

**WINDOWS INTO WORKPLACE EQUALITY: GENDERED EXPERIENCES OF
CAREER ASPIRATIONAL EMPLOYEES IN THE INFORMATION
TECHNOLOGY FIELD**

by

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STATEMENT

I declare that **Windows into workplace equality: Gendered experiences of career aspirational employees in the Information Technology field** is my own work and that all the sources that I have used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged by means of complete references.

SIGNATURE

(Ms Errolyn L Long)

DATE

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ABSTRACT

Using social constructionism and feminist theory, this qualitative study addressed the underrepresentation of women in senior management positions and explored the gendered experiences of male and female employees at a company in the field of Information Technology. The latest statistics of 2010 revealed that positions filled by women account for only 19% and 29% in top management and senior management respectively (personal communication with Lucy Holbol, South African Institute of Race and Relations (SAIRR) via email, April 2012). Data was collected at an Information Technology department of a company in Pretoria, South Africa using face-to-face semi-structured interviews. Thematic analysis and a listening guide were used to analyse the data. The findings of the study are located within the theoretical framework of social constructionism of gendered identity as well as the role of language in constructing gender in the workplace. Moreover, the main themes that emerged in the analysis were: the gendered organisational culture; reasons why men are better suited than women for the field of Information Technology; caring for children and the ability to cope with work responsibilities simultaneously; the languaging around senior management positions; the gender of management; and perspectives of race and gender policies within the South African workplace. Furthermore, the study is significant as it reveals the challenges that continue to persist in previously male-dominated industries, thus highlighting the work that still needs to be done before genuine gender equality can be attained in the workplace.

Keywords: Information Technology; gender; social constructionism; workplace equality

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION, BACKGROUND AND RATIONALE

There have been several studies that examined the underrepresentation of women in senior management positions (Eagly & Karau, 2002; Liff & Ward, 2001; Moletsane & Reddy, 2010; Oakley, 2000; Rudman & Glick, 1999). These studies highlight and point to how women in senior positions experience stereotypes in their various places of work. There is a need to explore the experiences of both women and men in the workplace as there is a dearth of studies in this area. The primary aim of the study sought to explore and describe the gendered experiences of employees in the field of Information Technology.

The central aim of this chapter provides an overview of the development of women from the perspective of feminist theorists. Firstly, I shall start by offering a global perspective on the history of gender inequality. Secondly, I will contextualise to South Africa and look at gender inequality within the local context, and lastly, I will offer a brief discussion of the waves of feminism (Scantlebury, & Martin, 2010). Looking at and focusing on these three perspectives will assist in understanding how women's identity is theorised.

In the current study, I explored and described the underrepresentation of women in senior management positions. It should be noted that senior management positions are referred to as top management, executive positions and leadership positions in the literature (Hofmeyr & Mzobe, 2012; Nkuna, 2010). The context of the study was a private organisation with a department that specialises in the field of Information Technology. The organisation is based in Pretoria in the Gauteng province of South Africa.

This study adopted a feminist social constructionist paradigm as realities are assumed to be multiple and focused on women as well as men's experiences. Qualitative research methods were used to explore and describe the experiences of male and female employees in the field of Information Technology. The field of Information Technology was chosen since there has been dearth of studies done on gender equality, women and senior management positions in this field (Demaiter & Adams, 2009).

The history of gender inequality in an international context

In a 1607 colonised American context, the role of men was defined in terms of patriarchy (Mintz, 2000). Glick and Fiske (1999) define patriarchy as “the social arrangement in which men possess structural power by virtue of monopolising high-status positions in important social, economic, legal, and religious institutions, as is the case in most modern industrial societies” (p. 373). This entailed husbands' and paternal authority over women and children which was supported by religion and the colonial law at the time (Mintz, 2000). Men's identities were shaped by them being the provider or “breadwinner” of the household, whereas women's identities were seen as homemakers (Mintz, 2000). In elaboration of this view, Chodorow (1974) states that it was widely thought that a man's inherent nature made them ill-suited to the domestic world (as cited in Mintz, 2000).

Due to economic changes during the eighteenth century, there was a reduction in birth rate as children were no longer seen as assets. By the nineteenth century, there was a rise in the commercial economy. Men worked long hours away from home and women had to assume the role of full-time parenting (Mintz, 2000). For example, married female teachers

that fell pregnant were not given maternity leave but were instead dismissed as they had to assume full-time parenting (Barnette, 2004).

During World War Two (1939-1945) with men away at war, women were allowed to enter the workforce since they were needed in positions characterised as masculine. I further elaborate on masculine and feminine traits in the conceptual definitions section of this chapter. After World War Two, there was a shift in the labour market for young females and there was an increase in young female workers aged 15-17 in clerical jobs (August, 2009). However, when the war ended, men that could still work returned to the workplace and women were sent back to their domestic roles at home. The traditional lifestyle, also known as the traditional family model in the 1970's, was for men to work while women stayed home to look after the children and do household chores (Steil, 2000).

In contrast to other international contexts, socio-structural discrimination is carried out in countries such as China and India. According to Finchilescu (1991), socio-structural discrimination refers to when the culture and norm of the group in power is seen as the only legitimate world view. This discrimination may manifest itself in language, history, beliefs, activities and the minority group being rendered as invisible (Finchilescu, 1991). Specifically, women are depicted as being part of the minority group. Furthermore, certain cultural practices are also detrimental for women, such as genital mutilation (widely practiced in the Middle East and some parts of Africa) and female infanticide.

Moreover, female infanticide is practiced in many Third World countries, such as China and rural India (Jones, 1999-2000 cited in Finchilescu, 1991). Both China and rural India are highly patriarchal societies where girls are perceived to be of little value. In India,

the parents of the female child are influenced by the dowry system. The dowry system is a payment (usually a large sum of money) given to the family into which the female child marries. In China, there is the one-child policy that contributes to female infanticide (Finchilescu, 1991).

All in all, patriarchy is an equally operating factor in different contexts. While women are more liberated in some countries, in others they still remain subjected to patriarchal terms. Chiefly, men are more likely to hold more value from the time of birth to the freedom of sexual pleasure and entering the work force without the restrictions of having to emotionally care for children.

The history of gender inequality in a South African context

Historically, South African women have withstood a long struggle against Apartheid and gender inequality (Geisler, 2000). On 9 August¹ 1956, Black women and anti-Apartheid activists formed a march to the Union Buildings in Pretoria, Gauteng Province to protest against the oppressive laws (Geertsema, 2010). In 1956, White English-speaking women formed the Black Sash which was organised to fight against the violation of human rights (Geertsema, 2010). It is critical to note that up until that at the time feminist or gender issues were not deemed as part of the Apartheid struggle (Seidman, 1999).

McEwan (2000) revealed in a quantitative study that a combination of three factors brought gender to the forefront of South African politics. Firstly, throughout the 1980s, women within the African National Congress (ANC) developed positions for a gender

¹ The 9th of August is a National public holiday that commemorates women's rights.

critique and regional and national women's movements, wherein gender issues were debated. These debates considered how women's needs would differ from men's in post-Apartheid reconstruction. Secondly, in the 1990s women activists fought for a mobilisation space, national liberation, state politics as these affected women, and gendered power relations within society. This resulted in the establishment of separate women's fora within the anti-apartheid movement that allowed women to express their viewpoints. Gender concerns were no longer subsumed within a broader liberation struggle, but could be articulated even if they ran contra to policies being proposed by the ANC and other national liberation movements. Thirdly, in the 1990s international feminism provided an important context for debates taking place in South Africa. According to Seidman (1999) the new democracy addressed gender issues by drawing on international feminist discussions on gender citizenship. McEwan (2000) state that these three factors, together with grassroots mobilisation, created a new constituency for feminist and gender concerns within the anti-Apartheid movement. Even though trade unions have implemented policies that consider women as citizens in the workplace, women still continue to face socio-economic struggles due to a lack of resources (Mathur-Helm, 2004).

South Africa's historical divisions as a result of Apartheid led to segregation, not only in terms of race, class and language, but also perpetuated divisions across gender (Geisler, 2000). Since the dismantling of Apartheid a number of legal protections have been implemented, notably Acts that promote transformation in terms of race and gender (Employment Equity Act 55 of, 1998; maternity benefits in the Basic Conditions of Employment Act of 1997; economic empowerment of previously disadvantaged blacks in business and economy in the Broad-Black Based Economic Empowerment Act 53 of 2003) much of which is underpinned by the Constitution Act 108 (1996) of the Republic of South

Africa (The Department of Labour, 2003). Ironically, in the daily realities of South African women, the legislative protections have not fully translated into full equality and representation in respect to gender and the workforce.

The three waves of feminism

From the late nineteenth and early twentieth century to the present day, there have been three waves of feminism or women's movements (Scantlebury, & Martin, 2010). The first wave started around the nineteenth century and lasted until the early twentieth century (Scantlebury, & Martin, 2010). This movement focused on advocating for women's equality and equity in terms of education and political power, as women had no citizenship and therefore no voting rights. Certain western countries such as Aotearoa New Zealand (1893), South Australia (1894), Commonwealth of Australia (1902), Finland (1906), United States (1920), Republic of Ireland (1922), United Kingdom (1928), Spain (1931), Brazil (1932), and France (1945), allowed for women in attaining their citizenship rights. In 1975, anti-feminist countries were Europe, West-Germany, Italy and the Netherlands (Spivak, 1981). Nevertheless, between 1975 and 1987 anti-feminist attitudes declined in Belgium and the Netherlands due to strong commitments to gender equality made by political elites. Change in anti-feminist attitudes were mainly due to generational replacement, where younger people were more liberal and had replaced most of the older generation (Morgan & Wilcox, 1992). However, during the 1970s anti-feminist attitudes did not decline in Germany due to lack of public response to women's equality (Spivak, 1981). This first wave ended when women attained voting rights (also known as woman's suffrage) (Scantlebury, & Martin, 2010).

In continuing to strive for the realisation of other aspects of women's rights, the second wave came into existence and called for equity of women within the social institutions of education, career and healthcare, with a specific focus on identity politics located within cultural issues (Scantlebury, & Martin, 2010). In the early 1990s, the third wave began as a response to the second wave, and focused on transnational politics, which sought to challenge notions of femininity and gender (which was defined by the second-wavers) (Pinterics, 2001). The third wave took a critical approach to previous feminist discourse as the experiences of African, middle class women were not recognised (Scantlebury & Martin, 2010). The feminists of the third wave (also called third-wavers) pointed out the dangers of reductionism that exists, such as dichotomies, for example, male/female, black/white and good/bad. In addition, third-wavers have criticised the second-wavers for categorising women into theories of sameness. For instance, Vietnamese and Black American women are both victims of race, gender and class, whereas Islamic women are oppressed by others in view of their religion. With regards to Islamic women, Islamist feminists are concerned with religious issues such as the banning of headscarves at universities, as well as the misuse of the Qur'an to oppress women (Diner & Toktas, 2010). In all things considered, these are all women but they are not oppressed by the same elements.

Importantly, Crenshaw's theory of intersectionality addresses influential differing aspects of women. Crenshaw (1999) described intersectionality as the intersection of racism and sexism factors into Black women's lives which cannot be captured wholly by looking at the race or gender dimensions of those experiences separately. She claimed that intersectional experience is greater than the sum of racism and sexism (Crenshaw, 1989). Crenshaw (1989) argued that black women were sometimes excluded from feminist theory and anti-racist policy as both were founded on a discrete set of experiences and therefore do not accurately

reflect interactions of race and gender as they were often treated as mutually exclusive categories of experience and analysis. Hence, if intersectionality was not taken into account, then the particular manner in which black women were subordinated would not be sufficiently addressed. For instance, white females' experiences have conceptualised what sexual discrimination is and it was therefore taken as a statement.

