defines sexism and the number of actions states should take to abolish it, affirms women's rights in particular areas, and provides for ratification, oversight, filing, and other procedural issues.

2.5.THE BEIJING PLATFORM FOR ACTION

The Beijing Platform for Action, signed by all governments in 1995, is an "agenda for women's empowerment" that is seen as an "essential and fundamental pre-requisite for democracy, prosperity, and peace." The Platform lays out a roadmap for women's liberation that is simple, transparent, and actionable. The paper provides a gender overview of challenges and opportunities in 12 key fields of focus, as well as consistent and concrete standards for steps to be taken by states, the UN system, civil society, and the private sector, as applicable. Several of these points of interest shed light on the ability of each of the UNDP's Strategic Plan 2014-2017 results to lead to women's empowerment (Women, 2020).

Furthermore, the platform represents the first collective contribution to gender mainstreaming as a methodology for achieving women's empowerment. "An active and noticeable approach to mainstreaming a gender viewpoint into both legislation and programs should be promoted so that before choices are made, an appraisal of the impact on women and men, respectively, should be made," it says. Gender mainstreaming is a two-fold challenge for UNDP. It should promote women's empowerment so that they can increase their skills, resources, and options, assert their rights, and achieve meaningful

equality with men. It should also help national capacities to positively respond to the needs and concerns of women (Lahey, 2018).

In 2015, the international community will gather to determine how well Member States and other partners have progressed in fulfilling the agreements reached at the Fourth World Conference on Women in 1995, 20 years after Beijing.

“Other nations have utilized targets as a shape of sexual orientation movement measures, but these are ordinarily restricted to the necessity to report on sex differing qualities status and exercises by corporate administration standards.” Additionally, they are not upheld, and they have not yielded the advance in sexual orientation balance that was anticipated (Terjesen, Aguilera and Lorenz, 2015). Inquire about the fact that sex uniformity quantities are seen as top-down authorization without the backing of and proprietorship by organizations, (Forstenlechner, Lettice, & Ozbligin, 2012). "They are seen as the law that's being forced upon companies from the political foundation" (Strom, 2016).

2.6. SOUTH AFRICAN LEGISLATION ON GENDER EQUITY

According to Jewkes and Morell (2012), white people were the only ones who could vote, have complete control over their finances, hold down permanent employment, and get widespread social and open recognition until 1994. The sluggish growth of SA's human development, which in turn affected the gender equality gap, was largely attributable to the persistence of racist and gendered segregation fostered by such an arrangement (Jewkes & Morell, 2019). Women could use their political expertise gained through decades of resistance against apartheid to stamp their mark on the new constitutional arrangement until women's issues were integrated into the post-apartheid political and legal agenda. Seven South African women have been active in significant discussions over the form and substance of constitutional guarantees for women's rights in numerous international forums in the decades leading up to the dramatic reforms that reshaped the country. Gender representation was pushed hard into the transitional Constitution by women's unions, academics, female members of the main political parties, and women's trade union organisations (Akala, 2018).

The success of these advocacy campaigns can be seen in both the provisional and final versions of the Constitution. Around 73 women presented their demands in a women's rights charter that encapsulated the priorities of women across the nation. 74 Contractual, land, and inheritance rights were among the requests, which had previously been denied to women in both South African and African customary law. "The right to serve in formal and community courts was deemed necessary by the women, and they demanded active involvement in all traditional institutions." Women requested those laws that refused to recognise the legality of customary marriages be repealed and that customary marriages be granted the same respect as all legitimate forms of marriage. Even though the Charter declares that women have the right to "practice their faith, culture, or beliefs without fear," it also notes explicitly that women have the right to "practice their religion, culture, or beliefs without fear." The equality clause of the Bill of Rights applies to tradition, culture, and ideology (Akala, 2018).

2.6.1. THE SOUTH AFRICAN CONSTITUTION AND GENDER EQUALITY

The Constitution of South Africa (1996) contains many references to non-sexist values. The principles that underpin the democratic state, such as non-racialism and non-sexism, are described in the Founding Provisions. (The Bill of Rights, 1996), especially the section on equality, contains the most important provisions related to gender equality. This section states that "the government must not unfairly discriminate directly or indirectly against anyone on one or more grounds, including race, gender, sex, pregnancy, marital status, ethnic or social origin, color, sexual orientation, age, disability, religion, conscience, belief, culture, language, and national origin, (The Bill of Rights, 1996). However, not all of these protections are inalienable and unfair discrimination exclusively based on ethnicity, color, racial or social background, sex, gender, or language" is not required to be exempted from the statutory guarantee of equality.

"The ban on overt and indirect discrimination indirectly recognizes institutionalized discrimination's heinousness and tenacity." This recognition represents the prevailing jurisprudential developments of Western democracy, where the concept of equality has

been enshrined in constitutional and legislative frameworks. Women are protected from prejudice based on biological and physical characteristics, as well as social and cultural assumptions regarding women's position and status, by utilizing both sex and sex as grounds for denying segregation.

Women can greatly benefit from the inclusion of security measures or affirmative action. "To facilitate the achievement of equality, statutory and other steps intended to shield or advance individuals, or groups of persons, affected by unfair discrimination can be taken," according to the applicable constitutional clause. A legislative provision for affirmative action has become apparent as an essential tool for combating racial inequality holistically while still protecting affirmative action policies from constitutional challenge. When the goals of equality of opportunity and care have been met, these steps will be phased out.

Women can greatly benefit from the inclusion of security measures or affirmative action. "To facilitate the achievement of equality, statutory and other steps intended to shield or advance individuals, or groups of persons, affected by unfair discrimination can be taken," according to the applicable constitutional clause.

A few parts of the Bill of Rights address the objectives of non-sexism. "Everybody has the right to bodily and psychological respect, which needs the proper (a) to form regenerative choices; (b) to security in and control of their body; and (c) not to be exposed to medical or test experimentation without their educated assent," agreeing to Segment 12. Numerous of these laws have the potential to provide critical security for women's reproductive and birth control choices. The Charge of Rights states that all citizens have the right to the protection and security of their bodies, which need to be secured from all forms of mishandling, whether open or private, in an arrangement that will have far-reaching implications for casualties of household and other forms of savagery. The Constitution also only guarantees freedom of speech if it does not include "advocacy of hate based on race, ethnicity, gender, or religion, and that constitutes incitement to inflict harm" (Akala, 2018).

2.7. NATIONAL GENDER POLICY FRAMEWORK IN SOUTH AFRICA

The Ministry of Women in the Presidency is currently in charge of organizing and carrying out all of the programs described in the National Gender Policy Framework, (South African Statistics, 2017). The following presumptions underlie the implementation of the national gender policy framework:

- While some international measures place South Africa among the world's upper-middle-income nations, the vast majority of the country's citizens either don't have enough money to get by or are terrified of falling into poverty. Since most of these people are women in semi-urban and rural areas, the National Gender Policy Framework adopts a "simple needs" approach and places a high priority on meeting "basic needs"; A "basic needs" approach is, by definition, a comprehensive (Statistics South Africa, 2017).
- For this method's ideals to be respected, the policy management strategy needed to go over traditional organisational boundaries. The situational analysis's emphasis on "basic needs" is complemented by the "women's empowerment" approach's emphasis on more concrete concerns. Participants would need to mobilise across a wide range of sectors to satisfy the expected demands under this paradigm and supply services specified by the national environment.
- Thus, to attain gender parity, the "Gender and Development" (GAD) plan emphasises "strategic needs." Given the high levels of inequality in the South African context and the document's emphasis on women's empowerment, which affirms the satisfaction of "basic needs" (or "practical needs") as a necessary precondition for identifying and achieving strategic needs, the National Gender Policy Framework was issue-driven rather than sector-specific and promoted a collaborative approach.
- Therefore, because situational research is systematic, the National Gender Policy Framework employed the Beijing Platform of Action as an empirical and planning tool. There was no justification for defining each sector and losing sight of the inter-sectoral plan because the National Framework recognised that each sector had

unique difficulties to address. These subjects, therefore, have diverse gender implications.

- The National Gender Policy Framework was created as a general policy framework to include guidance for different sectors to use in developing more comprehensive sector-specific policy documents. It aimed to make it easier for industries to incorporate the National Gender Policy Framework's concepts into their existing policies and strategic materials (Manjoo, 2018).
- The National Gender Policy Framework specified the needs of the major national agencies tasked with carrying out the project, developed a national target, suggested core priorities, and highlighted critical benchmarks for accomplishing the aim and objectives. Although it was not mandatory, the Gender Policy Framework established standards and guidelines for the national gender curriculum (Manjoo, 2018).

2.7.1 SA's Promotion of Equality and Prevention of Unfair Discrimination Act of 2000

Companies also try to use the Acts to address gender equality in the workplace.

The Promotion of Equality and Prevention of Unfair Discrimination Act 4 of 2000 seeks to achieve the following goals:

- to give effect to Section 9 of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996, read with item 23(1) of Schedule 6, to:
- prevent and prohibit unfair discrimination and harassment.
- promote equality and eliminate unfair discrimination; prevent and prohibit hate speech; and provide for matters related thereto

2.7.2 Employment Equity Act Of 1998

By prohibiting unlawful discrimination and enforcing affirmative action measures to redress the employment disadvantages experienced by designated groups, the Employment Equity Act, No. 55 of 1998, aims to ensure fair representation of all groups

in all fields of employment. Among the new reporting requirements for firms that this law introduces is the Employment Equity Report.

2.7.3 Commission for Gender Equality Act 39 Of 1996

The Commission for Gender Equality is a distinct legislative body that was established by Chapter 9 of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa. Through research, public awareness campaigns, the creation of laws, efficient oversight, and legal action, the Commission for Gender Equality (CGE) seeks to advance, defend, monitor, and analyse gender equality. The CGE's responsibilities include looking into inequality, commissioning research, making recommendations to Parliament or other bodies, and keeping an eye on and evaluating government, business, and other organisations' policies and practices to ensure they uphold and advance gender equality.

2.7.4 WOMEN EMPOWERMENT AND GENDER EQUALITY BILL

By establishing a framework for women's empowerment and ensuring that all parts of laws and their implementation are consistent, this Bill gives effect to Section 9 of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996 in terms of women's empowerment and gender equality.

2.8. IMPLEMENTATION OF NATIONAL GENDER POLICY FRAMEWORK IN JSE-LISTED COMPANIES

There is still a scarcity of women with the necessary qualifications and abilities to work in a corporate setting. Women who match this description have always taken an entrepreneurial direction and established their empires and businesses. As a result, they are missing out on prospects provided by large corporations, such as JSE-listed firms. This issue "can be tackled and also resolved by ensuring the best resources and platforms are in place to recognize and skill up young women that are in line with learning more about business," according to the report.

Although the percentage of women in the public sector has increased since 2008, the government's goal of 50% for senior management positions has not been met. In the business world, gender parity has not yet been attained. The percentage of female CEOs and senior managers among the most "engendered" corporations dropped from 58 in 2008 to 41 in 2010. According to the Department of Women, Children, and People with Disabilities (2013), just 4.5% of CEOs and 19.3% of senior management in businesses listed on the Johannesburg Stock Exchange (JSE) are women, and 73 companies have no women on their boards of directors. The EEC study from 2007–2009 found that women were more likely to hold management positions than strategic decision-making positions. Women made up just 4.8 percent of CEOs of JSE-listed firms in 2018 and just 5.3 percent of those who chaired them. 83 While data for 2015 is not yet available, it is clear that "males still dominated JSE companies" in October 2014.

In the gender inequality index, South Africa is on average ranked 118 out of 187 and 18 out of 142 countries on the Global Gender Gap Index Report (Gender Inequality, 2018; Global Gender Gap Index, 2018). With this ranking, it shows that South Africa still has a lot to do to curb gender imbalances, although, on the Global Gender Gap Index report, the ranking is much better. Although the country is seen on an average level and, at some point, credited as still being an "inequality society," it has witnessed a rise in the Human Development Index (HDI) from 0.569 to 0.658, an increase of 15.6% in the years between 1980 and 2018 (SAHDR, 2018).