While women possibly have shared and common interests, they may have different experiences due to their race, class or religion. In particular, white women were exempted from the workplace but this is not true for black women as they have always worked out in fields or as servants in the home of white people (Crenshaw, 1989). Moreover, Crenshaw (1989) stated that feminism must include an analysis of race if it hopes to express the aspirations of Black or Asian women. Earlier approaches treated experiences as singular, such as the oppression of black people when based on race, and the oppression of women when based on gender. Treating experiences as singular issues fashioned a way of thinking of discrimination which structured politics so that struggles were categorised as either gender or racial.

Therefore, women's issues in the Third World are different to those in the First World (Spivak, 1981). Mohanty (1984) refers to the Third World as everything that has been produced from colonisation (for example, colonisation of economy, political hierarchies and cultural discourses used). Thus, feminism that took place in the countries that did not experience colonisation, is rather different in those countries that underwent colonisation. In essence, while the third-wavers have criticised the second wave, they also seek to build on what the second wave has already accomplished (Pinterics, 2001). Furthermore, debates are

emerging whereby second-wavers criticise the third-waver feminists for oversimplifying the ideologies of the second wave and the achievements that were made.

Therefore, it becomes critical to acknowledge the background of feminism as it shows how women have fought for equality from the nineteenth century until the present date. The different waves of feminism not only demonstrate how different women's needs are from men, but also from each other, and thus cannot be treated indifferently.

Women in masculine-industries in South Africa

Science, Engineering and Technology (SET) are known to be male-dominated occupations (Moletsane & Reddy, 2010). A report compiled by Moletsane and Reddy (2010) explored the experiences and perspectives of senior managers on recruitment, retention and the advancement of women into the SET sector. The findings revealed three main themes. Firstly, women were seen to be emotionally different as they were regarded to be softer, feminine and empathetic. Secondly, men and women were viewed as being constructed differently on a cognitive level as women are regarded as tending to think holistically and have a deeper consideration when making decisions. Thirdly, men and women were viewed differently on a biological level. More specifically, women were viewed as physically weak and fragile and therefore cannot participate in duties or tasks that required physical strength and that were unsafe (Moletsane & Reddy, 2010). With this difference in mind, women were viewed as not being suitable for masculine work environments.

Gender-blind policies and strategies are used in the recruiting and retention of women. Gender-blind recruitment policies and strategies are used to recruit women into top

positions based on talent and merit and not gender, whereas gender-blind retention policies and strategies prevent women from remaining in companies since it aims to retain talented people and do not focus on gender (Moletsane & Reddy, 2010). However, these gender blind recruitment and retention policies and strategies appear to prevent women from entering and remaining in companies' altogether. In male-dominated industries it was mentioned by the senior managers in the SET sector, that women should not be advanced too quickly since this was perceived to result in their burnout as they would be seen as taking on more than they can handle (Moletsane & Reddy, 2010).

The central objective of the study will be to focus on the experiences of male and female employees in the field of Information Technology. This study is deemed crucial within a South African context as most studies have only investigated female employees in senior management positions (Eagly, Makhijani & Klonsky, 1992; Sczesny, 2003). There is paucity in qualitative research concerned with exploring the experiences of women and men in management positions (Cross & Linehan, 2008). This study included both men and women as I am focused on the gendered experiences in the field of Information Technology. Since the field of Information Technology is mostly male-dominated (Wentling & Thomas, 2007) this offered a space to include men's understanding who are in this particular environment. This study will contribute to studies that focus particularly on women that are aspiring toward senior management positions in the field of Information Technology.

Problem statement

Research has shown that there is an underrepresentation of women in senior management positions (Hofmeyr & Mzobe, 2012; Nkuna, 2010). This underrepresentation is a challenge for the following three reasons: Firstly, as aforementioned in the background of this study, the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa based on legislative protection Acts, prohibits discrimination against women when it comes to promotion in the workplace.

However, despite these legislative protective Acts, statistics for 2010 revealed that the positions filled by women account for only 19% and 29% in top management and senior management respectively (personal communication with Lucy Holbol, South African Institute of Race and Relations (SAIRR) via email, April 2012). Secondly, the promoting of women in the workplace is seen as good business practice and improves the overall business productivity (International Labour Office, 2004). Therefore, if women believe they are discriminated against based on race or gender, their experience of job satisfaction is lowered. The consequence of lowered job satisfaction leads to less engagement by women in their work (Ensher, Grant-Vallone & Donaldson, 2001). Thus, including women in senior management positions can spur economic growth and improve the welfare of many families (International Labour Office, 2001). Thirdly, as a subsequent, the implication of the underrepresentation of women in senior management positions creates gender imbalances. Gender imbalances, in turn, have a negative impact on the global competitiveness of the economic growth and sustainability of South Africa (Moletsane & Reddy, 2010).

A wealth of international (Eagly & Karau, 2002; Liff & Ward, 2001; Oakley, 2000; Rudman & Glick, 1999) as well as South African (Booyesen & Nkomo, 2010; Bosch, 2011; Hofmeyr & Mzobe, 2012; Moletsane & Reddy, 2010) studies have looked at the

underrepresentation of women in senior management positions. However, more qualitative research needs to be done on the experiences of employees in a South African context, especially in the field of Information Technology (Cross & Linehan, 2008). The ideal person for management is often depicted as someone possessing male characteristics, hence the think-manager-as-male stereotype fosters bias against women in managerial selection, placement, promotion, and training decisions (Schein, 2007). More research on the reasons of gender stereotyping towards the ideal senior manager that exists among men of all races, needs to be conducted (Booyesen & Nkomo, 2010). The current study explored both male and female employees' views on the ideal senior manager and explored whether gender stereotyping was present.

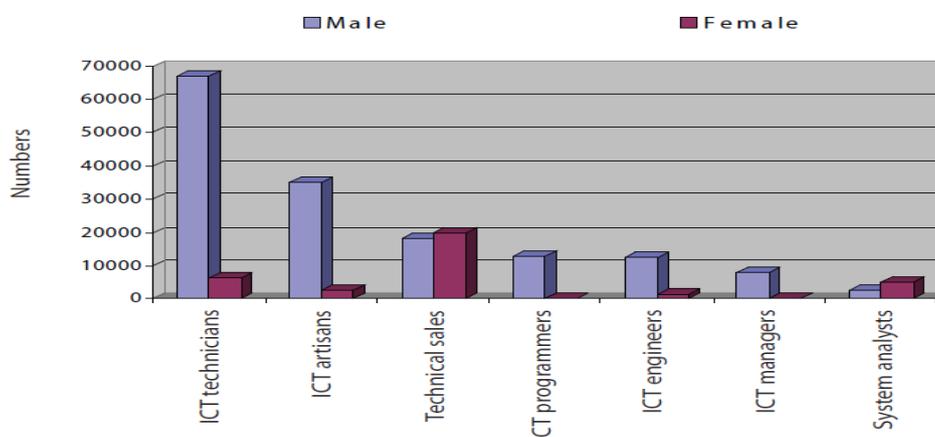
Previous studies have shown that there is a preference for male bosses rather than female bosses (Booyesen & Nkomo, 2010; Rudman & Glick, 1999; Rudman & Kilianski, 2000). There is a notion that leaders and managers must possess traditionally male-stereotyped characteristics (*see* Bem, 1974) which is owned by males (Cabrera, Sauer & Thomas-Hunt, 2009). Other studies focus on the gender typing industry whereby women in managerial positions that display male-stereotyped characteristics, are said to lack femininity, and when they do not display these dominant characteristics, they are said to be incompetent for the job (Rudman & Glick, 1999).

In addition, the current study also explored what support networks are available to women when it comes to advancement towards senior management positions in the field of Information Technology, since literature has pointed out that women do not support other women towards moving up the higher echelons of the company (Govender, 2005). This type of behaviour has been termed the "Queen Bee" syndrome; a term first coined by Staines, Tavriss and Jayaratne (1973) to describe a phenomenon that occurs particularly in women who have made it up the higher echelon in male-dominated environments and are unlikely to help

their junior female co-workers climb the upper echelon because they had made it by themselves without any help. This syndrome is characterised by women in elite positions who act like men; for example behaving in a way that must be tough and authoritative (Oakley, 2000). This also includes not supporting or providing mentorships for other women of lower echelons in the company (Johnson & Mathur-Helm, 2011). The current research also described participants' views of policies in the workplace on the advancement of women towards senior management positions (Nkuna, 2010).

According to the South African Institute of Race Relations (SAIRR) and the Human Sciences Research Council (HSRC) there are no recent statistics on the number of women in the field of Information Technology that hold senior management positions (personal communication with Lucy Holbol, SAIRR & Mark Frier, HSRC via email, April 2012). However, there were statistics released by the Department of Labour in 2003. The Department of Labour clustered Information Technology under the category Information and Communication Technology (ICT). There are different occupations within the ICT field. These are ICT managers, analysts, engineers, programmers, technicians, technical sales people, and artisans. According to the report compiled by James, Smith, Roodt, Primo, and Evans (2006), two surveys were conducted in compiling statistics for the representation of the above mentioned occupations within ICT of South Africa. The Labour Force Surveys (2000, 2005) and DTI/ISETT SETA skills audit (2005) surveys yielded different outputs. The difference in the outputs indicated the need to develop reliable data for a true reflection of the ICT workforce (James et al., 2006).

Figure 1: Core ICT workers by gender, 2005



Source: James et al., (2006)

Overall there are few women in ICT, however there has been an increase in the number of women working in the different areas of ICT. The above statistics convey how many occupations within the ICT industry continue to be male-dominated, for example ICT engineering. Furthermore, Information Technology remains a male-dominated field at the executive level (Wentling & Thomas, 2007).

Against this background, I will argue that understanding men and women's experiences and expectations towards senior management positions in the field of Information Technology will contribute towards describing the underrepresentation of women that exist in senior management positions. This research is deemed to be beneficial to women who are aspiring towards senior management positions in the field of Information Technology. It is my hope that by being part of this study, employees will become more sensitised to gender issues and the interlinkages to senior management positions. This study adds to the existing body of literature on gender and the workplace.

Aim, objectives and research questions

The aim of this research was to explore the underrepresentation of women that exist in senior management positions in the field of Information Technology from the perspectives of male and female employees. Following from the aim of the study, were the objectives explicated.

The primary objective of this study was to explore and describe the gendered experiences of male and female employees in the field of Information Technology. Since gender inevitably intersects with other categories such as race, class, sexuality and global capitalism (Hansjee, 2011), these were also taken into account in how participants experience their gender within their workplace. The study offered insight into the views of male and female employees of different social categories in relation to the ideal senior manager in the field of Information Technology and if these views are gender stereotyped (Booyesen & Nkomo, 2010).

Secondly, the study sought to understand the negotiations male and female employees make with regard to their roles in the organisation and their families in order to balance work and family life. Thirdly, it explored the available support networks male and female employees have towards aspiring senior management positions in the field of Information Technology (Hofmeyr & Mzobe, 2012; Johnson & Mathur-Helm, 2011). The final objective of this study was to describe the influence workplace policies have on employees aspiring towards senior management positions in the field of Information Technology (Nkuna, 2010).

Following from the above objectives, the current study sets out to answer the following research questions:

Main research question:

1. What are the experiences of male and female employees in the field of Information Technology? (Cross & Linehan, 2008)

Sub-questions:

2. What views do male and female employees have towards the ideal senior manager in the field of Information Technology and what is their subject positioning? (Booyesen & Nkomo, 2010)
3. What support networks do male and female employees have available to them when discussing advancement toward senior management in the field of Information Technology? (Hofmeyr & Mzobe, 2012; Johnson & Mathur- Helm, 2011)
4. What is their view of the workplace policies on the advancement towards senior management positions? (Nkuna, 2010).

Conceptual definitions

Gender

Gender is generally defined as “a person’s sex” (The Oxford Senior dictionary, p. 256). The discipline of Psychology defines gender as “the behavioural, social, and cultural attributes associated with sex.” (The Oxford Dictionary of Psychology, 2009, p. 309).