According to Jewkes & Morrell, (2019), the slight increase in South Africa's progress in trying to deal with gender issues as shown above has been attributed to a result the of post-Apartheid era, after the late Nelson Mandela became the 1st black President in 1994. In such circumstances politics and governance can be regarded as key players in the struggle to end gender imbalances since once in power you became the architects of policy formulation and endorsement. This was greatly witnessed when the Commission was set up aiming to foster the cooperation of State arms with other various Institutions in the Country to deal with gender issues which the government claims was greatly affected during the Apartheid rule under colonisation (Unterhalter & North, 2018). The National Council on Gender Equality presided over by the Minister of Labour and Social

Policy, was founded in 2004 to demonstrate an interest in and efforts in the fight against sexual discrimination. Its primary goal was to stimulate and assist the development of national and international programs that address issues of gender inequality (Stoykova 2016).

Besides the official, the organised legal framework that was set up by the government, several women in other arms of governance and civic organisations took active roles in the campaigns for gender balance in various sectors of institutions and in society. For instance, Poland became one of the few countries in Europe with female lawmakers actively promoting legislation promoting gender equality in the legislature. This served as a wake-up call for South African women lawmakers, who went on to establish their group in 1992 with the sole purpose of promoting and incorporating gender equality into all laws passed by the legislature (Fuszara, 2015; Zielinska, 2015).

It is in this group, after vibrant participation, that some changes in the legislature were taken into consideration, such as issues that have to do with divorce, taxes for single parents, and representation at top positions of leadership. Of all issues about gender, the aspect that has received the most attention is education. In this view, all other sectors of the country should take radical measures to address the imbalances that are still in existence, especially in workplaces and in political and economic organisations, as was done in the education sector.

There was a shift in large numbers of women and girls who started accessing education as compared to the apartheid era. Ames (2015) and Leggatt (2015) postulate that after the end of the apartheid period and the coming of a new political order in South Africa paved the way for a serious radical transformation in education, there was no access to learning, participation, and achievement. As a result, gender equality in other sectors of health, politics, and economic organisation can also be achieved once there is a collective effort by everyone to try to deal with the issue of gender imbalances, as it was done in the education sector.

2.9. CHALLENGES FACED BY JSE-LISTED COMPANIES IN THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE NATIONAL GENDER POLICY FRAMEWORK

Striving for gender equity in private organisations has been a crucial problem that affects women, organisational executives, and organisations, and it has gained global traction. According to preliminary reports, women's elevation to decision-making positions in private companies is also slow. As a result, the reasons for private companies' difficulties in successfully enforcing gender equity measures were investigated. The controversy about gender equality is fraught with sensitivity, including questions about moral ideals, societal traditions, leadership beliefs and behaviours, organisational cultures, and different countries' histories, social expectations, and human rights values. However, businesses are not maximising their potential because of a lack of focus on gender equity within the company.

Businesses can aid the community in achieving more equitable outcomes by fostering good corporate governance practices, enthusiastic investor responses, lasting relationships between businesses and stakeholders, greater productivity from diverse ideas and innovation from gender-diverse perspectives, enhanced reputation, increased worker participation, and a more equitable society.

Interventions at work, such as establishing goals for the percentage of women in leadership roles and creating mentoring and training programs, were advantageous to women as well. However, a lot of these initiatives have fallen short, and some of them have even hindered prior growth (Styodana, 2015). In addition, gender discrimination is more pronounced at the top of organisations than at the bottom. This indicates that the issue of economic discrimination among female top management causes the gender stall (Huffman, Cohen, & Pearlman, 2010). Gender equity has progressed slowly across the world, with just 7.4 percent of the world's 200 leading corporations raising their number of female board members between 2004 and 2014. For the same time frame, this is less than 1% annually (CWDI Report, 2015).

According to Styodana, (2015), policy enforcement issues are largely due to a lack of:

- Understanding how to enforce policies and how to assess them.

- Leadership is responsible for ensuring that the implementation goes smoothly;
- Organizational structure prevents effective implementation of gender equity policies;
- Detailed instructions for what are required of you;
- Gender equity is not a part of the organisation's culture.

Other challenges, according to (Van den Brink & Stobbe, 2014), include the shallowness, poor application, and fragmentation of gender policies; the view that initiatives for gender equality are at odds with career management guidelines that emphasize individual merit and advancement (Noon, 2010); and the general perception that addressing gender equality is too controversial. According to BWASA (2015), South Africa's ability to compete in the global economy depends on the country's ability to recruit and develop talented women.

2.10. GLOBAL TRANSFORMATION IN GENDER EQUITY

A global comparison of gender transformation shows that there is a gap that exists when it comes to economic participation. The table below tries to narrate gender transformations in different geographical locations around the world. It summarises the top and worst performers in different country categories, starting with high-income, the most developed nations, and ending with the least developed, which are low-income, underdeveloped nations.

Table 2.1 Gender Gap Performers

Income group	Top performer	Worst performer
High-income countries	Nordic countries	Saudi Arabia
Upper middle-income countries	Latvia (no. 1) South Africa (no. 2)	Iran, Islam Republic
Lower middle-income countries	Philippines	Yemen
Low-income countries	Mozambique	Chad

Source: World Economic Forum, 2019

North Africa and the Middle East have the lowest scores overall for economic and political participation of women after a lot of considerations have been considered in trying to measure gender equality (World Economic Forum, 2019). South Africa was placed at number 69 of 135 in economic participation and job opportunities and 87 in educational achievements; however, it recorded the worst score of 103 in the health sector. The table above also shows that Nordic countries were among the best at addressing gender issues, while Middle Eastern countries were among the worst. South Africa may have placed second in its category because of the many changes over the past 20 years, but there is still potential for growth.

In the past fifteen years, the World Economic Forum (WEF) has started investigating gender equality discrepancies, mainly in four areas: education, health, economics, and political participation. They did so by comparing different countries from different regions with different incomes, revenues, and statuses. According to the report, a total of 134 countries were sampled, which is more than 90% of the world's population. The report shows that no country has completely dealt with gender issues, but some regions and countries have managed to go a long way towards bridging the gap between gender differences.

The overall report identifies the education sector as having done the most to close the gender representation gap, with a total of 93%, followed by economic participation at 59% and political indifference at 17%. However, the report also identifies the health sector as having done the least to close the gap in terms of sexual representation, with numbers falling in that area. (World Economic Forum 2019).

In contemporary debates across the world gender equality is now being regarded as a fundamental human right which should continue to be discussed and implemented in all sectors of socio-economic and political organisation. According to Krook & True, (2019), Gender equality was previously credited as an essential issue globally together with the declaration of basic human rights in the 1940s. The concepts presented in the declaration include human rights, with a focus on those of women, economic rights, access to drinking water, and convenient access to health care.

The declaration followed a settlement by 189 member states of the 1995 United Nations conference in which international standards were discussed and suggested for action. Krook & True (2019) view the UN platform as global society's most comprehensive platform in which a framework for effective policies in dealing with gender equality issues can be outlined. Since then, gender equality has become a global discussion, and as such, many countries have adopted the policies. The major challenge that most countries are facing is how to implement these international standards in their specific communities under the diverse cultures and backgrounds that exist across the world (Holvoet, 2019).

Issues of gender equality differ from one country to another, from one community to another, and from one region to another, mainly due to the diversity of cultures across the globe. However, since gender equality became a global issue of concern, a lot of national governments established institutions or organisations that were specifically meant to deal with gender issues at the national level. It cannot be doubted that the formulation of gender policies differs from one country to another, considering the diverse cultural backgrounds of each country in the world.

Theoretically, national governments have set up groups to explore and include gender equality concerns in policymaking, according to Swaab & Galinsky's (2015) hypothesis. While these policies vary from one another based on geographic location, they are all governed by the issue of gender representation at all levels, and the main difference between them stems from the various cultural backgrounds that vary from one place to another. Although a country may seek to modify or expand its policy on gender imbalances, it is crucial to highlight that each policy is constrained by international norms since the establishment of gender equality has become a global problem for discussion.

According to Kogut, McCarthy, Pavlova, Astling, Chen, Jakimenko, Jones, Getahun, Cambier, Pasmooij, and Jonkman (2018), some countries have opted to use quota systems in dealing with issues of gender equality, and as a result, they have been successful in improving access to opportunities and participation of an almost equal number of both sexes. In this circumstance, it can be observed as an effective way of harnessing gender imbalances. According to Terjesen, Aguilera, and Lorenz (2015), Belgium, Finland, France, Iceland, Kenya, Canada, Norway, and Spain are countries that

became successful in adopting the quota system and are better ranked on the Global Gender Gap Index of 2018. They go on to say that there are important factors to be considered as a way of endorsing formal legislation on gender quotas, and these include the already-existing gender welfare policy to support women's employment, economic participation, and political representation, particularly in the top positions of decision-making.

However, Krook & True (2019) are of the view that despite the efforts put in place to endorse the quota system and its effectiveness in harnessing gender imbalances in some parts of communities, there is still a reluctance to try to implement such measures. They add on to say that other countries are viewed as using the gender equality quota system to personalise gender equality goals for their gains, especially when male counterparts occupy top positions of leadership; as a result, this leads to either sexual abuse of those already representing the quota or dismissal of mass women's movements.

A country should use different indicators in measuring the success of gender equality measures, which are known as the "Gender Inequality Index (GII)" and "Global Gender Gap Index" (Styodana, 2015). The three basic attributes that the Gender Inequality Index (GII) Appendix 1 measures are normally a decent standard of living, access to health, and education (Gender Inequality Index, 2018). More inequality between the sexes is indicated by a higher GII (Gender Inequality Index, 2018). Consequently, countries with a higher gender inequality index have a more lopsided distribution of human development (Gender Inequality Index, 2018).

Economic, political, educational, and health-related gender inequalities are the focus of the 2018 Global Gender Gap Index Report (Global Gender Gap Index). The number 1 indicates some degree of gender equality in that country, whereas a score of 0 indicates significant gender inequality (Global Gender Gap Index, 2018). The rankings aim to generate statistics that will help Member Nations assess and improve their gender equality policy implementation (World Economic Forum, 2018). They will also raise global awareness of gender issues, including both progress and setbacks. Most European countries rank highly, with Norway and Denmark topping the charts in both reports in 2018, even though each country takes a unique approach. Organisations in Norway are

required to meet a gender equality quota, whereas those in Denmark are held to codes (Terjesen et al., 2015).

According to Krook and Genuine (2019), there are two essential prerequisites for the effective implementation of global sexual orientation balance standards and global progress: the need to re-examine and politicise gaps between the theory and practice of international regulations and the need to support the effects of creating global sexual orientation balance standards on women worldwide. Nekhili and Gatfaoui's (2018) views contend that sex homogeneity should be moral, in violation of anti-discrimination legislation, and with sexual uniformity or representation at all levels of government.

2. 11. CONCLUSION

The chapter reviewed recent and relevant literature in relation to gender parity. Furthermore, previous research on gender parity was reviewed to create the gap for the current investigation. The study provided international accords in as far as gender equity is concerned. Furthermore, the South African legislation that supports gender equity were resented in the chapter to provide sufficient information on the purpose and reasons for the implementation of National Gender Policy Framework. Thus, the chapter also focused on the challenges experienced by selected JSE listed companies in the implementation of the National Gender Policy Framework. Therefore, this chapter set a tone for empirical investigation which would be discussed in the subsequent chapters.

CHAPTER THREE

3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter focused on the research approach adopted in the study, research design, data collection methods and analysis. The chapter outlined the systematic enquiry into the implementation of National Gender Policy Framework. According to Narayana, Varalakshmi, and Pullaiah (2018), an inquiry technique is a group of skills that are taught logically. These skills are the procedures used in a given inquiry to gather, organise, and analyse the data. Thus, this chapter will provide the details on the research approach used to collect and analyse data. Thus, the research techniques and methodology followed in this research is outlined in this chapter.

Rajesekar, Philominathan, and Chinnathambi (2013) define research technique as a methodical approach to solving a problem. Scientists use different techniques to conduct and report their results. Some scientists offer reasons for their research and predict future discoveries using different methodologies..

3.2 RESEARCH APPROACH

There are different research approaches, namely, quantitative, qualitative, and mixed methods research. According to Flanagan (2013), the research approach is a scientific method which is used to learn about the world, investigate new ideas, and verify hypotheses via experimentation. Science, therefore, is the process of conducting thorough and methodical investigations into a topic to learn about and make sense of the world around us. Thus, the research methods used in scientific inquiry may be classified as either qualitative or quantitative.

Quantitative research is the collection and analysis of numerical data. It can be used to identify patterns and trends, make forecasts, evaluate causal linkages, and extrapolate findings to larger populations (McDermott :2023). It is presented as numbers and graphs. It is used to test or validate theories and assumptions. This form of research can help to establish generalizable truths about a subject. Experiments, numerical observations, and closed-ended surveys are examples of common quantitative procedures (Kittur. (2023).