According to Kaufman (1999), sex and gender are two terms that are often inadvertently intertwined and should be distinguished from each other. Sex refers to the biological make-up

of an individual which acts as a minor difference between men and women (Kaufman, 1999). Biological make-up is based on the individual's chromosomes, hormones, and sexual anatomical structure (Bem, 1974). According to Glick and Fiske (1999), sex is the primary category whereby people are classified which leads to gender stereotypes.

According to Bem (1974), different people possess varying amounts of “maleness”, “femaleness”, masculinity and femininity. Psychologists often refer to masculinity-femininity as the basis for gender and gender identity as the individual's perception of their maleness and femaleness (Bem, 1974). Various researchers (mostly international) have referred to feminine characteristics as communal traits and masculine characteristics as agentic traits or agency (Ybarra, Chan, Park & Burnstein, 2008; Sczesny, 2003; Rudman & Glick, 1999; Eagly, Makhijani & Klonsky, 1992). Bem (1974) conceptualised the following items in the Bem Sex Role Inventory (BSRI) that were seen as desirable traits in males: to act as a leader, willingness to take risks, ambitious, willingness to take a stand, analytical, assertive, self-sufficient, masculine and independent; and the items for females were: affectionate, yielding, cheerful, flatterable, compassionate, understanding, gentle, feminine, loves children and soft spoken. Ybarra et al. (2008) state that across cultures communion traits are less likely to vary than agentic traits. Gender roles were defined socially and culturally by the prescriptions and beliefs about the behaviour and emotions of men and women (Anselmi & Law, 1998; Mintz, 2000). This gender concept was applied to the current study when participants described the competencies of a senior manager.

Aspirations

An aspiration is defined as “a hope, ambition, or ambition to achieve a specified goal.” (Oxford Dictionary of Psychology, 2009, p. 58). Rojewski (2005) defined aspiration

in the context of occupation as “an individual’s expressed career-related goals or choices” (p. 132). Rojewski (2005) adds “aspirations represent individual goals given ideal conditions, while interests reflect an individual’s emotional disposition toward particular career options” (p. 132).

According to Armstrong and Crombie (2000), an individual may limit their occupational aspirations to acceptable alternatives, or simply exchange their aspirations for more realistic choices within the acceptable alternatives that are available. An individual may anticipate when the desired occupation is seen as an unrealistic choice or aspirations may be modified due to prior experience of attempts to gain employment (Armstrong & Crombie, 2000). The concept ‘aspirations’ will be explored as a means of how participants talk about ways of striving towards securing a senior management position.

Expectations

An expectation is defined as “a strong belief that something will happen or be the case” (Coleman, 2009, p. 265). Expectations in an occupational context are referred to as representing the occupation the individual assumes to be realistic or accessible (Armstrong & Crombie, 2000). Expectations can have a powerful influence on a person’s behaviour when they contain knowledge of what is expected of them (Ridgeway, 2001 cited in Nkuna, 2010). For the purpose of the present study, I focused on what the participants’ expectations were towards a senior management position.

Information Technology

Information Technology is a field that involves computer systems designs and integrated solutions, programming, hardware and software engineering (James et al., 2006).

James et al. (2006) state that the South African ICT sector is defined through the work of the Information Systems, Electronics and Telecommunications Technology (ISETT) and Sector and Education Training Authority (SETA) and comprises of three subsectors which are Information Technology, Telecommunications, and Electronics. For the purpose of this study, the field of Information Technology was focused upon.

Chapter outline

Chapter 2 – Literature Review. Literature relevant to the topic of this study is reviewed in this chapter. I therefore considered studies on stereotyping of men and women, with a focus on leadership positions, work and other responsibilities that may serve as potential barriers towards career advancement, followed by studies reported on men and women's experiences in the workplace.

Chapter 3 – Theoretical Considerations. The various theories considered in the study are outlined in Chapter three, and the epistemological framework of the study is also described and discussed. A detailed discussion of social constructionism theory is provided, with a specific focus on the role played by language and gender theories.

Chapter 4 – Methods. The methodology implemented in the study is explained in-depth in terms of the research design, sampling procedure, data collection and analysis, self-reflexivity, and ethical considerations.

Chapter 5 – Interpretation of Findings and Discussion. The findings of the study are discussed in Chapter five by using thematic analysis (Braun & Clark, 2006) in conjunction

with a listening guide (Gilligan, Spencer, Weinberg & Bertsch, 2003). The findings are discussed in terms of the literature as well as the theories to help understand the underrepresentation of women in senior management positions.

Chapter 6 – Conclusion. In Chapter six it is considered whether the findings of the study have met the aims and objectives. In this chapter the limitations of the study are acknowledged and recommendations are made for future research.

CHAPTER 2

A REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

This chapter involves a review of research in which attention has been given to underrepresentation of women in senior management positions. Unlike the incongruity theory or studies based on the work of feminist theorists, there has been much emphasis on the social constructionism that shapes a man and woman's identity as a manager. This literature review serves to highlight what has been done, zoom into the gaps in previous research, and discuss how these informed my study on the underrepresentation of women in senior positions and the way that it is constructed.

A broad overview of the literature conducted on senior management positions in various work contexts will be provided in the present chapter. I will focus on the notion of stereotypes in general, then shift to gender stereotyping of leadership positions with specific reference to the Information Technology sector. I will later focus on theories used to understand stereotyping of leadership positions, organisational barriers for women, and how women negotiate their identities within workplaces. In light of the above, I offer a critical analysis of the literature and highlight gaps that I attempted to address in my study.

Stereotyping

Stereotyping refers to attaching a fixed set of generalised characteristics or traits to an individual on the basis of the perception of the group to which that individual belongs (Pickens, 2005). Stereotyping can be positive or negative. It is considered positive when an individual is allowed to categorise complexity that exists in the world in order to make sense

of the world. Stereotyping is considered negative when there is an overly generalised view of a group to which an individual belongs (Pickens, 2005). Negative stereotyping can lead to prejudice, which refers to negative attitudes directed towards a group or an individual belonging to a particular social group (Eagly & Mladinic, 1994). Eagly and Mladinic (1994) warn that positive attitudes towards women do not necessarily mean there is a liberal view about women's role in society. Instead, what is being portrayed is the "women are wonderful" effect. A stereotypical notion of women who are wonderful is derived from the prescription that women must be nice and nurturing with communal characteristics. However, women that go against this prescription are evaluated negatively (Eagly & Mladinic, 1994). This supports the work done by Glick and Fiske (1996; 2001) in their study which highlighted that women who displayed agency and challenged the status quo, were negatively evaluated.

There are two forms of prejudice encapsulated in the theory of ambivalence sexism (Glick & Fiske, 1996; 2001). The prejudice toward women that embraces the approval of women in traditional roles (and that possess communal traits) is labelled as benevolent sexism. The prejudice toward women that encompasses hostility toward women in non-traditional roles (and that possess agentic traits) is labelled as hostile sexism. Behaviour that is often associated with benevolent sexism is chivalry² (Altermatt, 2001).

Altermatt (2001) examined the relation between chivalry and two beliefs about women, namely the belief that women are more virtuous than men, and the belief that women are less agentic than men. The sample included 185 undergraduate students in an introductory

² Chivalry refers to a pattern of behaviour characterised by gallantry and preferential treatment expected from men toward women in the context of protection and provision (Altermatt, 2001).

psychology course. Of the 185 participants, 62% were male. Participants completed a questionnaire packet that contained four published attitude scales: the Attitudes Toward Women Scale, Neo-Sexism Scale, Ambivalent Sexism Scale, and Social Desirability Scale. Altermatt (2001) found confirmation of the chivalry script to be significantly positively correlated with the belief that women are more virtuous than men, as well as the belief that women are less agentic than men. Chivalrous men tended to show preferential treatment only to women who appeared to be high in virtue and low in agency.

In another study, Miller (2004) examined the culture of the Alberta (Canada) oil industry by using in-depth interviews with 20 professional (geologists and engineers) women, on their experiences in the industry. The researcher collected and analysed the data using an interpretive ethnographic feminist approach. Miller (2004) found that the drilling divisions of oil companies were described as the most 'macho' part of the industry. Two of the female participants who are well-site geologists, described their experience as being treated chivalrously. The attitude of condescending paternalism shown toward one of the participants seemed to have permeated the cultural system. Thus, she conveyed the same type of attitude toward those whom she outranked.

The gendered division of labour was fashioned and perpetuated by males, thus women had to adapt to these rules and fit in. The talk around the engineering value system focussed heavily upon the technical base of the occupation, and involved a masculine approach.

Miller (2004) found that the women in her study generally conformed to the dominant culture in order to survive and, over time, incorporated the values of the industry into their personal value systems. But they had to walk a very fine line between being 'like' the valued

masculine prototype and avoiding any implication that they were not 'really women'. They used the masculine system as much as they dared and pushed the envelope to where they deemed fit.

One of the theories used to understand the negative evaluation of women is that of Goldberg. Goldberg's theory states that women consciously or unconsciously consider their own sex to be inferior to men; therefore this belief makes them prejudiced against other women (Goldberg, 1968). Goldberg's theory has been utilised in a number of gender discrimination studies (Swim, Borgida, Maruyama & Myers, 1989; Eagly, Makhijani & Klonsky, 1992). Goldberg examined prejudice against women which was thought to reflect people's attitudes and stereotype (Eagly & Mladinic, 1994). For instance, men were evaluated more favourably than women, and women were prejudiced against each other as they considered their own sex as inferior to that of men (Goldberg, 1968). The purpose of Goldberg's study was to investigate whether there was real prejudice of women against other women. He tested two hypotheses. The first argued that even though identical work is presented, women will value the professional work of men more favourably than that of women. The second hypothesis argued that when the professional field is one that is traditionally reserved for women (for example nursing, dietetics) the tendency will be reversed or greatly diminished.

In Goldberg's study 140 college women were used, of which 100 were used to test the first hypothesis and 40 to test the second hypothesis. Goldberg found that there was a general bias by women against women, and that it was the strongest in traditional masculine fields, whereas other fields seemed unclear whether the job was masculine or feminine. Goldberg

also found that women seemed to think that men were better at feminine jobs as well. In addition, it was found that women downgraded the work of professional females.

Goldberg's study was critiqued for the unequal sample sizes. According to Field (2009), when comparing the two groups a bias in the results would occur as the sample sizes were not equal. Thus, in Goldberg's study the total number of participants needed to be 140 college women to test the two hypotheses. Moreover, Eagly and Mlandinic (1994) critique research based on Goldberg's ideas for not taking into consideration the possible subtle reactions to work men and women may have, as well as their qualifications that would allow for promotion into elite positions.

In contrast, Rudman and Kilianski (2000) have shown that females are more egalitarian. They further argue that prejudice against female authority is linked to men being associated with power and influence rather than role or trait expectancies. Paludi and Bauer (1983) argue that the findings from Goldberg's study were limited by the sample he used as he only took female participants into account and neglected the responses of males.

Furthermore, Goldberg's study used quantitative methods which reflect the numbers but not the understanding as to why men are rated favourably. My study will use qualitative methods as a way to offer an alternative way of understanding and looking at the issues highlighted above. In addition, my study will provide a platform for the voices of both male and female participants' experiences of gender equality.

Gender stereotyping and leadership positions

Most senior positions in various sectors have been occupied by males (Alksnis, Curtis & Desmarais, 2008; Sipe, Fisher & Johnson, 2009). According to Alksnis et al. (2008) jobs that are stereotyped as requiring female characteristics are less valued than those stereotyped as requiring male characteristics. One possible reason points to where Eagly et al. (1992) state that leadership and managerial characteristics are similar to traditional male characteristics.