Qualitative research is an approach that utilizes non-numerical data collection and analysis to gain insights into the beliefs, attitudes, behaviors, and experiences of individuals. In contrast to quantitative research, which employs numerical data for statistical analysis, qualitative research seeks to reveal the significance of social phenomena through the exploration of abundant meaning. It finds frequent application in disciplines including history, anthropology, sociology, education, and health sciences (Oranga and Matere:2023). Similarly, Hejsalem-Brahmi, Hung and Khoa (2023) utters that Qualitative research entails the gathering and examination of non-numerical data, such as text, video, or audio, with the intention of comprehending concepts, perspectives, or experiences. It can be employed to acquire comprehensive understandings of a matter or generate novel concepts for scholarly investigation.

Mixed methods research combines quantitative and qualitative research to address your research issue. Mixed methods can provide a more complete picture than a solitary quantitative or qualitative study since it combines the benefits of both disciplines (Matović and Ovesni; 2023). It is governed by the intellectual foundation of pragmatism. Mixed methods research can help you answer your research topic more completely than a single approach because it combines the benefits of both methods (Mertens :2023).

Hammersley (2018:56), Fine, and Hancock (2017) "have also identified the trait of qualitative research that comes from external forces, a research approach that is aimed at testing theories, determining facts, demonstrating relationships between variables, and also predicting the outcomes." According to Maxwell (2013), as qualitative research deals with the world of meanings, motivations, ambitions, beliefs, values, and attitudes, it should be related to a deeper realm of relationships, processes, and phenomena that cannot be restricted to the operation of variables.

When conducting qualitative research, drawing on theories and techniques from several disciplines is common. Qualitative research has a variety of goals depending on the field of study; for instance, psychologists may do it to learn more about human behaviour and the factors that influence it. To learn about a phenomenon, a researcher must first get acquainted with it. To analyse and represent the participants' feelings and to develop sympathetic and experiential understanding, researchers benefit from being immersed in the field (Kothari, 2019).

In this research, the qualitative approach was used to investigate the nature and extent of gender disparity in selected companies. This is because the method afforded the researcher to interpret the data from the perspective of the participants.

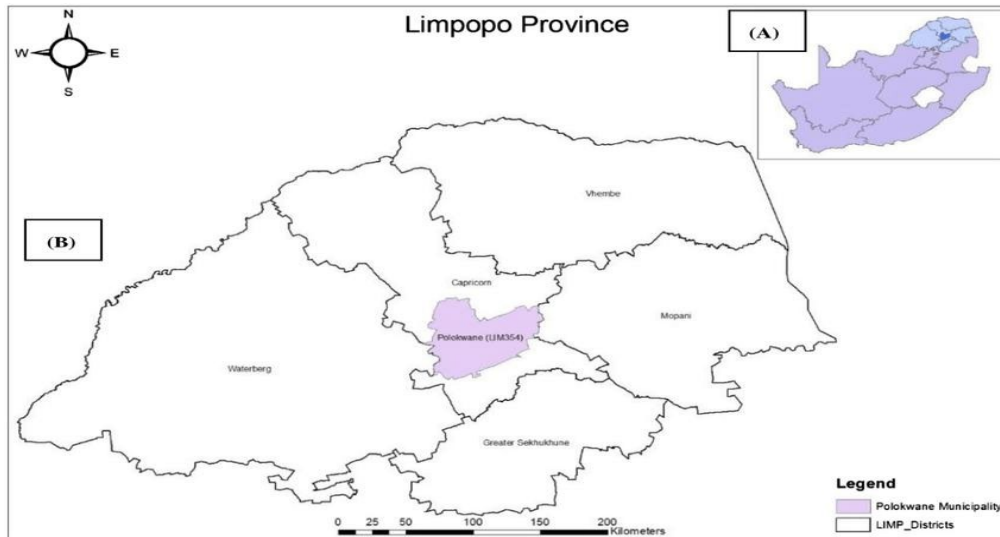
3.3 RESEARCH DESIGN

Thus, to define qualitative research, Merriam (2017) provides four defining features. The primary goal of qualitative research is to learn about how people interpret and make sense of their own experiences as opposed to the researcher's interpretation of the same events. Second, the researcher is likely to be biased since they are the main instrument used to gather and analyse data. Possible bias can be addressed by keeping track of it and acting when it arises. Thirdly, because researchers frequently employ qualitative studies to obtain data for ideas and hypotheses that earlier studies had ignored, qualitative research is seen as an inductive process. In contrast to the numbers produced by other methods of research, qualitative research offers highly descriptive data in the form of images and words.

After deciding to employ a qualitative methodology, the next step was to choose the most suitable qualitative approach. Eight distinct categories of qualitative methodology are described by Merriam (2017): basic interpretative, phenomenology, grounded theory, case studies, ethnography, narrative analysis, critical, and postmodern. Grounded theory, ethnography, narrative inquiry, and phenomenology are the most well-known qualitative approaches (Lal, Suto and Ungar, 2012). The fundamental interpretative theory was applied following a thorough examination of the many qualitative methods.

3.4 Study Area

Figure 3.1 Map of Polokwane



(d-maps.com)

The study was conducted with JSE-listed companies in Polokwane. The selected retailer companies that formed part of the study: Woolworths, Pick 'n Pay, and Shoprite.

3.5 POPULATION

The population of the study is presented as follows;

Table 3.1 Population of the Study

Name of the	Woolworths	Pick 'n Pay	Shoprite
Retailer	3	5	8
Senior Managers	5	8	12

Middle Managers	11	13	17
Supervisors	18	25	27
Employees	22	29	34
Total:	56	75	165

3.6 SAMPLING METHOD AND SAMPLE SIZE

According to Creswell (2019), a lack of resources (time, money, or access) makes it impossible to gather all of the currently available data. Thus, to reduce the amount of data by considering data from a subgroup rather than all possible cases or elements, the sampling approach is applied.

There are two types of sampling methods:

- Non-Probability Sampling Method
- Probability Sampling Method

Each participant in a non-probability sampling process does not have a known non-zero chance of being chosen, making it arbitrary and subjective. Non-probability sampling offers a variety of additional methods for making judgment-based sample selections. As a result, non-probability sampling was applied to this study to select the participants.

Table 3.2 Sample Size

Company 1

Name of the Retailer	Woolworths	Sample Size
Number of retailers	3	
Senior Managers	5	1
Middle Managers	11	2
Supervisors	18	3
Employees	22	3
Total:	56	9

Company 2

Name of the Retailer	Pick 'n Pay	Sample size
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Number of retailers	5	
Senior managers	8	1
Middle managers	13	2
Supervisors	25	3
Employees	29	3
Total:	75	9

Company 3

Name of the Retailer	Shoprite	Sample size
Number of retailers	8	

Senior managers	12	1
Middle managers	17	2
Supervisors	27	3
Employees	34	3
Total:	98	9

The total sample size was 27 as identified in the tables above. The sample size was also determined by the saturation of information.

3.7 DATA COLLECTION

The method of data collection has given the participants the chance to discuss their organisation and the personal perspective they brought to the study. Each participant was scheduled for a one-hour face-to-face interview; the interview schedule was used to guide the process.

3.8 DATA ANALYSIS

Thematic data analysis was used in this study. Data was sorted and organized according to the emerging themes. These themes are outlined in chapter 4 of the study.

3.9 RELIABILITY AND VALIDITY OF DATA

3.9.1. Trustworthiness

When conducting qualitative research, it is essential to establish protocols for trustworthiness to ensure the reliability and validity of the research findings (Cypress, 2017).

3.9.2 Credibility

According to Cypress (2017) credibility refers to the believability and accuracy of data. De Vos Strydom, Fouché and Delport (2018) also reiterated the notion by explaining that credibility is the truthfulness of the information gathered; this was achieved by ensuring that the questions asked were clear to gather the correct information. The researchers also used member checking, whereby participants reviewed and validated the findings, to ensure accuracy and authenticity (Cypress, 2017).

Conformability

De Vos et al. (2018) explained that procedures for data collection and analysis constitutes conformability if they reflect the true comments from the participants. To ensure conformability, the responses provided by the participants were written down and recorded with the permission of the participants. This provided the researchers with the opportunity to review the notes and recordings for accuracy.

Transferability

Transferability denotes the extent to which findings can be extrapolated and applied to different contexts or settings. The researchers have described the context of the research process to facilitate transferability. Kyngäs, Kääriäinen, and Elo (2020) argue that transferability in qualitative research is achieved when the researchers provide context of the study to enable the readers to assess the transferability of the findings to their own settings.

3.10 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

The following ethical considerations were adhered to in the study.

3.10.1 PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH

The researcher applied for and obtained the ethical clearance, which is attached as an appendix in this document. This was followed by requesting permission from the relevant retailers. It's crucial to go through all the proper administrative processes before formally asking for approval to conduct a study. (Saunders et al., 2016).

3.10.2 ENSURING PARTICIPANTS HAVE GIVEN FORMAL CONSENT

Informed consent, as defined by Saunders et al. (2016), relates to the significance of disclosing the nature of the research project to participants. Therefore, before starting the investigation, the researcher formally obtained the subjects' agreement.

3.10.3 ENSURING NO HARM COMES TO THE PARTICIPANTS

The researcher is responsible for making sure that the subjects are not harmed while the study is being conducted (Saunders, Lewis, and Thornhill, 2016). The questions asked during the research did not cause any emotional or mental harm. Furthermore, the participants were protected from physical harm.

3.10.4 ENSURING THAT THERE IS CONFIDENTIALITY AND ANONYMITY

The researcher must make sure that no participant's identity is revealed (Saunders et al., 2016). The researcher ensured that the identities of the participants were kept confidential both during the research procedure and in the final report.

3.11 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

The study was self-funded and therefore, the selected companies were only in Polokwane. This means that the study would not be generalized to other companies. The conclusions and recommendations arrived at will only be applicable to participating companies.

3.12 CONCLUSION

This chapter provided an overview of different research approaches and how they are applied. Furthermore, the qualitative research method was discussed in detail as the chosen method. Justification for the choice of qualitative research method was provided. The researcher also provided justification for the choice of case study design. The target population was identified as well as the sample size. The researcher differentiated the probability and non-probability sampling to acquaint the readers with the sampling methods before identifying non-probability sampling as the chosen method.

CHAPTER FOUR

4. DATA PRESENTATION, INTERPRETATION AND FINDINGS

4.1 INTRODUCTION

Chapter Three presented the research methodology, which contained data collection and analysis techniques. This chapter presents the findings of the empirical data collected in line with the data analysis discussed in Chapter 3. The chapter also presents the research findings.

4.2 BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION

This section presents the biographical information as gathered through the interview schedule. The interview schedule is attached as an appendix in this research report.

4.2.1 AGE COMPOSITION

The participants were asked to submit information containing their age and Figure 4.1 displays the sample's age distribution.

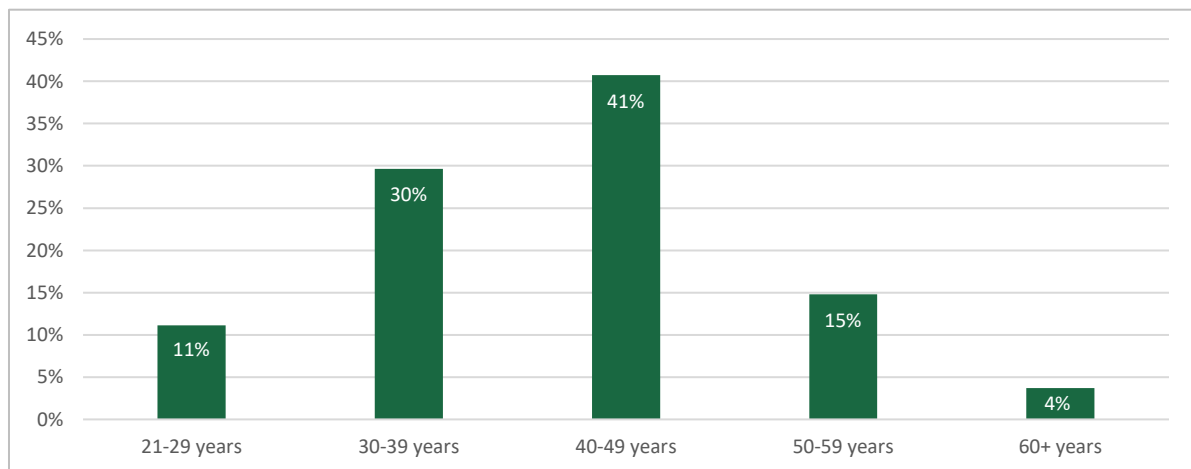


Figure 4.1: Age composition

Figure 4.1 appears to show that most of the members constituting 41% are within the 41–49 long-time age bracket, followed by 30% within the 30-39 long-time age bracket, and 15% within the 50–59 long-time bracket. An encouraging 11% of the members are within the 21–29 long-time age bracket, and the remaining 4% are 60 long-time and more seasoned. The reasons for this are in line with the work-driven characteristics of the South African economy. According to Measurements South Africa (2021), there's a high level of unemployment among the youth, and there is a high extent of individuals who have been over 60 for a long time and are financially inert. It appears that numerous of the members are between 40 and 49 years old, which supports the attestation by Measurements South Africa (2021).

4.2.2 RACE COMPOSITION

When asked for information on their race, the participants provided it. Figure 4.2 illustrates the sample's makeup by race.

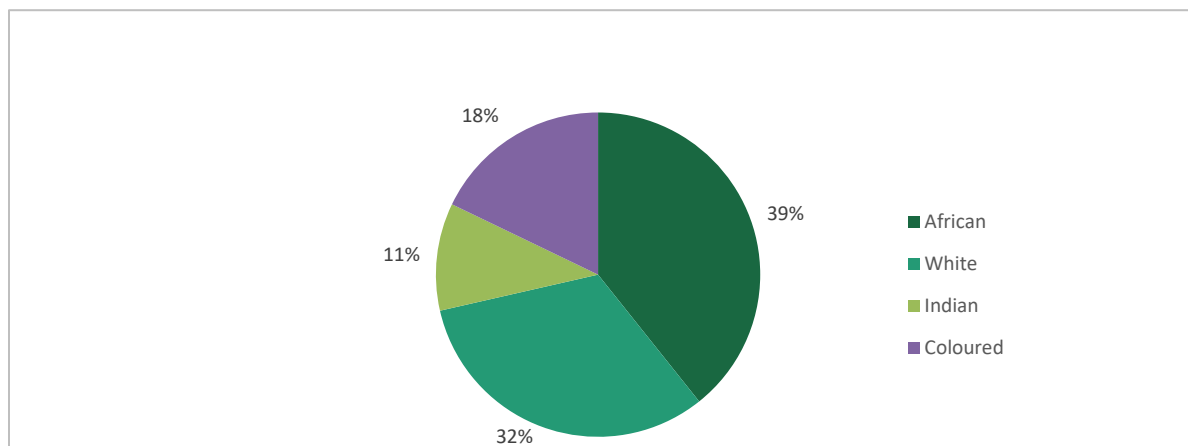


Figure 4.2: Sample composition by race

The study's findings indicate that Africans make up the bulk of participants, followed by whites (32%), coloureds (18%), and Indians (11%). The labour force statistics show that the majority of South African workers are of African ethnicity (Statistics South Africa, 2021). However, a study by Whitaker (2019) noted that, comparatively, most white workers hold supervisory and managerial roles.

4.2.3 GENDER COMPOSITION

When asked, the participants identified their gender. The participants' gender distribution is shown in Figure 4.3.

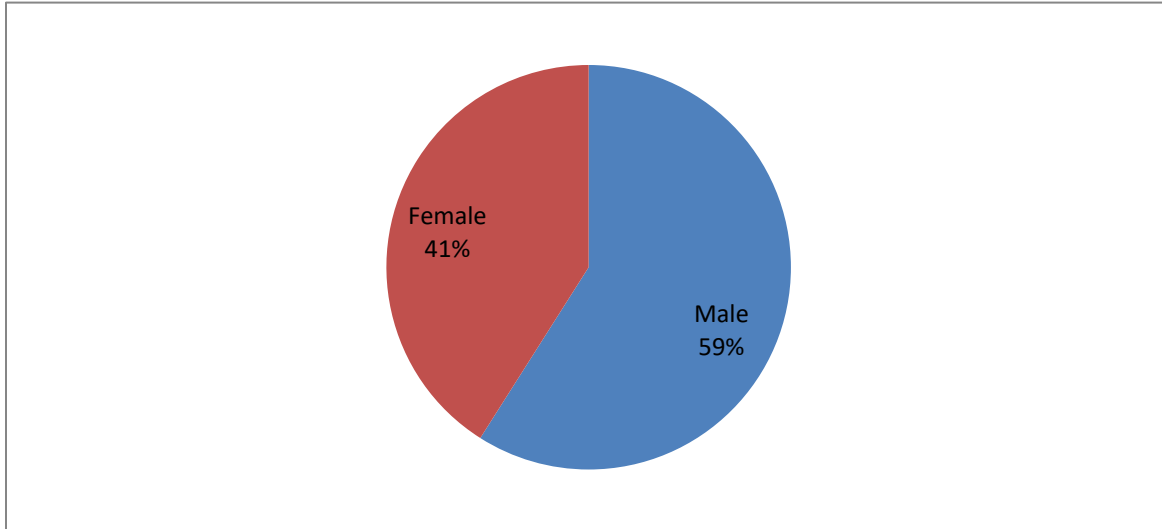


Figure 4.3: Sample gender composition

Figure 4.3 below demonstrates that 59% of the participants are men, with women making up the remaining 41%. According to Statistics South Africa (2021), in the first quarter of 2021, the labour force participation rate for women was 50.2%, which was lower than the rate for men, which was 56.4%. The findings of the study corroborate the data presented by Statistics South Africa (2021).

4.2.4 WORK EXPERIENCE

Figure 4.3 shows the composition of the sample by work experience.

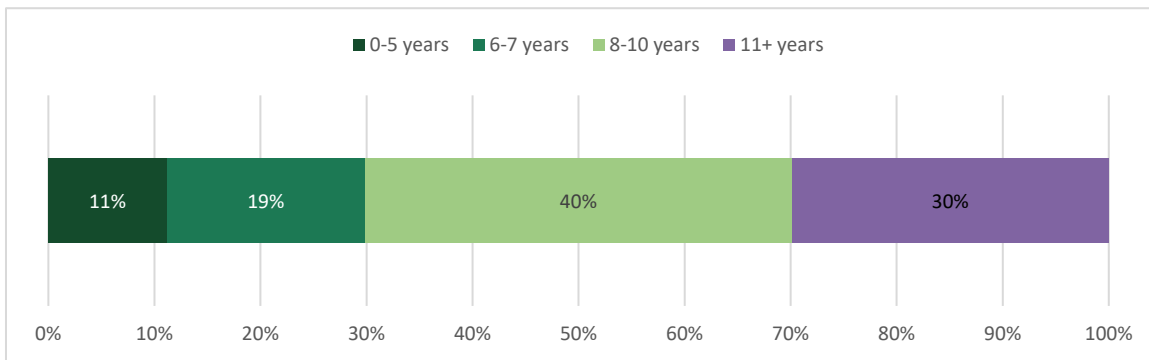


Figure 4.4: Sample composition by work experience

According to Figure 4.4's findings, 40% of the participants had management job experience ranging from 8 to 10 years, 30% had 11 years or more of experience, and 19% had experience between 6 and 7 years. The remaining 11% have work experience ranging from 0 to 5 years. According to Nguyen et al. (2020), an expert is an individual who has more than a decade of experience in the area of specialisation. Although an individual is regarded as experienced after five years. The results show that 30% of the participants are management experts; hence, they are experienced managers, as 89% have more than five years of managerial experience, in line with the assertion by Nguyen et al. (2020).

4.2.5 EDUCATION OF PARTICIPANTS

The participants were asked for information on their highest level of education. The sample composition by educational background is depicted in Figure 4.5 below.

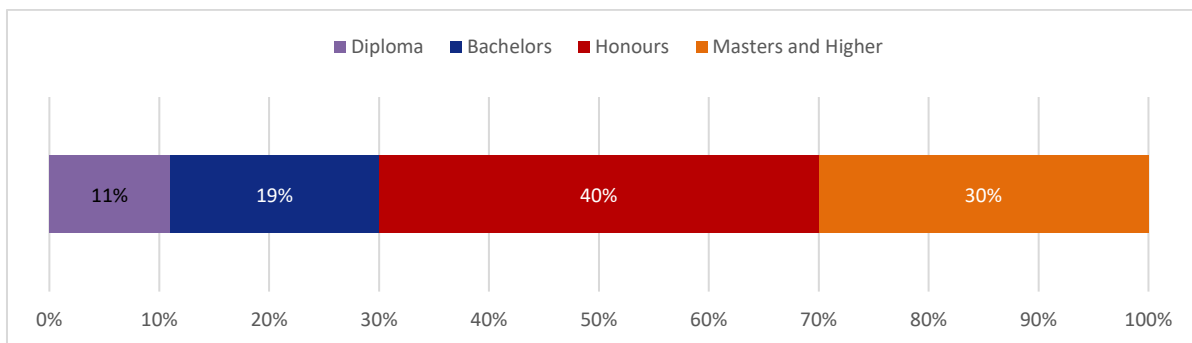


Figure 4.5: Educational qualifications of participants

The results in Figure 4.5 highlight that 40% of the participants hold an honours degree, while 30% hold a master's degree or higher. In addition, 19% and 11% of the participants hold a bachelor's degree and a diploma, respectively. Educational credentialism posits that tertiary education is the most effective way to acquire skills and is the basis for workplace promotion (Wiess 2014). The results show that the participants are educated, as they hold tertiary education qualifications.

4.2.6 OCCUPATIONAL POSITION

Figure 4.6 below shows the sample composition by position held in the organization.

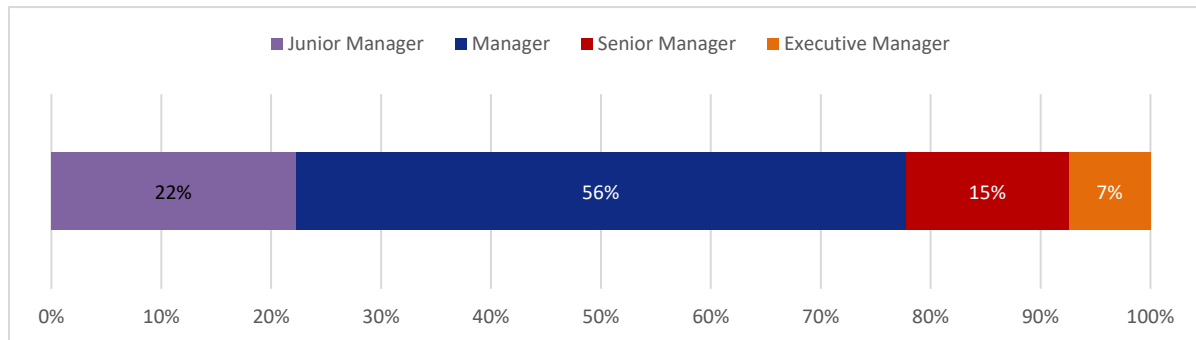


Figure 4.6: Position in the organization

According to Figure 4.6's findings, 56% of the participants are managers—10 of them males and 5 of them women—while 22% are junior managers. A further 15% are senior managers; hence, the remaining 7% are executive managers. According to Guadalupe, Li, and Wulf, (2014), most organisations have a pyramidal hierarchical structure with a wide base and a narrow top. The results support the notion by Guadalupe et al. (2014) that there are fewer executive managers compared to other managerial positions.

4.3 UNDERSTANDING OF GENDER PARITY

Manlosa (2018) defines gender parity as a statistical metric that quantifies the ratio of females to males or girls to boys for various variables such as income or education. Participants were prompted to give an understanding of the term "gender parity." The participants highlighted that gender parity implies measuring the value attached to one gender relative to another.

"The concept is discussed every day. "I understand that gender equality has everything to do with measuring the opportunities between men and women." In the broadest sense, gender parity"(Participant).

"Gender parity refers to the relative numbers of men and women in the workplace. It is measured by the GPI. I am not sure what it stands for, but I know that it has to be equal to one for there to be parity." (Participant P₂₁).

"It is a measure of the ratio between men and women on a specific factor like income."It is generally descriptive." (Participant).

"This topic is interesting because it affects everyone. Gender parity refers to how maleness or femaleness is valued in a society based on a given metric."
(Participant P₂₇).

"Gender parity is all about comparing men and women quantitatively"
(Participant P₄).