Leadership and traditional stereotypical characteristics have been elaborated on by the incongruity theory. According to this theory, when a woman displays agentic characteristics, there is an incongruity in the characteristics she is expected to display and what she is displaying (Eagly & Karau, 2002). This perceived incongruity leads to two forms of prejudice. Firstly, women in leadership positions are perceived less favourably compared to men in those same positions. Secondly, women that display the characteristics of leadership roles are evaluated less favourably (Eagly & Karau, 2002). In a paper entitled, *Formal and informal discrimination at work: The role of gender stereotypes*, Welle and Heilman (2005), argue that the role of incongruity theory points out how men's social roles, shared cultural set of beliefs, and expectations of their behaviour, is overlapped with the characteristics of organisational leadership, whereas women's roles do not. Thus, women who pursue careers in male-gendered types of work will be evaluated as if they have violated a social norm (Welle & Heilman, 2005). In a review of implicit theories of gender and leadership, Ryan and Haslam (2007) state that women who are in pursuit of leadership positions are often in a "lose-lose" situation. For example, when a woman behaves according to the prescribed stereotyped female role she is viewed as not being fit for a management position, and yet

when a woman behaves in the manner of a stereotyped leader, she is viewed as not acting as a proper woman (Ryan & Haslam, 2007). This leads to women being in an untenable position in the workplace.

In another theory, Lämsä and Sintonen (2001) drew upon ideas on how women's leadership becomes symbolically represented. They argued that due to there being a disproportion in the amount of women to men in top management positions, there are probably visible as well as invisible discriminatory practices that exist in the workplace. Lämsä and Sintonen (2001) developed a discursive approach as a theoretical framework to understand the discriminatory practices toward women leaders. The discursive approach focused on two concepts, namely, discourse and ideology (Lämsä & Sintonen, 2001). Firstly, discourses position individuals as subjects and therefore produce material conditions and forms of articulation. Secondly, ideology refers to a system of ideas that consist of attitudes and beliefs and carry meaning that may vary. However, ideology is not equivalent to a belief system. Ideology is descriptive of relationships according to historical and cultural contexts and not evaluative of the content. Furthermore, ideology has a way of representing and constructing society and culture, which may result in power relations and relations of domination (Lämsä & Sintonen, 2001). For example, respect can demonstrate power relations as to those who give and those who receive respect. This power relation is demonstrated through young people respecting older ones, women respecting men, children their parents, workers their employers, pupils their teachers, laymen respect sacred people, and poor people the rich. According to van der Geest (1997), this view ties up with culture as a performance, as an act that is carried out before the eyes of others.

Lämsä and Sintonen (2001) considered discriminatory practices to be based on an ideology of sexism. The ideology of sexism involves a process of sexist signification consisting of two phases. Firstly, physical features mark the outlines of a group, such as the bodily appearance and ways of acting. This forms a code system for differentiating genders and is based on historical events, circumstances and political power. Secondly, after identifying different genders based on physical features, there are additional characteristics, such as cultural and psychological characteristics which are associated with the classification. The physical, cultural and psychological features are seen as a collective. The sexist ideology integrates the physical features with cultural and psychological features. Over time the features become so transparent that it is naturalised. Thus, a female leader is viewed from a generalised perspective and becomes a symbol for female leaders (Lämsä & Sintonen, 2001). It should be acknowledged that Lämsä and Sintonen (2001) have studied the issue of discrimination toward women leaders from the viewpoint of Finnish researchers and have claimed to be bound by the Finnish cultural environment. Thus, it is important to take the context into consideration since experiences may differ from one context to another and cannot be generalised.

South Africa is well-known for its cultural diversity and often referred to as a rainbow nation. With that said, there are also certain stereotypes that exist amongst these different cultural groups. In my study I hope to see how these three aspects (physical, cultural and psychological) are represented when participants discuss leadership in the field of Information Technology.

In an attempt to understand gender and leadership positions, Rudman and Glick (1999) conducted a quantitative study with 103 men and 130 female undergraduate students.

The students evaluated videotaped agentic or communal traits of male and female applicants for a computer lab manager position. The computer lab manager position was either masculine (highlighting agentic personality traits) or feminised (highlighting communal as well as agentic traits). The applicants were assessed on three dimensions, namely, competence, social skills and hire-ability. The results revealed that applicants with agentic traits had higher ratings for the dimension of competence than those with communal traits. Both male and female applicants with agentic traits were perceived equally competent. However, applicants with communal traits were rated higher for the dimension social skills than those with agentic traits. Female applicants with agentic traits were discriminated against for not being nice when it came to a feminised job. Regardless of sex, applicants with communal traits lost out to applicants with agentic traits (Rudman & Glick, 1999). Both male and female participants evaluated female applicants harshly when they violated the prescriptive norms of femininity. In this light, Rudman and Glick (1999) suggested that female applicants should present both agentic and communal traits to avoid backlash. Backlash is encountered by females with agentic characteristics who display competence for the job but experience a decrease of being liked (Rudman & Glick, 1999). Rudman and Glick (1999) suggest that it may be more difficult for agentic females than agentic males since females who already display agentic traits, will be interpreted as lacking communal traits.

According to Davison and Burke (2000), an individual will be evaluated more favourably when the job type is matched with his or her sex. For example, women are also overrepresented in administrative support, clerical, secretarial, services and health-related occupations, as these jobs allow for feminine characteristics to be exerted (Barnette, 2004; Catalyst, 2013). In Canada, women were found to dominate in secretarial occupations while men dominate in decision-making and analytical-typed jobs (Catalyst, 2013).

Therefore, when a woman is employed in a feminine job, she will be evaluated favourably because it does not violate the prescriptive norm; she did not display any characteristics that are contradictory to what is prescriptive of her gender. This notion is supported by Amâncio and Oliveira (2006), who argue that it is expected of men and women, whether in the workplace or at home, to display behaviour that is traditionally consistent to their gender.

According to Levanon and Grusky (2012), essentialism³ is one of the driving forces for gender segregation being so extreme in the workplace. For example, the essentialist presumption maintains that female-dominated occupations require abilities (such as, nurturing) that are regarded as prototypically female while male-dominated occupations require abilities (for example, physical strength) that are regarded as prototypically male (Levanon & Grusky, 2012). The essentialist association is generated when employers internalise essentialist presumptions and allocate occupations to men and women in accord with them (this is essentialist discrimination). Workers who internalise the same essentialist presumptions tend to aspire to occupations that are in accord with them (this is essentialist preferences).

There are three types of essentialism that distinguishes between the physical, cognitive and interactional. Physical essentialism is defined by manual work, strength, robustness and fine motor skills. Cognitive essentialism is characterised by mathematical and analytical skills. Interactional essentialism includes technical demands, exercising of authority, and sociability.

³ Essentialism is the belief that entities have a set of characteristics existing in nature which make them what they are (Gergen, 1999).

Levanon and Grusky (2012) argue that some types of physical labour are the province of women (such as, fine motor skills), other types are more integrated (for example, strength), and yet other types are very much the province of men (like robustness). Consequently, physical essentialism works mainly to assist women while interactional essentialism works mainly to assist men.

Schein (1973) has shown in her research “think-manager-think-male” that managerial characteristics correlated highly with the stereotypical characteristics of a man. According to Schein (1975), her previous study (1973) and the other research studies (Bass, Krusell & Alexander, 1971; Cecil, Paul & Olins, 1973; Rosen & Jerdee, 1974a, 1974b) were mostly comprised of male participants and therefore yielded biased results which concluded that men are preferred for management positions. Schein (1975) confirmed the hypothesis that managers are perceived to possess characteristics more commonly ascribed to men than to women when she carried out the study with both male and female participants. Subsequently, in an extended study Schein (2001) did a cross-cultural comparison and found that there was a shift in the way leadership positions were viewed. A leadership position was viewed as having androgynous characteristics (Schein, 2001). The term androgynous⁴ was coined by Bem (1974) and refers to both masculine and feminine traits that are represented by an individual of either sex, based on which behaviour fits a particular situation. According to Schein (2001) the notion “think-manager-think-male” still holds gender stereotyping when it comes to the ideal manager. In essence, Schein’s work demonstrates how perceptions of management characteristics have changed over time, from 1973 when gender

⁴ An example of androgynous traits of a female is characterised as gentle, sensitive, and soft-spoken (traditional feminine characteristics), but she is also ambitious, self-reliant, and athletic (traditional masculine characteristics). An example of androgynous traits of a male is characterised as competitive, dominant, and risk-taking (masculine traits), but displays traditional feminine characteristics such as affection, sympathy, and cheerfulness (Bem, 1974).

inequality/discrimination was still rife. This was during the second wave of feminism where women had attained voting rights (also known as women's suffrage) and still fought for a continuation of women's rights within the social institutions of education, career and healthcare, with a specific focus on identity politics located within cultural issues (Scantlebury & Martin, 2010).

In South Africa, there has been a shift in some legislation in the promotion of women into the workplace and leadership positions, which includes the Public Service Act of 1994, the White Paper on the Transformation of the Public Service, 1995; the Employment Equity Act, 1998; and the Promotion and Prevention of Unfair Discrimination Act 4 of 2000 (The Department of Public Service and Administration, 2006). These legislative policies that have been passed, have contributed to challenging the view of what management should be like. This displays the historical and social context of how the characteristics of management have changed.

However, Ryan and Haslam (2007), argue that Schein's work (1973, 1975, 2001) only examined the perceptions of successful managers which are different from what is expected and required from a leader in times of a crisis. Ryan and Haslam (2007) argue that theories about gender and leadership fail to take context into consideration. The ideal prototypical manager differs with context (for example, different managerial roles and styles may differ on the basis of different industries and cultural norms). This implies that contingency models of leadership are based on the assumption appropriateness of leadership styles according to context (Ryan & Haslam, 2007). Even though Schein's work focuses on the issue of gender, Ryan and Haslam (2007) proposed that leadership styles do not depend on the gender of an individual, but rather the industry context the individual is in. For instance, certain industries

would need an individual to display feminine or masculine characteristics regardless of being a male or female.

Eagly and Carli (2007) reviewed a meta-analysis which integrated the results of 45 studies on whether female leadership exist. These studies adopted a framework on leadership by James MacGregor Burns (1978), who distinguished between transformational leadership and transactional leadership. Findings of the meta-analysis revealed, in general, female leaders were somewhat more transformational⁵ in their style of leadership than male leaders, whereby they displayed behaviour such as giving support and encouragement to subordinates. Male leaders were exceedingly more transactional⁶ in their style of leadership than female leaders, whereby they displayed behaviour such as corrective and disciplinary actions that are either active (timely) or passive (belated). However, female leaders were also engaged in some form of transactional leadership as they displayed behaviour of rewarding. A third category, called the laissez-faire style, is a type of non-leadership that does not concern itself with traits of transformational or transactional leadership, despite rank authority.

Eagly and Carli (2007) argue that the meta-analysis tells us that men and women have somewhat different leadership styles. Women's approaches appear to be generally more effective while men's approaches are somewhat effective or actually hinder effectiveness.

Also, women adopt a more participative and collaborative style than men as it may be that collaboration can get results without seeming particularly masculine. By way of women

⁵ Transformational leadership is a style that strives to gain employees' trust and confidence. This type of leadership involves mentoring and empowering employees, encouraging them to develop their full potential and thus to contribute more effectively to their organizations (Burns, 1978).

⁶ Transactional leadership is a style that establishes a give-and-take relationship that appeal to subordinates' self-interest. This type of leadership involves a conventional manner of clarifying subordinates' responsibilities, rewarding them for meeting objectives, and correcting them for failing to meet objectives (Burns, 1978).

navigating their way through the double bind, they seek ways to project authority without relying on the autocratic behaviours that people find unfavourable in women. A means to bring others into decision making and to lead as an encouraging teacher and positive role model to subordinates. However, if there is no collective group of other women to affirm the legitimacy of a participative style, then female leaders usually conform to whatever style is typical of the men, which may sometimes be autocratic (Eagly & Carli, 2007).

In South Africa, Booysen and Nkomo (2010) conducted a quantitative study to investigate Schein's gender role management stereotype "think-manager-think-male" on the combined effects of race and gender. The researchers used black feminist theory as a framework. Black feminists view the world through a conceptual lens which includes race, class, and gender oppression. Black feminism portrays the emerging power of Black women as agents of knowledge and advocates that changed consciousness of individuals and the social transformation of political and economic institutions constitute essential ingredients for social change. The experiences of Black women are therefore placed at the centre of analysis as a means to offer fresh insights on the prevailing concepts, paradigms, and epistemologies of this worldview and on its feminist critiques (Collins, 1990).