In addition, other participants highlighted their understanding of gender parity using examples.

"Gender parity in the workplace is shown by the representation. The numbers do not lie. There is gender parity when we have 10 male managers and 10 female managers with the same power and authority. It is 1:1, thus gender parity."
(Participant P₂₀).

"I can use an example for gender parity. 10 boys and 10 girls in a class thus gender parity" (Participant P₂₆).

Other participants indicated that gender parity can be measured using various metrics.

"Gender parity implies equal access to everything. "Most people only look at gender parity from an economic perspective." But it also looks at the social aspects, looking at things like health and politics, among others. Quota representation in parliament is a way to attain parity."(Participant P₈).

"It is the recognition that there is a need for equality between males and females, and this should also be viewed from other angles. If you investigate religion, there are no female leaders. Why? It is because there is no gender parity. Gender parity is an all-encompassing concept, and it has to be viewed from a holistic point of view." (Participant P₁₅).

"Gender is a socially constructed concept. The starting point is having social parity, where all social events should have the same number of men and women in

representation. But if you look at our traditional courts, there is no parity; men dominate. In the healthcare sector, there are more nurses compared to men; there is no parity. Gender parity is everywhere you look. You can measure it.”(Participant P₂₅).

The view of the participant is in line with the perspective of Kent (2006), where gender disparity is described as a social process in which individuals are treated differently and disadvantageously based on their gender in comparable situations. Gender parity is a concept that should be viewed from all angles (Dobrotic, 2018). In addition, other participants highlighted that gender parity is confused with gender equality.

“Women’s empowerment is part of gender equity, not equality.” People, especially men, have a negative attitude towards the word “gender” because they believe it only concerns women, but that is the wrong stance.” (Participant P₁₇).

By “Gender parity” does not mean “gender equality.” Equality looks at disadvantaged genders and how they are treated. Parity is a general indicator of how a group is composed by looking at the number of” (Participant P₂₃).

The study’s findings indicate that the participants perceive gender parity in a broad sense. In addressing the issue of gender disparity, people have to be aware of and understand the concept (Kornegay, 2013). A basic understanding of gender parity provides the basis on which gender disparity and gender equality in the workplace can be addressed. However, Singhapakdi et al. (2014) argued that gender disparity is well-known, but there have been few efforts to address it. The notion by Singhapakdi et al. (2014) is supported by one participant, who stated that

“Disparity is what the world faces now. There are generally four types of gender, which are neuter, common, feminine, and masculine. Right now, access and opportunity favour the masculine gender. Parity cannot be achieved.; documents have been written about it but still today we are talking about it” (Participant P₁₂).

A study by Carian and Sobotka (2018) concluded that men always utilise resources at their disposal to maintain dominance over women; hence, gender parity is not easily

achievable. The failure to understand and recognise gender disparity negatively affects the organisation (Kornegay, 2013). The results show that the participants comprehend gender parity and recognise that gender disparity has been in existence for a long time.

4.4 GENDER DISPARITY AT THE WORKPLACE

Gender disparity exists in the workplace, and there is a need to analyse its existence at the workplace (Kornegay, 2013). The participants were prompted to respond to issues about gender balance at the top positions as well as the strategies and policies in place to address gender disparity. The participants acknowledged that there is a gender imbalance at the top positions.

“Our company is mainly led by men. They are the ones who have the ultimate power and authority in the organisation” (Participant P₁₀).

The top leadership in the organisation is mainly led by men. There are only a few women in senior management posts or as executives. I think there are less than a quarter of women in leadership (Participant P₂).

“There is no balance, there are few women. It is male dominated” (Participant P₁₉).

“There will never be balanced. Men are more than the female managers at the top of the organisation” (Participant P₁₈).

The responses by the participants show that there are a few females at the top of the organisation; hence, there is a gender imbalance. In addition, other participants highlighted that the gender imbalance at the top positions is widespread across many organisations in South Africa.

“There is always male dominance in the organisation. Even if you look at the public sector, which is responsible for making laws, there is no gender balance at the top positions in public institutions.” (Participant P₂₂).

“Men dominate the board room, and there are a few opportunities for women.” If you look at most boards, there are a few executive female board members

because they do not have the chance to be in senior management positions. "Executive board members are drawn from senior management, and there is no gender balance at the top."(Participant P_{14}).

"You know there are many men in top posts, and to appear as if there are corporate reforms, they just engage a few women who do not have the decision-making powers. It is a widespread disease in this country." (Participant P_6).

The comment by Participant P_6 is supported by Srivastava, Das, and Pattanayak (2018), who highlighted that even at institutions that have campaigned for women's quotas in leadership roles, male counterparts often fail to provide the necessary support, thus perpetuating the gender imbalance in the workplace. Furthermore, the participants showed that the gender imbalance in the workplace is primarily influenced by social factors.

"The male dominance in society, I think, spills over into organisations. Women are not given proper opportunities because society does not see them as leaders. This ideology is strengthened in most organisations." (Participant P_{11}).

"I think the problem comes from this patriarchal view. As I said, men are the masculine gender, and society endorses their dominance. Remember, a company is also a society of its own. If you check the promotion list for top positions, you will find that it mainly contains male workers." (Participant P_{12}).

The gender imbalance we see in the top positions in these organizations has been built through socialisation. Girls are not family heads, and likewise, in companies, they cannot lead. Gender equality cannot be achieved unless we address social dynamics." (Participant P_{27}).

In addition, the participants highlighted several barriers that limit the opportunities for women in top positions.

“I think the most common barrier that women face and that prevents them from being at the top is stereotyping against women managers. Women managers are not viewed or treated the same as men.” (Participant P₉).

“Women do not have the resources to get to the top, for example, by advancing their education. This inherently affects their career progression.” (Participant P₂₃).

“The biggest barrier which women face in their progression to the top is networking. They do not have strong networks and men are not supportive of their rising to the top. Women should invest in their network” (Participant P₁).

The study results show that there is a gender imbalance in top positions in the organisation. A study by Kiaye and Singh (2013) showed that there are few female senior managers and executive board members in South Africa. Srivastava et al. (2018) highlighted that there is tokenism in the modern corporate world where females are only employed in top positions as a token of corporate governance reforms without being given decision-making powers and authority.

The study results show the existence of a glass ceiling in the workplace. Lauwo (2018) asserts that the more masculine a culture is, the more women are underrepresented in positions of authority such as senior management. The glass ceiling, which refers to apparent hurdles that prohibit women from rising to top management positions and being visible in large corporations, restricts the career advancement of women (Adams & Funk, 2012). Kolade and Kehinde (2013) defined the glass ceiling as an impenetrable barrier that prevents women from reaching parity with their male counterparts in top positions in businesses.

Women’s professional progression is hampered by the glass ceiling, resulting in visible female underrepresentation at the highest levels of corporate governance and management (Hampden, 2015). Where this glass ceiling occurs, women may see and detect professional development possibilities but are unable to advance in their professions due to their inability to get higher-level work roles (Gurjao, 2010). South Africa has a masculine culture and a glass ceiling in terms of female representation on boards of directors and in senior management (Ndebele, 2018).

According to studies, gender diversity and business performance are related. Ahmadi et al. (2018) discovered a favourable correlation between business performance and gender composition. Yahya and Shukeri (2014), as well as Ghaeli (2019), found that female board participation positively correlates with company performance and adherence to corporate governance standards. On the other hand, Carter et al. (2010) found no correlation between gender diversity and performance.

Ghaeli (2019) found that women managers managed interactions with different stakeholders better than their male counterparts and were more likely to maintain a successful leadership ecosystem. The argument over gender diversity continues because academics cannot agree on its effect on corporate governance and company performance, which is exacerbated by shifting societal values that demand equality and justice (Yahya & Shukeri, 2014).

4.5 IMPLEMENTATION OF THE NATIONAL GENDER POLICY FRAMEWORK AND POLICIES

The participants were prompted to highlight the integration of the National Gender Policy Framework in policies, activities, and strategies.

4.5.1 CURRENT GENDER PARITY POLICIES IN PLACE

To address gender disparity in organisations, there is a need for gender-based policies which govern the operations (Kent, 2006). Gender disparity mainly emanates from unequal practices and procedures which are in place in most corporates (Kiaye & Singh, 2013). The participants highlighted that there are policies in place.

“Yes, we have a policy on achieving gender parity. The human resources policy states that there should be fairness and equality in recruitment and performance management. It guides us” (Participant P₂₁).

“There is a policy in the company. The sexual harassment policy states that there should be no forms of abuse and hindrances to anyone especially women” (Participant P₄).

“The non-discrimination policy states that no one should be discriminated against based on their sex, religion, race, and sexual orientation. This is one policy that is in place to address the imbalance that exists in the organisation” (Participant P₉).

“We have affirmative action. I am not sure which policy talks about it but we do have it and it is the one that addresses the issues of gender inequality. It also talks about the youth as another disadvantaged group who need opportunities in the organisation” (Participant P₂₄).

Policies are put in place to ensure that there is gender parity in the organisation. A study by Marin (2014) showed that the nondiscrimination and affirmative action policies by PepsiCo reduced gender disparity and there is close to 48% women representation in management. Policies that promote gender parity have a positive impact on employee motivation and performance.

“I think one of the critical benefits of having a gender policy is that it motivates the workers, especially women. It is satisfying to know that your work environment is free from any discrimination and that you are all equal. It motivates people and they will go an extra mile in ensuring that they perform better and this is good for the organisation” (Participant P₁).

Furthermore, other participants noted that gender policies are not only meant to achieve gender parity for the organisation but also extend to building a positive organisational reputation, credibility, and image.

“The policy is a framework for all people in the organisation to follow. The policy enables disciplinary procedures to be taken in the case of a breach of policy regulations. Companies with frameworks to address this issue have a good reputation. I think most companies on JSE have a good public image because of it” (Participant P₇).

“Now when we look at police it is all about building trust in the institutions. Trust is important. Internal and external there should be trust. Customers expect us to at least adhere to the minimum standard set by the society” (Participant P₁₅).

“You know these policies are differentiators in the market. Policies set you apart from others in the market. They are good for your reputation in the market” (Participant P₁₈).

The statement by participants indicates that policies build a good reputation and foster professionalism in the organisation. By presenting the organisation as responsible, responsive, and genuine, gender diversity and parity may assist in building confidence in the organisation leading to market domination (Mayes & Pini, 2014). A policy is a critical tool in which the organisation shapes the behaviour and processes towards gender equality (Nyberg, 2012). Conversely, other participants highlighted those policies are inadequate in addressing gender disparity.

“The policies are there but they are just papers. They are not dealing with the issue decisively” (Participant P₂₆).

“These policies are just ineffective, look at what is on the ground. Women are discriminated against and the policies are in place. Have not you heard about sexual harassment by top managers? These are the custodians of the policies” (Participant P₂₀).

“The effectiveness of the policies is yet to be seen. I am not saying that they are getting positive feedback but they are taking time to yield positive results” (Participant P₅).

“The policies do not have the enforcement powers and with that people are not always compelled to follow them. It is time to put the policies into practice not simply mentioning and shelving them” (Participant P₁₇).

The King Report and the Employment Equity Act both implicitly advocate for gender parity on boards of directors and senior management (Ndebele, 2018). The notion by Ndebele (2018) shows that the policies lack the enforcement component to make them effective and hence people are not compelled to follow them as noted by participants. Conversely, other participants noted that there are corporates which do not have policies to address gender disparities.

“Okay, so I think we need to adapt to the changes that are going on. But what concerns me is that there are organisations that do not have these policies altogether. Organisations need to develop these policies so that an individual can be judged to have acted morally or immorally in terms of gender equality” (Participant P₁₉).

“In the absence of these policies, you find that people are being abused. There are no guidelines and people act based on what they believe is right or wrong. There are companies which do not have these measures in place” (Participant P₁₁).

The study results indicate that the organisations have policies that are in place to address gender disparity although participants noted that they are non-existent in some organisations. Studies have shown that policies that address gender disparities motivate employees leading to better performance of the organisation (Ghaeli, 2019). Policies elicit good behaviours in organisations and raise awareness among the employees about the expected behaviours and conduct regarding gender equality and parity in the workplace (Nyberg, 2012). However, the study results show that policies are inadequate in addressing gender disparity in the workplace. The inadequacy of policies shows that there is a need for other measures to complement the policies to achieve gender parity. These policies are stretched out in different companies just to see what kind of results they may get out in these different companies.

4.5.2 INTEGRATION OF THE NATIONAL GENDER POLICY

To address the disparities that exist in both society and business units, the National Gender Policy Framework was created. How has the National Gender Policy framework been incorporated into the participants' organisations? The panellists emphasised that training, corporate culture, and organisational structures, as well as recruitment and promotion, are all ways that the National Gender Policy Framework is put into practice.

4.5.2.1 RECRUITMENT AND PROMOTION

Gender diversification facilitates the development of more brainpower, ideas, and methods to detect and resolve issues and there is a need to recognise gender parity in

recruitment (Dittmar, 2015). The participants highlighted that the National Gender Policy Framework is implemented through ethical recruitment and promotions.

“The National Gender Policy is implemented through recruitment. If you look at our recruitment drive, it advocates and promotes gender balance in the organisation. This is in line with the National Policy” (Participant P₁₄).

“Our recruitment especially of senior management takes cognisance of the equity targets. We have set targets for the organisations to achieve and this applies at all levels but it is mainly emphasised at the top because that is where most people are concerned about” (Participant P₂₃).

“Recruitment is the first option in the implementation of gender policy. We strongly urge female and disadvantaged participants to apply for vacancies in our organization” (Participant P₆).

The duty to appoint the best and most efficient individual, that is, placing the right person in the appropriate position, comes from thorough fair and just assessment of requirements, methodical planning, and avoidance of discrimination (Mihailović, Cvijanovic and Simonovic, 2015).

“It always begins with the way we recruit our people. We always hire staff based on the values of equity, transparency, and fairness. If a candidate does not meet these criteria, then in the future they might give us problems. So, the candidate is hired based on encouraging diversity and fairness in the organisation” (Participant P₁₆).

“At the end of the day, it is all about people. Any great or reputable organization is driven by the people inside it. It is all about the people. It is people in it who have to uphold gender parity. Recruitment is used to reflect this” (Participant P₈).

In addition, other participants highlighted that the National Gender Policy Framework is not used to justify the recruitment of women into the organisation

“Well, there are people who say that this policy justifies the inclusion of women in top position because of their gender and not merit. I beg to differ and stand guided; the National policy shows how the organisations should transform to combat gender inequalities” (Participant P₂₅).

“Some male applicants feel aggrieved when a female candidate is selected. They see it as a platform for promoting women’s recruitment at the workplace but the policy directs us on how gender parity is to be achieved. Women have skills like men as well so the policy is not there to favour women” (Participant P₁₃).

“We are judged because they think this policy got us into these positions. We are here on merit and if the policy favours us it is a bonus but first of all your credentials are what counts” (Participant P₁₁).

In addition, the participants highlighted that ethical promotion in the organization was another way in which the National Gender Policy Framework was integrated into the policies and activities of the organisation.

“Previous empowerment of women was not happening. They were not recognised as leaders but now the promotions are based on both merit and equity. Firstly, the people promoted should have the prerequisite qualifications and experience. Then we go on to look at the representation based on gender when we hire. Promotions are gender sensitive in this organisation” (Participant P₅).

“We consider the targets in recruitment. As an organisation, we advocate for at least 40% women representation in senior management. When there is a senior managerial vacancy, we also consider women and if this is not in line with the National policy then I do not what is” (Participant P₆).

“Gender equality is among the top of the strategic objectives of HR. We look at issues of performance appraisal and promotions. I think we have done considerably well, all people are paid the same for the same type of work here. Promotions are done considering gender bias” (Participant P₁₇).

Conversely, other participants also highlighted that there still is gender bias in the integration of the National Gender Policy Frameworks through recruitment and selection

Bias in recruitment will always exist. But the most important thing now is that recruitment considers the National Policy on gender (Participant P₂₁).

Some subtle forms of discrimination are still in play. They cannot be objectively quantified and observed but they still influence recruitment (Participant P₁₃).

The results show that the national Gender Policy Framework is implemented through recruitment and promotion. When it comes to human resource recruiting, hiring managers act as gatekeepers for the organisation (Mihailović, Cvijanovic and Simonovic, 2015). Organizations, according to Dittmar (2015), should have ethical hiring practices and standards that recognise gender imbalances and biases. According to Gond et al. (2011), by participating in ethical human resource recruiting, a business may preserve gender diversity in the organisation.

In addition, the results showed that despite the implementation of the National Gender Policy Framework through recruitment and promotion, gender imbalance continues in organisations. Promotions based on merit, equity, and rigorous performance assessment systems (rather than tenure) may help reduce gender gaps (Dittmar, 2015). Additionally, they may eliminate obstacles for women, who may be less likely to be recognised for leadership positions as a result of assessment bias. A few challenges I had was that participants thought that I would plug their names but I showed them the form of secrecy.

4.5.2.2 TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT

Workforce development and talent management may be used to spread organisational information about gender equality goals and policies, as well as to exchange ideas about how to achieve them (Chuang, 2019). Employee development and talent management programs assist workers in developing career goals, acquiring leadership skills, and achieving success in increasingly difficult tasks (Lyonette, 2015). The participants stated that the National Gender Policy Framework is implemented through the training and development of workers

“The workers are trained on how to avoid gender discrimination. This also includes another issue such as sexual harassment. For your information, sexual harassment also affects men’s training and development and is targeted for everyone in the company” (Participant P₁₅).

“Training is critical when it comes to implementing these frameworks. This is where you must train people; people need to comprehend why they are doing it, what the advantage is, and what the rationale is. Thus, after you’ve taught folks and ensured they understand what they’re doing, it becomes much easier” (Participant P₂).

“People need to be constantly trained, especially the leaders, to keep in touch with the growing and changing environment. Training sensitive people on issues of gender equality makes them more aware of it. Therefore, how we align ourselves to the policy” (Participant P₂₇)

“The content of the training material is informed by the National Policy otherwise we would risk going against the laws of the country” (Participant P₇).

According to Unterhalter and North (2011), gender disparities in South Africa are a result of a lack of training for decision-makers in alignment with the changing business and social environment. Gender is a dynamic concept where there are constant changes and there is a need for continuous training (Maluleke, 2012). One participant supported the notion by Maluleke (2012) and stated:

“The issue of gender is dynamic because it differs from one society to the other. Remember we are multinational corporations and we have workers from outside. They need to be taught about gender equality from a South African perspective. The roles are changing in society and business and to keep abreast with this training should be a continuous support element of the National gender framework” (Participant P₉).

Participants also highlighted that there is a need for training and development that has feedback for training to be aligned with the National Gender Policy Framework

“The major question I ask myself after training is did I give the right training? Training has to have some form of channel back where you recognise the gap and address it so that the gender disparity does not continue” (Participant P₁₈).

“You have to train people and measure their progress. It not about just saying we have trained people; you should monitor the process and have feedback on whether you have addressed the gender needs (Participant P₁₉).

Thus, to be successful, training should be accompanied by other employee development initiatives that seek to correct gender disparities (Shannon et al., 2019). Other participants noted that they utilise other developmental initiatives in implementing the National Gender Policy Framework.

“I have seen that most women lack coaching and mentoring to become leaders. The mentoring is provided to women and you so that they have leadership skills and, in the end, become leaders” (Participant P₃).

Coaching is an individualised process and I think through it we have been able to notice incredible change in terms of gender parity as envisaged in the National framework. I use coaching to instil behaviours that are aligned towards gender diversity, especially with my fellow HR officers (Participant P₁₂).

The study results show that training is utilised in the implementation of the National Gender Policy Framework, the policy is implemented from the senior management going through to the HR department through training and now workers just have to go through the process. Lepak and Gowan (2017) describe training as the process through which workers acquire knowledge and skills. The participants' training is consistent with the stakeholder theory, which emphasises the importance of all parties engaged in the organisation regardless of their gender, race, or orientation. Training equips employees with new skills and information necessary to run the organisation and educates them about the best gender-sensitive practices.

4.5.2.3 CORPORATE CULTURE AND STRUCTURES

Institutional discrimination refers to an inherent prejudice against a group of individuals, regardless of their job-related knowledge, skills, talents, and performance (Pearse & Connell, 2016). Discrimination in an organisation is a product of the procedures and processes that exist in an organisation. These impediments were built by the organisation's systematic practices, protocols, and processes, rather than based on skills (Kolade & Kehinde, 2013).

“A closer analysis of the gender disparities will tell that these are within the structures of the organisation. I read a 2016 report about gender inequality in the public sector where conclusions were made that the structures in the government promote gender inequality especially disadvantaging women’s progression in their careers. The target of 30% in Provincial structures was not met” (Participant P₁₀).

The participants noted that corporate culture and structure are used in the implementation of the National Gender Policy Framework. There were no challenges encountered in the corporate structures and cultures as they are described as well-written processes and principles that influence the organisation's current and future behaviour and conduct by making explicit statements about the standards the organisation maintains and the areas for which it is responsible (Kolade & Kehinde, 2013).

“I think the system of corporate culture is the one that gives or defines the limits on gender inequalities. It has always been part of our culture that if a woman is discriminated against there is no problem. But organisations are now pushed especially by external forces to change their culture. The culture has been changing to adopt gender diversity policies as led by the National Gender Policy Framework. There is the Business Association for Women that has been pushing for gender equality for all listed companies. We have changed our culture to recognize that women are also part of the society and they need to be given leadership roles” (Participant P₁₁)”.

“We have been altering the organisational hierarchy to reflect those women now hold more power. The restricting is a process and it is ongoing but right now it is aligned to the national interest what we are doing” (Participant P₂₀).

For establishing and monitoring gender balance in organisations, a comprehensive organisational structure with clearly defined roles, duties, and lines of responsibility is required. One participant noted that the organisation now recognises the gender desk as part of the organisation

“The women in the organisation formed their group and it is now part of the organizational structure. Whenever we want to make some critical decision, we engage them. It is like a trade union for the women in the organisation and we have received tremendous value from it. We even support them financially. They give each other tips and mentor each other and this has brought up good candidates for leadership in the future” (Participant P₄).

The study results show that the organisations use organisational structures and culture in the implementation of the National Gender Policy Framework. A study by (Pearse and Connell (2016) concluded that a positive change in the organisational culture and structure reduced gender disparity by approximately 10% although it was insignificantly felt at the top of the organisation. The study results are aligned with the conclusion by Pearse and Connell (2016) hence successful corporate structures, according to Teelkem and Deem (2013), need strong leadership, human resource training, and enough financing to achieve gender equality. Furthermore, according to Teelkem and Deem (2013), formal organisational structures must be communicated to employees clearly and efficiently hence workers must appreciate an organisation's ethical framework for it to be accepted. As a consequence, sound personal beliefs and values should contribute to the formation of corporate culture.

4.5.2.4 ETHICAL LEADERSHIP

The participants highlighted that ethical leadership is necessary for the integration of the National Gender Policy Framework in organisations. Ethical leadership is described as

leading that is governed by ethical principles and values, as well as a commitment to others' dignity and rights (Mayer et al., 2009). As a consequence, it is associated with characteristics such as trust, compassion, and justice.

“The public always asks itself if the leaders are ethical and acted in the right way. As managers, we have the responsibility of ensuring that we act ethically in terms of gender equality. It is our duty as leaders to act in a way that fosters gender equality” (Participant P₂₇).

It always starts from the top. The tone is set by us leaders. If we as leaders are conscious about gender equality then there is no way our followers can take the issue seriously. Leading is a form of fighting gender inequalities (Participant P₂₂).

Leaders should serve as a key source of ethical guidance for employees while also being responsible for the moral development of the company (Ho, Li, Tam, and Zhang, 2015). The assertion by Participant is in line with the notion by Ho et al. (2015) that leaders are responsible for moral developments in the organisation and hence are responsible for ensuring gender equality. Academics and managers have only lately begun to place particular emphasis on ethical leadership (Bark, Escartín, and van Dick, 2014). The legitimacy of leadership is being questioned, and public confidence in corporate governance bringing about gender equality is at an all-time low raising concerns about "ethical consciousness" at this time (Ho et al., 2015). Leadership according to Bark et al. (2014) is part of management and this is supported by participants who stated that:

“The role of managers is to lead and it is our responsibility to the organisation. Without proper leadership then there will be no gender equality at the lower levels of the organisation” (Participant P₄).

“You know senior management is accountable for compliance with the laws on gender equality. I am accountable for the outcomes of the organisation including gender disparities” (Participant P₂₅).

“We have to make sure that the voice of women is there in the organisation and that this voice is heard. Exemplary leadership addresses gender disparities” (Participant P₂₃).