The researchers found that Black males associated male characteristics with management compared to White males and Black females, who associated a resemblance of women in general with successful managers. The study of Booysen and Nkomo (2010) calls for qualitative research to further probe the origin of gender stereotyping of men of different races. However, the researchers excluded other races, such as Coloureds and Indians, from the sample which does not provide any understanding of whether these races (constructed under the Apartheid regime) also share gender stereotypes towards management.

Furthermore, the model used in Booyesen and Nkomo's (2010) study can be considered as a triple oppression model because it takes gender, race and class into consideration. According to De La Rey (1997), the triple oppression model was seen as a positivist view of human experience as it objectified dimensions of social experience in which it placed categories in isolation from one another and not in total context. In response to this isolated view, poststructuralism has become a dominant theoretical framework which emphasises multiple identities, multiple truths, relativism, and subjective voices which are seen as continuous, changing and mutually constitutive (De La Ray, 1997).

In light of these critiques of Schein's (1975, 1993, 2001) work, the proposed study will take context into consideration. It should also be noted that if discriminatory practices were to be implied, then the context of where the theory is applied must be taken into consideration. In this research study, I am not assuming that discriminatory practices exist, but I am exploring the lack of women in senior positions in the field of Information Technology.

Organisational barriers

Organisational barriers prevent women from moving up to higher echelons within organisations. According to Davis-Netzley (1998), women can often see these top positions but are held back by the barriers that seem invisible and are often referred to as the glass ceiling. In reviewing literature on organisational barriers, the following themes emerged: women and pregnancy, family-friendly policies, and family responsibilities.

Women, pregnancy and family-friendly policies

Liff and Ward (2001) conducted a study in the United Kingdom with 38 junior and middle managers, and 14 senior managers. The study explored whether the underrepresentation of women in senior management can be explained by the messages they receive about promotion as well as the requirements for senior positions. The sample comprised of male and female employees, some of whom had children and others with none. The common themes that emerged from the study were visibility in the workplace, dual roles and family friendly policies. Women appeared afraid to take maternity leave as this would mean time away from the workplace and not being informed of any changes taking place. Constant awareness of the processes and changes in the company requires investing long hours into the organisation which is believed to lead to promotion. Female senior managers reported that despite the perks of the position, they often experienced conflict between work and home. Liff and Ward (2001) found this to be especially true for females that perform dual roles; performing duties in home life and work life.

Cuddy, Fiske and Glick (2004) argue that in order to get hired, promoted or obtain training, an employee should possess competence. Women that had children were perceived as having more warmth and less competence and were assumed to be less committed to their work due to construed distractions of family commitments (Cuddy, Fiske & Glick, 2004). According to Hochschild (1997), working parents try to evade the time bind as a means to buy themselves out of it. This approach particularly puts women at the heart of contradiction as women, like men, tend to absorb the work-family speed-up far more than they resist it. However, unlike men, women still assume most of the workload at home. Thus, women still represent the heart and soul of family life. Mothers are seen as the primary caregivers of children, given that they spend much more time in childrearing than fathers (Harris &

Morgan, 1991). Thus, mothers are typically responsible for meeting the basic needs of their children, such as ensuring that children are properly dressed, bathed, and fed (Harris & Morgan, 1991; Kelly & Lamb, 2000). When Hochschild (1997) interviewed working mothers, an overwhelming majority recoiled from the idea of buying themselves out of parental duties. The literature therefore informs us that most working mothers feel that it is inherently part of their identity to assume parental and home duties. In contrast, according to Kelly and Lamb (2000), mothers are no longer seen as the primary caregiver of children since fathers are increasingly being recognised in the primary caretaker role of children.

Holt and Thaulow (1996 as cited in Liff & Ward, 2001) define three types of elements included in parental needs. Firstly, economic support is the financial recourse on which the family can survive. Secondly, practical care is the need to which children are transported to and from school; their health needs and basic needs are seen to. Thirdly, emotional care is the attention and stimulation for the child. Drawing on the abovementioned elements, Liff and Ward (2001) state that family-friendly policies only place emphasis on the practical care. Women's uncertainty toward career advancement is affected by the messages and information received from the organisation, peers and superiors, as well as their commitment to home-life and work (Liff & Ward, 2001).

Research conducted in diverse countries such as Iraq, Taliban, Afghanistan, South Africa and Ireland, reveal that there are more males than females that occupy senior management positions. This is attributed to males not requiring maternity leave (Cross & Linehan, 2008; Govender 2005; Metcalfe, 2008; Nkuna, 2010). It was also revealed that male employees do not take advantage of opportunities such as family responsibilities as they will be considered less seriously for senior management positions (Cross & Linehan, 2008). In

South Africa, there are human resource (HR) policies that provide family-friendly policies and gender equality (Basic Conditions of Employment Act of 1997), but it is unclear if male employees actually utilise these family-friendly policies. This research will explore what family-friendly policies exist, and how they are utilised by employees.

In Ireland, a qualitative study conducted by Cross and Linehan (2008) investigated the impact of organisationally created barriers on female managerial career progression. Cross and Linehan (2008) recruited 30 middle-level female managers into the study. The study revealed that pregnant employees that went on maternity leave felt like they missed out on what was going on in the workplace. Participants that did not have any children as of yet felt they did not want to aspire toward a senior management position as they thought of the effect having children would have on their career progression.

Findings presented by Cross and Linehan's (2008) are similar to those obtained by Liff and Ward (2001), and this offers an indication of the possible parallels in the United Kingdom and Ireland studies. With this in mind, it would be of valuable interest to see the findings that will be yielded within the South African context.

Family responsibilities

Women tend to be excluded from networks such as socialising after hours; for example on the golf course, sport clubs or at a bar. One possible reason is family responsibilities. The exclusion of women from networks is known as an 'old boy network' (Oakley, 2000). The 'old boy network' refers to an informal male social system that consists of powerful males and usually excludes less powerful males, and especially an embargo of all females, from membership. In most instances, family responsibilities take precedence and

women have to attend to dual roles (Moletsane & Reddy, 2010). The home duties that await women are referred to as the second shift (Hochschild, 1989). According to Hochschild (1989), women take a deeper interest in balancing work and home life as they feel more responsible for children and home. The commitment to family members hinder women's movement into upper position as they must first consider the needs of the family and cannot always work shifts or travel when the job requires them to do so, or network with their colleagues after hours (Moletsane & Reddy, 2010).

Challenges for women usually involve balancing between work and family life, which creates a "sticky floor" and prevents them from breaking through the "glass ceiling" (International Labour Office, 2001). Men, on the other hand, have to deal with the responsibility of meeting the financial needs of the family (Cuddy, Fiske & Glick, 2004). Work-family conflict has been negatively associated with the performance of an employee's job satisfaction and production (Ahuja, 2002). Ahuja (2002) mentions that most demanding jobs, such as Information Technology, may, on the one hand, interfere with family life because the job requires long working hours, constant updating of skills and being on standby in case of an emergency. On the other hand, home life can also affect an employee's work performance (Ahuja, 2002). Cuddy, Fiske and Glick (2004) argue that there is enormous pressure placed on women that have careers as they are often questioned about whether they can cope with having a career and being a parent.

However, this is not the situation for all working mothers. Garey (1995) investigated the strategies employees with children used to construct themselves as working mothers. Garey (1995) conducted in-depth open ended interviews with 42 women at a private hospital in California (USA), of which 35 of the 42 women were mothers. It was found that shift

workers who were married, had help from their spouse getting the children up and ready for school. Most employees that work irregular time schedules are more unlikely to use formal modes of child care such as a child care centre and sitter care (Kimmel & Powell, 2001; Presser & Cox, 1997). Enchautegui (2013) highlights how work-support strategies, workplace policies, and schools can contribute to making irregular work schedules viable for low-wage employees. Also, the role of extra women in the household are viewed as potential facilitators of employees who work shifts and irregular work schedules (Enchautegui, 2013).

Other supportive networks in taking care of children are active parenting from fathers. According to Harris and Morgan (1991), the "new father" role blends the traditional paternal and maternal roles and is supported by feminist ideology. In comparison to mothers, fathers are seldom negatively sanctioned if they spend little time with their children due to long work hours or frequent travel. Fathers are expected to be active parents only if their jobs allow it. However, this requirement of the active role generates variability and provides a legitimate rationale for men to escape heavy parental duties (Harris & Morgan, 1991).

Fathers are more likely to be involved in parenting when they have sons. Thus, the lowest level of paternal participation is for daughters with no brothers. As the number of brothers grow, so do the attention daughters receive from their fathers. Thus, fathers may spend more time with sons since they find easier common ground and share in masculine activities (Raley & Bianchi, 2006). Harris and Morgan (1991) argue that sons draw fathers into parenting but norms of equality encourage equal treatment of children. Raley and Bianchi (2006) state that parents may sex-type their time investments in children because they believe fathers have a special knowledge to impart to sons (for example, how to be a

man), whereas mothers need to spend more time with daughters to properly model motherhood and nurturing behaviour to their daughters.

The present study aims to explore how female and male employees cope with family and work life. Cross and Linehan (2008) state that women feel pressurised to self-impose the “glass ceiling” on themselves as there is a maintained unequal division of household chores and duties, maintaining traditional role division, which negatively impact their career aspirations.

Women in management

In South Africa, Bosch (2011) reports that since the mid-1990s, and especially after the abolishment of Apartheid, there has been an influx of women into the labour market. This influx has primarily been for economic reasons. The policies mentioned above serve not only to support women’s movement into the workplace but also into leadership positions (Bosch, 2011). According to Hofmeyr and Mzobe (2012), the experiences amongst different racial groups are diverse as White women were not discriminated against to the same extent as Black women, which has led to the conclusion that White women should be eliminated from the equity legislation in order to focus on Black women. However, Booysen (2008 cited in Hofmeyr & Mzobe, 2012) argues that this would merely slow the process of advancing women as much emphasis will be spent on polarising different racial groups of women. Moletsane and Reddy (2010) caution that a ‘one size fits all’ solution will not remedy the lack of representation of women, as women do not belong to a homogenous group and their experiences in the workplace are diverse.

The slow advancement of women into senior positions can be seen as a result of gender-blind recruitment and retention policies. For instance, the misuse of tokenism⁷ may drive away much of the best female talent from ascending the corporate ladder to the top (Oakley, 2000). Another consequence of gender-blind recruitment strategies undertaken by organisations can potentially cause male backlash whereby males feeling threatened and subsequently lead to rebelling against females and the organisation (Burke & Black, 1997). In light of gender-blind policies, a report compiled by Moletsane and Reddy (2010) on the experiences and perspectives of senior managers of the recruitment, retention and advancement of women into the Science, Engineering and Technology (SET) sector in South Africa, revealed that there is the perception that women should not be advanced too quickly as this will result in burnout since they would be taking on more than they can handle. They also found that most female participants in senior positions felt it was important to recruit women but not on fulfilment of the affirmative action quota.

However, companies are severely affected by these legislations and therefore under an enormous amount of pressure to comply with the provision of the Act or face fines and penalties (Wylie, 2011). Wylie (2011) conducted a quantitative study on identifying the internal and external barriers that prevent the effective implementation of Black Economic Empowerment (2003) and Employment Equity (1998) strategies in order to recruit and retain previously disadvantaged professionals at the Steel Merchant. A questionnaire was distributed to 100 employees that included different racial groups (Black, White, Coloured and Asian) and gender (male and female). Descriptive statistics were used to interpret the results, which revealed the Steel Merchant has a White male-dominated organisational

⁷ Tokenism refers to the practice or policy whereby a bare minimum of effort or gesture is made in offering opportunities to the minority group equal to those of the majority group (Oakley, 2000; Rudman & Glick, 1999).

culture and ineffective Human Resource Management strategies. Black shareholders have contributed little towards previously disadvantaged development, creating resentment by employees. Employment Equity (1998), Black Economic Empowerment (2003) and affirmative action have created racial divides and a lack of trust, which will have a negative influence on the company's competitiveness internationally. The research identified various problems that hinder the implementation of Employment Equity (1998) and Black Economic Empowerment (2003) policy at the Steel Merchant which makes it difficult to recruit and retain talented previously disadvantaged individuals. It is suggested that a strategy for the implementation of government policies such as the Broad-based Black Economic Empowerment is necessary to diffuse the resentment, jealousy and anger that has been growing over the last couple of years (Khan, 2006).