According to Dhatt et al. (2017), leadership is a change agent as it refines and tailors behaviours to be morally acceptable while aligning personal and organisational interests. This is supported by one participant who stated that

“As a leader, I am a role model to all the people who look up to me for guidance. I am responsible for modelling the behaviour of my team by treating them fairly and just so that we eliminate the problem of gender inequality” (Participant P₂₀).

While keeping the organisation's goals in mind, ethical leaders, according to Elner (2015), comprehend their followers' needs and expectations. According to Dhatt et al. (2005), the continuity theory of management promotes system, harmony, and collection of behaviours. The study results show that the participants as managers in organisations address gender disparities by providing ethical leadership. In addition, the participants highlighted that they shape gender-conscious behaviour in the organisation by acting as role models.

4.5.2.5 Whistleblowing

Flynn et al. (2019) emphasise that whistleblowing is the conscience's voice and is considered a legitimate form of corporate governance. The participants highlighted that they address gender disparity through whistleblowing.

“Whistleblowing is a mechanism that we use to address the issue of gender disparity. It is an effective way of aligning behaviours to the set policies, frameworks, and target” (Participant P₈).

“The staff is aware of whistleblowing. They are told in training how to use it. Whistleblowing is not only for gender issues but you can even report cases such as fraud, sexual harassment, basically any type of immoral behaviour and I think it keeps people in check” (Participant P₂₂).

“Whistleblowing gives people the chance to air out their views without any fear. It talks about gender inequality fairly and openly” (Participant P₁₇).

Al-Malkawi et al. (2012) emphasises that institutional theory is concerned with acceptable social norms and beliefs that have to be upheld in an organisation. Whistleblowing is a recognised and widely accepted mechanism which aligns behaviours to set standards (Tilton, 2017). However, other participants noted that whistleblowing is only applied to lower levels of the organisation.

“Yes, I am aware that we have whistleblowing to deal with the issue. But it is not generally directed towards people in senior management or the board. I wonder why it is so because their actions have a significant bearing on the achievement of gender parity” (Participant P₁₄).

Some people in top management act unethically and I think it is because they are the ones that review the evidence from whistleblowing, which can be easily brushed off. If you check you rarely get a senior official implicated through whistleblowing. Cases of discrimination will be highlighted if he or she leaves the organisation. So, to some extent I doubt the efficacy of whistleblowing (Participant P₁₉).

According to Alleyne (2010), whistleblowing entails personal consequences such as harassment, job loss, salary reductions, and demotions hence it is most successful when done in complete anonymity.

“Whistleblowing works because there is no one who knows your identity. Once your identity is known you are in trouble and this can lead to harassment and even widen the gender gap in the company. Some people who are powerful and you do not want to be on their wrong side” (Participant P₁).

The study results show that whistleblowing is used to address gender disparities. A study by Tilton (2017) showed that whistleblowing is a way in which companies use to address gender disparities. However, a study by Alleyne (2010) showed that whistleblowing is a mere token of showing reforms but it does not reduce gender disparities. Gender

disparities need coercive measures for them to be addressed. The study's findings support Tilton's (2017) hypothesis, and show that whistleblowing is effective in addressing gender disparities under strict anonymity.

4.6 CHALLENGES THE IMPLEMENTATION OF NATIONAL GENDER POLICY FRAMEWORK

The implementation of all policies faces inherent challenges which emanate from different dimensions. The participants were asked to provide the challenges faced in the implementation of the National Gender Policy Framework and highlighted that the challenges are the ambiguity of the policy, resistance to change and poor monitoring and evaluation.

4.6.1 RESISTANCE TO CHANGE

Participants emphasised that resistance to change is their biggest obstacle. Resistance to change is the action of rejecting or fighting against adjustments or alterations that upset the status quo (Ratele, 2015). Durbin, Page, and Walby (2017) pointed out that resistance to change has an impact on how policies intended to reduce gender gaps are carried out.

“It simply people do not want to change” (Participant P₂₇).

“I think men always want to remain in power and will do everything in their power to keep it that way” (Participant P₁₄).

What I have realized is that it always starts with people. People are the most difficult hurdle. Why do you think in this modern day and age we are still talking about gender inequality? Everywhere you look there is gender inequality and there is always something that pushes them not to want change (Participant P₁₀).

This resistance may manifest itself in an individual employee or collectively, informally, or formally (Ratele, 2015).

“Men always put in place things that preserve their power and they are in most leadership positions that is why reforms take long. A man can voice his displeasure

towards female leadership in the workshop then he is joined by others and before you know it all the men have joined. I have seen many boards vote against gender initiatives and this is the formal resistance” (Participant P₂₆).

The assertion by participant shows that resistance to change can emanate from people or organisations. Another participant noted that resistance to change is an inevitable element associated with gender equality

“Resistance is inevitable because no one wants to lose their power and authority. So it is expected that they will be resistant. Men are more privileged than women and they do not want gender equality. Men will never fully embrace the quality process” (Participant P₃).

The participants noted that the major source of resistance to change comes from the social dynamics

“There is always a resistance to gender parity that comes from society. Our culture states that women should be submissive to men. Unless we change this, there will never be gender parity; it will not have the support of men” (Participant P₂₂).

“Society wants to normalise these structural inequalities. It is taught when children are growing up. Emphasis is placed on the boy than the girl. So, men do not want this change so they do not accept gender equality or parity” (Participant P₂₄).

“Gender equality is viewed as a challenge to masculinity or an advocacy for extreme feminism. They always want to maintain dominance and society teaches this” (Participant P₇).

Closely linked to resistance to change is backlash. Backlash refers to the limiting exercise of coercive authority (either the threat of punishment or the use of force) to reclaim lost or threatened power (Flood, Dragiewicz, and Pease, 2018).

“There is what is called backlash. It is close to resistance but in this case the resistance is not subtle. It is followed by a specific action which forces the other party to cede their powers. A backlash is a form of resistance that counteracts any

developments to empower a particular gender and it is not limited to men even women practice it. Men who are nurses are condemned by women on social media even some are victimised to the stent of quitting their jobs. So, the backlash is everywhere” (Participant P₁₃).

A study by Flood et al. (2018) showed that resistance to change about gender issues mainly comes from men compared to women. Furthermore, the analysis of the responses by the participants shows that resistance to change takes many forms

“Resistance can be in the form of inaction. Simply not acting is resisting” (Participant P₁₆).

“There is an instance when the men just use the gender-sensitive language to appear as if they are progressive but they are not. I know cases where gender policies have been put in place and there were people who undermine them” (Participant P₉).

“Men can blatantly deny that gender inequality exists. And when asked about it they play the victim card. They even attack the credibility of those who would have reported the cases and may argue that their facts are overtly over exaggerated” (Participant P₂₅).

“They are people who just refuse that there is a problem. Total denial of the issue and you can clearly see that there is an issue here. We have all heard of these phrases where people highlight that they have a more pressing issue to deal with right now and will look into it (gender inequality) later” (Participant P₅).

According to Flood et al. (2018), resistance can take the form of inaction and other forms include repression where there appears there is only superficial progress. The statement by the participant shows that resistance to gender parity takes many forms.

The study results indicate that resistance to change is a challenge towards the implementation of the National Gender Policy Framework. A study by Shefer (2014) concluded that resistance to change is a major obstacle towards achieving gender

equality. The participants noted that resistance to change is meant to preserve male dominance and authority. Study results show that resistance to change is accompanied by benefits which result in resistance against the status quo.

4.6.2 POOR MONITORING AND EVALUATION

The progress of all initiatives put in place has to be continuously and accurately measured hence it reflects where corrective measures are needed (Tirivanhu & Jansen van Rensburg, 2018). The participants noted that there is poor monitoring and evaluation of the implementation of the National Gender Policy Framework and other strategies designed to address gender disparity

“The outcomes of the policies are unknown. We rarely get feedback about the issue of gender equality. It is only highlighted in the Final year report as a requirement for listing on JSE otherwise we do not what has been done and where we are going” (Participant P₁₇).

“I frankly believe that there is nothing we are practically implementing because if you are implementing something, we would know the progress. We constantly get updated on profitability, revenues, costs, and share prices but none is related to gender parity. We cannot move forward with this kind of thinking that we have currently” (Participant P₆).

Gender-sensitive monitoring and evaluation are used to determine whether a program addresses the distinct priorities and needs of women and men, to determine whether the program influences gender relations, and to identify gender-related aspects that should be integrated into monitoring and evaluation systems (Tirivanhu & Jansen van Rensburg, 2018). Incorporating specific gender equality goals and indicators during the planning stage also enhances responsibility for gender equality development (Salo, 2014). Other participants highlighted that the metrics used to ensure gender parity are poor or non-existent

“There is no measure of gender parity other than simply looking at the employment numbers. It does not extend beyond that and I think the numbers sometimes lie.

Imagine we have two female managers in the company. If there is one who is hired, it will be called a 50% change in female management. Now check a case for men. There are 10 male managers, if you hire 4 more it will be called a 40% change. If we are to use these changes women are ahead of men but is it the case when the actual number of new male managers is 4 times greater than that of women? These metrics are lopsided” (Participant P₁₂).

“The targets are just simplistic but a lot of gender imbalance is going on. We do not get to know the numbers of moms who did not return after maternity leave. Those are the real statistics for gender parity not what we have now” (Participant P₄).

“We do not have a measure of gender inclusiveness at the moment. Those figures are just HR figures” (Participant P₂₀).

The responses by the participants show that monitoring and evaluation of the gender initiatives is poor in organisations. Effective monitoring and assessment of gender relations must include both qualitative and quantitative data on the effect on gender relations (Henry, Sandler, Passerini, and Darmstadt, 2017). Without adequate data, it is very impossible to conduct a comprehensive study of the effect on gender equality. This also means that all data should be gathered, presented, and analyzed on a sex-disaggregated basis at the very least (Salo, 2014). The participants highlighted the various domains of gender monitoring and evaluation that are lacking in their organizations

“We only hear about representation what about the access to resources, it is not talked about because there is no data about it” (Participant P₂₃).

“What is amusing about this is that we are not even asked about the information that is needed to collate a strong report. It is not inclusive” (Participant P₁₁).

“The reports are quantitative because we have been told that numbers are objective. There are some qualitative issues here that we need to discuss. You cannot quantify these emotions that people go through due to gender

discrimination that is why I am saying that this reporting on gender is very poor”
(Participant P₁₅).

“The M&E that we do here does not cover all the bases. They only capture the causal effects but we know that there are unintended consequences. We monitor what we want only but not the other things. We monitor the number of women in the organisation which is important but what about the unintended outcomes such”
(Participant P₂).

A study by Zamfir (2015) showed that to produce gender-accurate reports there is a need for the incorporation of various methodologies which reflect the true gender picture on the ground. The study outcomes revealed that there is poor monitoring and evaluation of initiatives directed towards addressing gender disparity. Monitoring and evaluation provide a basis on which corrective actions can be taken and without effective monitoring and evaluation, gender bias and disparity will always be present.

4.6.3 OTHER CHALLENGES

Participants also emphasized additional issues that prevent the National Gender Policy Framework and other policies intended to reduce gender inequities from being implemented effectively. Others in the discussion pointed out that the Gender Policy Framework is unclear and poorly understood.

“The National Framework I think needs to be reworked. It does not lay out things that deal with gender disparities in black and white. I guess if you improve equal pay and increase women managers is still okay but what about the issue of productivity, how do you deal with compensation when there are differences in productivity on the same type of work, it does not give us that” (Participant P₂₁).

This document is not well-known. The problem these days is that there are so many documents that talk about the same thing and you lose interest in it honestly. You have so many documents that you have to know and I think a document about gender is the last thing you will research public awareness need to be raised

otherwise companies are using it as a marketing or publicity stance without really following it through (Participant P₈).

The assertions by the participants show that the document is not well known and is used to promote the image of the company. There are divergent views of what is morally correct, which are not adequately defined by legislation or judgments. According to Pittroff (2014), the legitimacy theory postulates that a corporation seeks to establish societal legitimacy by superficially adopting societal standards and norms. The study results are aligned with institutional theory. Moreover, the participants highlighted a challenge in the implementation of the National Gender Policy Framework ignoring the informal institutions that build gender disparity.

“The most efficient way to reach your goals sometimes is to do things normally. I have seen that men learn more under informal circumstances like when they are gathered. We are too focused on formal training but the other form of training we should incorporate is informal. Informal training is important but ignored in addressing gender disparities” (Participant P₅).