Bosch (2011) argues that women's ability to be leaders is still being undermined due to sociocultural stereotypes. She further reports that female leadership is seen as "soft power". "Soft power" is characterised as being empathetic, responding gently, a willingness to be outspoken and seek support, honesty, strong belief in group work and cooperation, and the ability to stay in power (Sguazzin, 2011 cited in Bosch, 2011). Bosch (2011) adds that character and confidence is attributed to female leaders and this is what makes the difference between male and female leaders. She goes on to report that there is minimal research on the purported leadership differences in South Africa. This "soft power" that is described by Bosch (2011) is actually known as soft skills. In the workplace, soft skills play a pivotal role for professional success and it has become the need of the hour in the era of information and knowledge (Neela, 2011). According to Neela (2011) soft skills are represented by a cluster of personality traits, social graces, communication, language, personal habits, friendliness, and optimism that characterise relationships with other people. The current study will explore

what the views of employees are regarding the ideal senior manager in the field of Information Technology.

Women's identity in the workplace

The identity of women is influenced by two important factors in the organisation. Firstly, the roles that an individual fulfils in the organisation. Secondly, the corresponding behaviour of an individual (Bosch, 2011). Bosch (2011) goes on to argue that work identity involves an interplay between an individual's personal resources and work characteristics. An individual's personal resources consist of demographic and biographical characteristics, as well as attitudes. Work characteristics comprise of job demands and job resources which is taken from the Job Demands-Resource model (JD-R model). Job resources are the physical, psychological, social or organisational aspects situated on an organisational level, interpersonal and social relation level, organisation of work level, or level of tasks. Job resources are regarded as more capable of predicting work identity than job demands (Bosch, 2011).

In the United States of America, Riordan and Shore (1997) examined three demographic characteristics, namely, gender, race-ethnicity, and tenure, as the indicators for demographic similarity at an insurance company. The sample consisted of 1554 respondents which comprised of White, African American, and Hispanic racial groups, with nearly 80% being female. With the use of statistical analysis, the results indicated that similarity in race-ethnicity affected individuals' attitudes toward their work group, as well as perceptions of advancement opportunities. Similar race-ethnicity groups were perceived to have higher levels of work group productivity, advancement opportunities, and work group commitment (Riordan & Shore, 1997).

Other studies have shown (Byrne, 1971; Chatman, Polzer, Barsade & Neale, 1998; Rousseau & Parks, 1993) that people of the same nationality, racial background, or gender are more likely to associate with one another within organisations. Demographic similarity usually has the requisite trust in each other (Chatman et al., 1998; Rousseau & Parks, 1993). However, the downfall is that creativity may be stunted because of the similarity in ideas that may exist (Chatman et al., 1998). Studies on the interaction of demographic characteristics and the workplace drew on relational theory and self-categorisation theory. In this regard, I drew on social constructionism and feminist theory to add to my understanding.

Kirpal (2004) outlined three dimensions that influence work identity, namely, individual-psychological, structural, and social. The individual-psychological dimension emphasises the individual's identity orientation. In order for women to become better workers in adapting to their dual role, especially in male-dominated environments, women would need to make use of support networks such as family members to care for children. On the structural dimension, Bosch (2011) reports that race and class affects the way women experience their gender. For example, during the Apartheid regime, even though White women were discriminated against on the basis of gender, they still received access to education and healthcare (Erasmus, Swanepoel, Schenk, Van der Westhuizen & Wessel, 2005). Bosch (2011) also points out most South African organisations have been created by men for men and therefore display masculine management styles. Thus, the organisation has an influence in the way the individual identifies with the organisation.

The social dimension is based on the interaction of the individual with others in the workplace, colleagues, superiors, and trade unions. The lack of female mentors and role models has emerged as a common theme in advancement of female employees (Bosch, 2011)

and especially in the field of Information Technology because it is mostly male-dominated (Wentling & Thomas, 2007). Part of this is a consequence of many executive women that do not want to offer help and would rather surround themselves with male co-workers. These executive women are often linked to the “queen bee syndrome” (as discussed in chapter one). Bosch (2011) concludes that organisations should provide women with education and management skills to help develop women’s working identities. These definitions are relevant to the current study as they will assist in understanding the different dimensions as well as work identity the participants possess and whether it is similar or different for men and women.

Hofmeyr and Mzobe (2011) focused on the factors that influence women’s advancement in corporate South Africa. Their quantitative descriptive online self-administered questionnaire asked women across a broad cross-section of South African industries, with an age group of between 30 and 60, a minimum of one year’s experience in a management position, and in junior to senior managerial positions, as well as aspiring managerial position. Hofmeyr and Mzobe (2011) found that barriers encountered by women were stereotypes ingrained about men being better leaders than women, to subtle discrimination at work. Thirty eight per cent of the respondents felt the pressure of dual home/work role and acknowledged male-dominated culture in organisations; particularly in the boardroom. Other barriers that were identified included the lack of mentoring and role models, insufficient leadership development programmes, and women not supporting the career advancement of other women. The lack of supportive role models or mentors is consistent with other research findings (Bosch, 2011; Wentling & Thomas, 2007; Govender, 2005). These barriers were found to have psychological and emotional effects on women. The participants reported a lack of confidence, lack of self-esteem, lack of assertiveness, self-

doubt, and lack of drive, and even fear resulting from negative self-perceptions. The opposite of these characteristics were perceived as aggressiveness, toughness, and the constant challenging of the status quo. More than half of the women felt depressed and withdrawn. Others reported wanting to leave the organisation or pursuing a Master's in Business Administration (MBA). The pursuit of further education as part of the challenges that women experience in the workplace has arguably resulted in women of the 21st century opting to becoming entrepreneurs by obtaining their MBA which allows for flexibility in order to balance work and family life (Bosch, 2011).

However, Hofmeyr and Mzobe's (2011) study had limitations, namely, they only recruited female participants and thereby excluded a male's perspective. The study did not distinguish between different industries or between the public and private sectors as generalisability would not be possible because each sector and industry has different dynamics. Though the study took into account all races (Black, Indian, Coloured, and White) as equal participants, different races are affected differently by the legalisation of the country as it tries to correct the effects of Apartheid. The framework used by Hofmeyr and Mzobe assumed that the slow advancement of women into senior positions was based solely on gender stereotypes in the way men and women act as managers. According to Nkuna (2010), gender stereotypes do not provide adequate explanations of differences observed in leadership behaviour as an individual can assume other social role identities that might not be congruent to their sex. Hence, gender stereotypes cannot be the only explanation for the slow advancement of women in management positions.

Stress, gender and work

In the past, many studies have only considered men when it came to studying the effect of stress and work. Studies that included both men and women in their sample, have negatively viewed women's coping styles. For example, coping strategies that are related to female gender role were considered less beneficial and more related to psychosocial distress than coping strategies associated with the male gender role (Matud, 2004).

Research has shown that women scored significantly higher than the men in chronic stress and minor daily stressors (Matud, 2004; Ptacek, Smith & Dodge, 1994). More specifically, stressors listed by women are more frequently family and health-related events, whereas the men list relationship, finance and work-related events. Matud (2004) claims that women suffer more from stress than men and their coping style is more emotion-focused than that of men. According to Ptacek, Smith and Dodge (1994), men and women are socialised to cope with stress in different ways. Women are prone to seek social support and using emotion-focused coping to a greater extent, whereas men use relatively more problem-focused coping as they have more emotional inhibition.

Apart from women and men being socialised differently, biologically their bodies also respond differently to stress. This is a consequence of the hormone Oestrogen which is only found in women. Oestrogen is responsible for the physical female traits women possess. In addition, when women are in stressful situations, this hormone is responsible for women feeling and remembering the event more prolonged compared to men (Crowley & Elster, 2013). In the workplace, harsh feedback or cutting remarks that are taken personally by women are experienced as stressful events (Crowley & Elster, 2013).

For a healthy work environment to be established, male and female colleagues need to acknowledge each other's strengths and weaknesses (Tucker, 2014). Boundaries that set out for a healthy environment must support professional behaviour and encourage appropriate interactions amongst male and female colleagues (Tucker, 2014). The current study explored male and female work relationships in the field of Information Technology.

Reasons for aspiring towards a career in the field of Information Technology

In the United States of America, Turner, Bernt and Percora (2002) explored the educational, social and familial experiences that women cite as influential in their decision to pursue a career in the field of Information Technology. Turner et al. (2002) used a survey with both a short-answer and open-ended questions as a method of data collection. Their sample comprised of a wide range of companies, Information Technology job titles, and geographic areas. The job titles covered a broad range of Information Technology positions which encompassed the following: software engineer, network administrator, programmer, systems analyst, web developer, Information Technology manager, database administrator, technical writer, application developer, quality assurance engineer, director of student computing, professor, multimedia consultant, and Chief Executive Officer (CEO). The sample only consisted of female respondents. Turner et al. (2002) found that most of the respondents reported more encouragement than discouragement in pursuing a career in the field of Information Technology. In the survey, most of the respondents were strongly influenced by the male figures in their lives, as 60% of the respondents cited a close male friend, father, husband, or male teacher or professor working in Information Technology that influenced them. Most of the respondents mentioned that their father influenced their decision to choose a career in Information Technology as their father was more actively

involved. One respondent felt they wanted to make their father proud whilst a few mentioned the female parent. Respondents, who cited teachers as influential, presented female teachers in a more passive role than male teachers. The respondents regarded female teachers as role models or people to be admired. On the other hand male teachers were presented in a more interactive manner. Other respondents cited their boss or colleague at work, or a friend already in the field who recognised their aptitude for computing who encouraged them to consider a job in Information Technology. Only 20% of the respondents cited a female as most influential, whilst the remaining 20% said that the greatest influence had been their own initiative. Turner et al. (2002) argue that men are more likely to work in the field of Information Technology, therefore it is not surprising that men are more influential than women.

According to Turner et al. (2002) women were far more likely to move into the Information Technology fields based on mentoring relationships at work or support from college professors once they returned to school. Several other respondents reported that in high school or college they had a positive reaction toward computer courses and described enjoying, liking, or even loving the experiences. However, these respondents did not mention education as a route to their decision making process and mentioned they entered Information Technology due to some experience in the field or their recognition of the value of a job in the field of Information Technology.

In contrast to Turner et al. (2002), Wajcman (2009) states that women's employment in the field of Information Technology, Electronics and Communications (ITEC) sector is much lower than their participation in the workforce generally, and it is declining in most industrialised countries. In particular, countries like the United Kingdom (Evans, Glover,

Guerrier & Wislon, 2007), the United States of America and over the continent of Europe (Maitland, 2001).

Wajcman (2009) acknowledges that feminists have pointed out that the problem does not lie with women (their socialisation, their aspirations nor their values). Rather, researchers need to address the broader questions of whether and in what way technoscience and its institutions can be reshaped to accommodate women.

Importantly, women are being asked to exchange major aspects of their gender identity for a masculine version, whilst there is no similar 'degendering' process prescribed for men. This can be traced back to the late nineteenth century, when the professional identity of a male was based on educational qualifications and followed by managerial positions. The ideal of manliness was characterised by the cultivation of bodily prowess and individual achievement whilst femininity was being reinterpreted as incompatible with technological pursuits (Wajcman, 2009). In addition, working in a high technology firm makes it impossible to balance work and family obligations due to pace and time constraints. The pace is fast and time constraints usually involve working late hours or being on standby should something go wrong (Ahuja, 2002). Thus, many young women tend to reject careers in Information Technology and older women tend to leave the field as it is often seen as socially isolated, consuming all one's time, intensely competitive and therefore incompatible with a healthy family life (Fountain, 2000; Wajcman, 2009).

According to Fountain (2000), in order for an increase in women's participation to occur in the fields that support Information Technology, analysis must be done at the child development stage. Fountain (2000) states that attitudes of women that relate to identity,

gender and technology during childhood might later constrain or promote education and career decisions.

Possible ways to increase favourable attitudes toward technology

Fountain (2000) states there is strong evidence based on four arguments to support the claim that women hold different perspectives to men when it comes to the technological needs of society, and they possess a greater affinity for the attitudes, competencies and interests of users. Firstly, fundamental changes for women and for society have taken place and therefore created little reason to expect a slow pace of change as society enters the Information Age. Secondly, none of the fields from which women were excluded, such as politics, psychology and medical research, occurred as natural evolutionary developments. These fields in particular comprised of societal norms generally accepted and largely unnoticed by most of society, including women. Thirdly, each change was at first considered to be radical, abnormal, ludicrous and outrageous. Fourthly, each advancement required difficult and sustained political, organisational and intellectual action by women and men for its achievement to occur.

Furthermore, the social environment, such as parents' attitudes towards computers and parental encouragement of students to work with a computer, can affect students' attitude towards computers (Shashaani, 1994). Shashaani (1994) found that parents' gender stereotypical views about computers can have a positive effect on the computer attitudes of their son's, but a negative effect on their daughter's attitude. This negative effect may cause females to assume that Information Technology is not suitable for females as a job.

In South Africa, Bovee, Voogt and Meelissen (2005) investigated whether differences in computer attitude could be found between boys and girls, and to what extent these differences could be explained by student, school, and environment characteristics. The sample consisted of 240 learners from eight primary and secondary schools in the Western Cape and Gauteng provinces of South Africa. The learner population of six of the eight schools that participated in the study can be characterised as situated middle or upper class neighbourhoods. Two schools were situated in South African townships⁸ and were categorised as lower class. The study showed differences in computer attitudes between students from the upper/middle class schools and learners from the township schools. This is due to the lack of resources township schools face, which can exacerbate a lack of confidence when it comes to computers.

A confident and competent approach of the instructor may have beneficial effects on learners with anxiety and negative computer attitudes (Bovee et al., 2005). Also, the presence of female role models in schools could have a positive effect on the computer attitudes of female learners (Bovee et al., 2005).

Bovee et al. (2005) suggest that education could be one of the instruments to make computers and computer-related professions more attractive to women. The authors proposed that schools should not only prepare learners by providing them with the required ICT knowledge and skills, but present ICT in such a way that it is attractive and interesting for both male and female learners (Bovee et al., 2005). It is generally assumed that sufficient knowledge and skills, as well as stimulating positive attitudes towards ICT, will increase the

⁸According to Statistics South Africa (2004) a township in South Africa is referred to as an urban residential area created for Black migrant labour, usually located beyond the town or city limits. For instance, reference is sometimes made to 'Black township', 'Coloured township' and 'Indian township', meaning that these settlements were created for these population groups under the Apartheid regime.

participation of women in the field of Information Technology (Van Eck & Volman, 2001 cited in Bovee et al., 2005). This is in line with the research conducted by Turner et al. (2002), that positive experiences reinforced by the school teacher promotes learners' favourable attitude towards computers.

Bovee et al. (2005) found that overall, most female and male learners were not interested in careers as computer programmers, software developers, technical co-ordinators at schools, helpdesk operators, or computer retailers. In the top three of their favourite professions, only 19% (nine per cent female and 10% male) of all learners wrote down a profession that could be typified as computer-related.

Bovee et al. (2005) regard the underrepresentation of women in senior positions in the field of Information Technology as caused by numerous elements. These elements include that women are gendered according to the stereotypes of being a woman. Other possible elements include the lack of exposure to computers and technology based equipment, which results in few women even entering the field of Information Technology. However, the low participation of women in ICT professions cannot only be explained by the lack of ICT-access and ICT knowledge and skills (Bovee et al., 2005). Without women choosing technology-based careers, gender imbalances will remain. Therefore, Wajcman (2009) emphasises the importance of women being involved throughout the processes and practices of technological innovation.

Conclusion

In this chapter, I have identified gaps in literature as well as the body of literature my study will contribute to. The gap in literature that this study intends to address will take into account both male and female experiences of employees in the field of IT. My study aims to contribute to the understanding of what the current gender preference is for a senior manager, since previous studies only looked at gender preference from the Black and White employees.

Moreover, I have also shown how the perceptions of management styles have changed over time by taking into account historical and social context. The context has shifted from where women's rights in the workplace were first acknowledged following the second wave of feminism. During the 1970's era of feminism, strict notions of female and male prescriptions remained. Later, the perceptions of management changed as legislation and policies came into play. It is my hope that my study will shed light on whether behaviour is traditionally consistent to gender performed in the workplace or whether an androgynous style of management is adopted in the workplace.

Previous studies have pointed out discriminatory practices and gender stereotyping to make sense of the underrepresentation of women in senior positions. From this viewpoint, one can see the continual process of negotiation that women undergo in their lives, where they continually reconstruct their identities in light of the job and role they should play as well as the support (or lack thereof) that they receive within certain relationships (at home or work).

This study also aims to add to the existing body of literature of the challenges women face and how they cope when it comes to managerial career progression as a female.

CHAPTER 3

THEORETICAL ORIENTATIONS

This study follows a feminist social constructionist paradigm (Gergen, 2008). Social constructionism is open to various ways of doing qualitative research. In light of this study, I will firstly define social constructionism. Secondly, I will link feminism and social constructionism.

Social constructionism is one of the postmodern ways of thinking as it acknowledges that the realities being explored are socially constructed and there are multiple constructed realities (Gergen, 2008; Ponterotto, 2005). Thus, social constructionism is chosen because it is concerned with explicating the process whereby the participants describe and account for the world in which they live, and how they construct it according to their lived experiences (Gergen, 1985). Social constructionism allows all languages, as ways of speaking (discourses), even that of the research psychologist to enter culture used by people to justify, separate, control and cascade (Gergen, 1994). In postmodernist thought there is no ruling out certain ways of speaking or acting in favour of others (Gergen, 1994). Social constructionism invites reflexivity, encouraging one to consider all propositional realities and dictates as local, provisional, and political. Postmodernist thought includes both the phenomena being studied and the manner in which it is carried out (Gergen, 1994).

According to Gergen (1994) the term 'objective knowledge' in psychology as well as other sciences, is seen as a conversational trump and disregards any thoughts or work that does not deal with terms such as evidence, measurement and reliability.

Social constructionism points to knowledge that is co-constructed (Gergen, 2008). According to Biever, De Las Fuentes, Cashion and Franklyn (1998), people make meaning out of what they experience in the world through their interaction with others. Thus, social constructionism supports competing viewpoints of the world instead of one true view.

The degree of understanding is sustained across time which does not depend on empirical validity but through the vicissitudes of social processes. Thus, reality is from a subjective position and is multiple, but equally valid (Ponterotto, 2005). Understanding is not uniform but exists in negotiated forms because it is intertwined with the social activities men and women find themselves in. The participant's knowledge is based on constructions that have arisen from artefacts or products of historically situated interchanges in their lives (Gergen, 1985).

In the current study, the experiences of women and men in the field of Information Technology are considered as sources of knowledge as they offer space for critical reflection of the ordinary and extraordinary events that provide insight into the understanding of their social world (Campbell & Wasco, 2000). The theoretical framework chosen for this study will help in understanding the worlds or realities of the participants (Gergen, 1994; 2001).

Most contemporary feminist research studies use a social constructionist approach as they recognise that women have multiple identities (Schefer, 1997). These multiple identities exist because gender intersects with other social categories such as race, class, language and culture. As a result of Apartheid in South Africa, these social categories have an effect on the way an individual experiences being male or female. For example, in the Apartheid era,

White women were discriminated against on the basis of gender (Erasmus et al., 2005), whilst Black women were discriminated against on the basis of gender and race (Mello, 2000). Women in South Africa therefore experience their genders differently depending on the position they occupy in society, however they do share common experiences (Schefer, 1997).

The difference between feminism and a social constructionist approach to gender demonstrates that feminists are more likely to take a political stance whereas social constructionists view gender as just one of the lenses through which to view behaviour. Feminism critiques social constructionism for not taking a more advocate stance and for allowing gender to dominate and possibly provide a societal construction that men are privileged (Biever et al., 1998). Feminists are concerned with the sociocultural and political influences, whereas social constructionists are concerned with many possibilities that explain the marginalisation of women and emphasise interpersonal contextualisation of making and changing of subjective reality. Biever et al. (1998) critique feminism for potentially creating pathologies in telling families how they ought to behave.

Nevertheless, feminists and social constructionists both recognise the importance of social context in understanding behaviour, interactions and relationships (Biever, et al., 1998). In addition, social constructionism and qualitative work done in feminist research both recognise that multiple realities exist (Gergen 2008). The feminist social constructionism paradigm is therefore well suited to uncover the meanings that will be brought to the fore as participants relay their gendered experiences in the field of Information Technology and how they construct their realities regarding senior management positions.

Theoretical framework

Central to this study is the gendered experiences towards senior management positions in the field of Information Technology. The present study drew on social constructionism and feminist theory as a theoretical lens. I am using two theorists' ideas, namely Kenneth Gergen and Julia Nentwich towards understanding how gender is constructed, as well as the dynamics of gender in the field of Information Technology. Gergen speaks of social constructionism while Nentwich speaks of gender within a social constructionist perspective. I will first discuss Kenneth Gergen's ideas on social constructionism, followed by Julia Nentwich ideas to provide a fore structure to understanding the present study (Gergen, 1994). In addition, I will touch on the work of Mary Gergen as she focuses on gender and social constructionism.

Kenneth Gergen and social constructionism

The inquiry involved in constructionism demonstrates how claims of what is true and good originates from historical traditions which have been enabled by social networks, maintained, practiced and operate in a service of particular ideologies which fashions structures of power and privilege. According to Gergen (1997), many ideals of what knowledge is and what holds as being true are deeply interwoven into Western tradition and would therefore constitute a major loss if there should be erosion of these ideals.

In the past, Western, middle class, White women, have spoken on behalf of women that are representative of different races, culture and religion (Boonzaier & Shefer, 2006). Thus, a Western tradition of studying other groups of people reproduced relations of power (Hollway, 1987 cited in Boonzaier & Shefer, 2006). In South Africa, westernisation has

dominated most of the arenas in which people live. This includes the westernisation of university education, and the conflation of class, where English is presumed to be westernised (Long & Zietkiewicz, 2006).

Political identity was closely aligned with social constructionism (Gergen, 1999). According to Gergen (1999) political identity is referred to as a mode of political activism which differs from many social movements (for example, fundamentalist Christian activism). In essence, political identity pertains to marginalised groups such as women, homosexuals and Afro-American that is marked as individuals (Gergen, 1999). While political identity encompasses the political categories (such as age, race and gender) associated with identity, constructionism is referred to as a range of dialogues based on what is considered to be knowledge, reason, and virtue, as well as an enormous range of social practices that are created or sustained by these discourses (Gergen, 1999).

Likewise, feminists have stated that experiences contradictory to the constructions of social categories, for example “woman” or “Black”, might be read through a theory that favours the conclusion of personal insufficiency instead of social constructionism (Long & Zietkiewicz, 2006). This then reinforces perceptions of one’s self and the other in terms of the valued norm (Long & Zietkiewicz, 2006). This supports Gergen’s argument in which he states that dominant orders still potentially remain ideological (Gergen, 2011). Critiques of social construction are that race, class, and gender offer a range of privileges that are given by the broader society and this then creates a power base in the home (Mill, n.d). Agrawal (n.d) warns against the assumption that women among the marginal groups are more oppressed in the domain of gender relations, than the women in dominant groups are, or going to the other extreme of romanticising the former’s apparent freedom. However, the reality of class is that

there are privileges which are enjoyed by both men and women from dominant groups (Agrawal, n.d). Privilege and power can therefore result in patriarchy in the family regardless if egalitarianism may be desired. In my research study, I hope to see how these political categories influence an individual in the workplace.