People are social beings and we need to recognise that an informal way of doing things can get things done faster. Look at how information travels fast with the grapevine (Participant P₁₀).

A study by Waylen (2014) showed that gender practices are informally built and have longer lasting impact on the individual than formally built views. The study results support the position by Waylen (2014) and highlights that the informal aspect of gender disparity is not only addressed through formal means. In addition, the participants highlighted that bias is a challenge towards achieving gender parity.

“Both men and women regard leadership as a masculine role. When a woman in leadership displays these features she is called bossy and is not liked by people. On the other side, the more men exhibit masculinity the more likeable he is. This bias results in women taking a back seat and further exacerbating the gender disparity” (Participant P₁₈).

“Women are always associated with and viewed as vulnerable and in need of protection by men. This bias results in women being given inferior assignments and most people do not give constructive criticism to female managers fearing emotional breakdowns” (Participant P₂₃).

According to Hideg and Ferris (2016), women with young children are not selected for foreign assignments, since managers believe they would find them too difficult. The assertions by the participants indicate benevolence bias where women are perceived to be weaker than men and it exaggerates the gender disparities in organisations. Other participants indicated that women lack confidence and this is a barrier to effective implementation of measures which address gender inequality.

“Women do not have confidence in themselves; they do not believe in themselves that they can perform the same as men in managerial roles or even better. Women under evaluate themselves and they do not support each other” (Participant P₄).

A study by Yatskiv (2017) showed that women also negotiate their wages four times less than males, and when they do, they ask for 30% less. Other participants argue that women do not have leadership support and this presents a barrier to the attainment of gender parity.

Even if they are in positions of power some women do not know what to do. They have not been equally groomed as men (Participant P₁₉).

“The leaders generally do not support women’s initiatives maybe it’s because most of them are men” (Participant P₁₃).

According to McKinsey research, 49% of female managers are unsure how to increase gender diversity due to a lack of leadership support and mentoring (Ogbogu, 2011). The study results show that there is poor awareness of the National Gender Policy Framework, lack of leadership support, bias and ignoring of informal processes which present challenges to the effective implementation of the Gender National Policy Framework. The results show that gender disparities still exist and this call for a need to have effective remedies in place. The key findings are that the majority of women that

were interviewed did not have faith in the leadership of women because they say the majority cannot stand their ground, and I have also observed that most of them take workplace duties to be very personal.

4.7 CONCLUSION

This chapter presents the findings of the observational data that was gathered and analysed using the techniques described in the inquiry about strategy. An important first step in ending women's subordination was South Africa's benevolent treatment of women's rights through holy rituals, an expansive and dynamic system of authority, and the representation of women in political decision-making positions. These systems and educational initiatives stand in conjunction with the foundational organisational elements, particularly the South African National Sex Approach System for women's advancement, to represent the state's dedication to the principles of sex balance. The ideas and conclusions founded on this chapter's discoveries are presented in another chapter.

CHAPTER FIVE

5. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Introduction

The previous chapter presented the study's findings, and this chapter offers a review along with some suggestions and the study's conclusion. The earlier chapters serve as the chapter's main point of reference.

5.2 CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.2.1 KEY FINDINGS FROM THE LITERATURE

Olgati and Shapiro (2018) emphasise that equality does not mean turning a blind eye to sexual issues while performing professional duties; a person cannot be judged or given attention solely based on his or her sexual orientation, and as such, everyone should be treated fairly in terms of rights and opportunities within the institution. Wu and Cheng (2016) argue that gender equality cannot be ignored if economic development is to be attained in each community.

Understanding how sexual orientation equality in conventional wage-and-sector work influences such discernments is vital considering the illustrated suggestions for ensuing entrepreneurial behaviour (Schlaegel and Koenig, 2013), but too with a more noteworthy probability of real wander creation as well as the degree to which contrasts within the holes may be credited to separation against female labourers. The Ministry of Women in the Presidency is currently responsible for executing and coordinating all the National Gender Policy Framework's objectives, which are consolidated under the Ministry of Women in the Presidency. The National Gender Policy Framework was developed as a broad policy framework to provide direction to various sectors in creating more detailed sector-specific policy papers. Its purpose was to make it simpler for sectors to integrate the ideas included in the Gender Policy Framework into their current policy and strategy documents (Manjoo, 2018).

5.2.2 KEY FINDINGS FROM THE PRIMARY STUDY

According to the research questions, the primary study's key findings are given.

WHAT IS THE NATURE AND EXTENT OF GENDER DISPARITY IN THE COMPANIES?

The study findings show that there is gender disparity at the top of the organisation where there is male dominance. In addition, the study findings show that there is resistance to change and poor monitoring and evaluation which exacerbates gender disparities in the companies. Furthermore, the study findings show that the women lack leadership support and other challenges encountered in addressing gender disparities are bias; ambiguity and lack of awareness of the National Gender Policy Framework and ignoring informal training and development.

HOW ARE COMPANIES SPECIFICALLY INTEGRATING THE PROVISIONS OF THE NATIONAL GENDER POLICY FRAMEWORK INTO THEIR POLICIES, STRATEGIES AND ACTIVITIES?

The study findings show that the companies are specifically integrating the provisions of the National Gender Policy Framework into their policies, strategies and activities through recruitment, training and development, corporate structure and culture, ethical leadership, and whistleblowing. Lack of self-confidence and the society's notion of women in leadership discourages women to take leadership roles.

5.3 RECOMMENDATIONS

Regardless of the discoveries of the ponder, measures and methodologies that address sexual orientation differences are pertinent. Based on the discoveries, the consider proffers the taking after proposals:

5.4 MONITORING AND EVALUATION:

The study recommends companies to ensure that all departments submit gender mainstreaming and equality reports to the appropriate Board of Directors for evaluation

on an annual basis. This will aid in detecting gaps in the Strategic Framework for Gender Equality's implementation inside businesses.

5.5. KNOWLEDGE AND AWARENESS BUILDING

The study suggests the distribution of the National Gender Policy Framework is highlighted to all departments. Following that, departments must conduct orientation seminars continuously to familiarise the employees with the concepts and procedures of gender mainstreaming and equality.

5.6 GENDER FORUMS

In addition, the study recommends the creation of gender forums that facilitate the organisation of training in the organisation, allowing workers to reflect on gender equality issues and procedures relevant to their work areas. The study further suggests the funding of gender forums so that they efficiently deal with gender disparity and ensure the integration of the National Gender Policy Framework in the activities of the organisation. The National Gender Policy Framework can be implemented in companies after they have made a research study on how effective it is in other companies and checking if it addresses gender issues as we have been highlighting in the above research study.

5.7 LEADERSHIP CAPACITY SUPPORT

The study recommends the identification of leadership capacity-building initiatives to ensure exposure to leadership by women. This gives them a chance for female workers to participate in leadership and mentoring programs and enhance their competence to advance their careers. The main reason why the research was undertaken is that we want to eradicate poverty, achieve equality of gender, and encourage inclusiveness in the process of governance and development.

5.8 CONCLUSION

The study aimed was to study is to investigate the implementation of the National Gender Policy Framework in selected JSE-listed companies. Gender equality remains a battleground since few women hold senior executive roles in companies. Women's

inclusion in decision-making roles has been identified as a critical basic problem to address when bridging the gap between gender disparities at institutions and in society. One of the study objectives was to highlight the nature and extent of gender disparity in companies. The study objective was excellently achieved. Study results show that there is gender disparity at the top of the companies and the challenges in achieving gender equality include resistance to change and poor monitoring and evaluation. Furthermore, they sought to establish how companies are integrating the provisions of the National Gender Policy Framework.

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CONSENT FORM

Name of the Researcher	Moloko Ramaotswa
Title of the study	The implementation of National Gender Policy in addressing gender parity in selected Johannesburg securities exchange listed retail companies in Limpopo Province.

Dear Participant

You are hereby requested to give your consent to participate in the study. If you are willing, kindly complete the form below.

Please take note that the information that you will provide, will be treated with confidentiality and for the study purposes only. You will also not be mentioned in any written work arising from the study. Should you require further clarity, feel free to discuss your concerns with the researcher.

I _____ give my consent to participate in the study titled; **The implementation of National Gender Policy in addressing gender parity in selected Johannesburg securities exchange listed retail companies in Polokwane.** I am also aware that my participation in the study is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw my participation at any time.

Signature _____

Date _____

INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

THE IMPLEMENTATION OF NATIONAL GENDER POLICY IN ADDRESSING GENDER PARITY IN SELECTED JOHANNESBURG SECURITIES EXCHANGE LISTED RETAIL COMPANIES IN POLOKWANE.

Dear Participant

I would like to thank you for availing yourself for this interview. The study is geared towards investigating the implementation of national gender policy in addressing gender parity in selected Johannesburg securities exchange listed retail companies in Limpopo Province. Therefore, your honest opinion in the matters raised is all that is required from you. There are no wrong or right answers. Kindly note that a tape recorder is going to be used throughout this interview to collect data, this is done for the purpose of capturing all the information presented and not to incriminate you in a way. Your permission to use the tape recorder in this interview is required.

Please be informed that your identity will be anonymous and that your participation in this study is done voluntarily. You are also free to withdraw from the participation in this study at any point whereby you feel uncomfortable.

Thanking you

Ramaotswa Moloko

Information worth noting:

This interview will last for about 15-20 minutes at most. You are requested to respond to all the questions to the best of your ability.

SECTION A

Kindly provide the following biographical information to the researcher;

Biographical information

1. Age in years.

21-29	30-39	40-49	50-59	60 and above
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2. Race.

African	White	Indian	Coloured	Other
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3. Gender'

Male	Female
------	--------

4. Work experience in years.

0-5	6-7	8-10	11
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5. Education qualification.

Matric	Diploma	Degree	Honours	Masters and above
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6. Occupational position.

Junior manager	Manager	Senior manager	Executive manager
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SECTION B

ANSWER THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS:

1. What is your understanding of gender parity?
2. What is the gender balance at the top positions of the company?
3. What gender parity policies are available at the company?
4. How does the company implement the National Gender Policy Framework?
5. Share the challenges that the company experiences in the implementation of National Gender Policy Framework.
6. What strategies and activities does the company has in place to address gender disparity? This signifies the end of the interview. Thank you very much for your time. Please feel free to share any additional information.

DISSERTATION

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University of Limpopo
Sovenga
0727

Unit C Mankweng 0727
081 5666 755
rightmovemultimedia@gmail.com
karabokonyani@gmail.com

13 June 2023

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

This editing certificate verifies that this dissertation was professionally edited for Naeven Moloko Ramaotswa (201211977).

Thus, it is meant to acknowledge that I, Mrs K.L Malatji and Dr E.J Malatji professional Editors under a registered company RightMove Multimedia, have meticulously edited the proposal from the University of Limpopo. Title: "THE IMPLEMENTATION OF NATIONAL GENDER POLICY IN ADDRESSING GENDER PARITY IN SELECTED JOHANNESBURG SECURITIES EXCHANGE LISTED RETAIL COMPANIES IN POLOKWANE".

Sincerely,

Mrs K. L Malatji



University of Limpopo
Department of Research Administration and Development
Private Bag X1106, Sovenga, 0727, South Africa
Tel: (015) 268 3935, Fax: (015) 268 2306, Email: anastasia.ngobe@ul.ac.za

TURFLOOP RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE
ETHICS CLEARANCE CERTIFICATE

MEETING: 24 April 2020

PROJECT NUMBER: TREC/63/2020: PG

PROJECT:

Title: The Implementation of National Gender Policy in Addressing Gender Parity in Selected Johannesburg Securities Exchange Listed Retail Companies in Polokwane

Researcher: NM Ramaotswa

Supervisor: Prof MM Kanjere

Co-Supervisor/s: N/A

School: Turfloop Graduate School of Leadership

Degree: Master of Business Administration

PROF P MASOKO
CHAIRPERSON: TURFLOOP RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE

The Turfloop Research Ethics Committee (TREC) is registered with the National Health Research Ethics Council, Registration Number: **REC-0310111-031**

Note:

- i) This Ethics Clearance Certificate will be valid for one (1) year, as from the abovementioned date. Application for annual renewal (or annual review) need to be received by TREC one month before lapse of this period.
- ii) Should any departure be contemplated from the research procedure as approved, the researcher(s) must re-submit the protocol to the committee, together with the Application for Amendment form.
- iii) PLEASE QUOTE THE PROTOCOL NUMBER IN ALL ENQUIRIES.