Critiques of Kenneth Gergen's work

Gergen has been criticised by radical constructivists as being too fully “interiorised” and therefore seen as condemning human beings to imprisonment in their own, individualistic experience (Gergen, 1995b). As a response to this criticism, social constructionists have emphasised the “primacy of relational, conversational, social practices as the source of individual psychic life” (Stam, 1998, p. 199). In addition, social constructionists have pointed out the flaws of traditional, Western individualism of American psychology, as well as the rationalism of cognitive-behavioural perspectives.

Another criticism toward social constructionist approaches have been for being excessively anti-humanistic (Burr, 1995; Gergen, 1995a). And yet, social constructionism has been relativistic in emphasising just how contextual, linguistic, and relational factors combine to determine the kinds of human beings that people will become and how their views of the world will develop. In social constructionism, all knowledge is negotiated between people within a given context and time frame. Social constructionists have argued that what may constitute personhood one day may change the next, based on shifts in social surroundings and currently accepted interpersonal boundaries (Raskin, 2002).

Social constructionism and gender

Central to this study is the gendered experiences towards senior management positions in the field of Information Technology. The present study drew on feminist theory as a theoretical lens. There are multiple feminist theories that differ in terms of conceptualisations of the marginalisation of women, however they all have a central commonality of focusing upon the experience of women's lives (Campbell & Wasco, 2000).

Gender is a central aspect of this study. In this regard, I will use Julia Nentwich's ideas towards understanding how gender is constructed as well as the dynamics of gender in the field of Information Technology. Nentwich's work is deemed applicable to this study as she has conducted extensive research, not only on gender, but specifically within the workplace context.

She draws on the concepts of ideological dilemma, repertoire and subject positioning (Nentwich, 2003). Ideological dilemma refers to how men and women deal with conflicting notions. One example of conflicting notions is the difference that is perceived to exist between men and women and believed to be as a result of sex-role socialisation (Nentwich, 2006). Sex-role socialisation arguably caused women to be regarded as less skilled in male-dominated environments (Nentwich, 2006). Nentwich (2006) argues that men and women cannot be treated the same because this will ignore that they have differences. However, if men and women were treated differently, this would reinforce the gender stereotypes.

Gender is not something the individual inherently has but rather through construction of social structures, identities, power and knowledge. In order to implement potential change, identification of the construction process needs to be identified. Therefore, the post-equity

avoids the sameness-difference dilemma and allows challenging of the basic assumptions of gender systems that exist. In the current study, I did not challenge participants' basic assumptions of the gender systems, but rather explored whether these binary gender systems do exist.

Repertoires are a set of skills that a person or organisation knows or are prepared to perform and are highly contextual and therefore exclusive. When one repertoire shifts to another it is interpreted as a strategy for dealing with tensions that are inherent in feminist theory. According to feminist theory, one repertoire must be exclusive in one context so that a stable version of reality is constructed. The transitioning of roles can have an impact on the psychological well-being of a person (Menaghan, 1989). For example, the current role repertoires a person has and the current psychological symptoms are supplemented by consideration of how changes in role repertoires are related to changes in symptom level. Distress, as a psychological symptom, is likely to occur if an individual role repertoire deviates from what is considered to be the norm for their age and gender (Menaghan, 1989).

Subject positioning is determined by how men and women's identities are constructed in relation to gender when speaking about their own biography, the field of Information Technology, the family context, the gender system and gender equality. The conversational resources used by the participants shape the plot and then have an influence on what subject positions are present, and, if taken up, how speakers talk about themselves, objects, and/or events in the world (Davies & Harré, 1999; Edley, 2001; Taylor, 2006).

These three concepts (ideological dilemma, subject positioning and repertoire) are uncovered through a process of relating. In my study, I explored these concepts in a South African context since Nentwich's work is situated in a Swiss Swedish context.

Like Nentwich, Mary Gergen (1988) has used social constructionism as a lens to explore gender relations. Mary Gergen's work focused on how women's development is represented to the public through textbooks. She found that the prominent theories used in the textbooks to understand womanhood were Freudian theories and focused on the playing out of psychosexual themes.

The social constructionism position was a form of postmodernism aimed at restoring the lifespan psychology of women. Social constructionism played its part in the dimensions of gender by looking at the life experiences of women in the workforce as a position of centrality.

Mary Gergen (1988) argues that when using social constructionism, critical attention must be given to the theoretical and methodological practices used to prevent bias. As the researcher, I questioned what realities were favoured and what possibilities are subtly closed off.

In Mary Gergen's work, it is apparent that she is more inclined on challenging rather than merely accepting the existing social practices, such as women's development in the work environment. According to Mary Gergen, social constructionism as metatheory, offers the necessary freedom from the constraining bonds of tradition. This could also be used to describe the stereotypes placed on males and females in the workplace.

Commonalities of Kenneth Gergen, Mary Gergen and Julia Nentwich's work

Both Kenneth Gergen and Julia Nentwich drew on language as an important aspect in social constructionism. The role of language is therefore deemed critical in the present study. The use of Wittgenstein's (1953) *Philosophical Investigations* was used in both Kenneth Gergen and Julia Nentwich's work. Gergen used it as it proposed that language acquires its meaning through its use in social practices whereas Nentwich (2003) used it to understand the construction of reality (Leithäuser & Volmerg, 1998 cited in Nentwich, 2000). Words are part of language and the meaning of words are not fixed, therefore the context must be taken into consideration when interpreting the meaning (Nentwich, 2000; 2003). Thus, Nentwich (2000) argued that understanding cannot take place without knowing the context. The context in the present study is the interview session and all nonverbal cues documented, as well as clarification of words used by participants.

Moreover, social practices arise from when and where men and women have to act on certain prescribed gender roles since they belong to the sex categories (such as, male and female categories) (West & Zimmerman, 1987). It is therefore through the negotiation that these roles have emerged through communities, such as kinship and religion. For example, many religions have a shared understanding of women and sexuality and therefore treat women's bodies as impure and defiling. This results in women being excluded from several spheres of social life (Agrawal, n.d). Many of these religious views have had an influence on the secular world and influence the construction of gender and identity (Agrawal, n.d). Against this background, it can be understood that the shared understanding of roles are negotiated through language.

Nentwich's work (2003; 2006; 2008) expanded and developed other theorists' concepts such as "doing gender" (West & Zimmerman, 1987), "undoing gender" and "gender trouble" (Butler, 1990; 1993; 2004), and "degender" as concepts (Lorber, 2000). What these concepts have in common is that they convey the message that gender is a social construction of sex (Shefer, 1997). Gender is not biologically determined but constructed according to social expectations (Shefer, 1997).

Within a workplace context, Nentwich (2003) argues that the organisation starts off as a neutral place which embodies and then reproduces an understanding of what male and female gender roles are, the behaviour that is performed by males and females, as well as sex-categories and hierarchal relationships. She elaborates that it is not the difference between sexes but the process that goes into constructing the differences that results into sex-categories and hierarchal relationships (Nentwich, 2003). For instance, women entering masculine industries must demonstrate so-called male characteristics like toughness and aggressiveness, but simultaneously appear somewhat feminine, to avoid being derogated or criticised (Demaite & Adams, 2009). I previously mentioned that language is used to move people into action by changing their views and perceptions (Parton, 2003) and that it offers various subject positions that an individual can take up when interpreting an event in their lives. Thus, it can be seen that the language games in the masculine industry are acting tough and aggressive, but still appearing to be feminine. The positioning women take up in these industries are that of men. Women interpret hostility by downplaying it as being part of the work environment or needing to have a "thick skin" and ignoring it (Damaite & Adams, 2009).

Social constructionists have been interested in the performative aspects of language. That is, people use words and symbols not just descriptively, but persuasively to accomplish goals (Burr, 1995). According to Parton (2003), language does not only describe objects but has social and political implications. What this means is that language is used to move people into action by changing their views and perceptions (Parton, 2003). In addition, language offers various subject positions that an individual can take up when interpreting an event in their lives (Boonzaier & Shefer, 2006). The subject position is achieved as language is used to negotiate, and has implications for other ranges of social activity that one may find themselves in (Gergen, 1985). In terms of gender studies, using language games assumes there cannot be any fixed meaning for gender differences and gender equality in the organisation because meaning will be understandable if there is a shared life form. Specifically drawing on the interview context, Nentwich (2000) questioned if there was a way of knowing if any clear understanding was documented in an interview with a participant. Nentwich (2000) states that language cannot just be seen as words because it contains acting and performing too. For example, talking is part of an act or form of life as it is used to interact with others and express meaning (Nentwich, 2000).

According to Nentwich (2000), language exists in language communities and its particular function or performance for that context. These language communities are community forms of life. This may refer to how a community of people use language and certain words to represent a particular context. In light of this study, the community for this study are the employees in the field of Information Technology. Nentwich (2000) says that every game has rules, which makes forms of life and rules the building blocks for language games which leads to understanding. Rules are not fixed but are flexible, indefinite and vague. Rules describe certain performances and acts pertaining to a context and are therefore

closely linked to the meaning of those acts or performances. Meaning is therefore created in language games that are following flexible rules which are dependent on the community (form of life) that language game exists in. Therefore, understanding is possible when participating in a certain form of life. Thus, in order to understand the repertoires used by participants, careful attention should be given to the words they use and the meaning attached to these words.

Much of Gergen's writings are about the linguistic limit of what is considered to be taken as true (Gergen, 2001). Gergen claims that it is easier to point to objects that are tangible, unlike the cognition or attitude. Thus, in order for an agreement on empirical findings in psychology to be reached, a second order of interpretive or hermeneutic assumptions is required. An example on second order interpretation is, when confronted with a given facial experience, we cannot say it is fear but rather an expression of an event (Gergen, 2001). As mentioned before, non-verbal cues were documented in conjunction with interview scripts. The non-verbal cues of the participants were taken into consideration within the interview context.

In Nentwich's work, it appears that she focused more on the methodological aspect. Nentwich (2000) advises researchers to look at the process of understanding when it comes to analysing text. Nentwich (2000) refers to Leithäuser and Volmerg's (1988, p. 119-130) approach where they used understanding as a method. The use of understanding as a method is accomplished through the everyday hermeneutics of the researcher. The researcher would do this by firstly defining the notion of understanding, and secondly by explaining how it can be used for the justification of the research process. For the purpose of this study, I only

focused on defining the notion of understanding as this is what I probed into when the participant was describing their reality.

Nentwich (2003a) mentions that the background of the researcher and the participant must also be taken into consideration when it comes to the interpretation of the interview session. During the interview, the subject positions of the researcher and participant offer discourses that may go unnoticed or set aside. Sometimes there is power linked to a subject position. The researcher plays an important role in determining not only the subjectivity but also how the process of relating will take place. Nentwich (2003a) says the researcher may bring aspects that are embedded within their social identity to the interview and this may contribute to the context of the interview to which the participant may relate to. Nentwich (2003a) refers to an example of being a female researcher that conducts an interview with women about the subject of gender equality. Implied in most of Nentwich's (2003a) interviews is how she appears position herself as a feminist with an emancipatory interest. The current study will take into consideration the context of the interview session as this forms part of the construction of the reality during the interview.

Conclusion

The theories described above provide a potential explanation of the dynamics that occur in the field of Information Technology. Kenneth Gergen, Mary Gergen and Julia Nentwich place particular emphasis on language and its role in the construction of reality. Language is used as a vehicle for the creation of meaning and is shaped neither by nature, the world, nor mind, but by relationships (Gergen, 1994; 1997; 1999; 2011). It is through language that certain forms of life are negotiated. These forms of life pertain to being a male

or female in the field. Drawing from these theoretical underpinnings assisted me in understanding the lack of female leaders specifically in the field of Information Technology.

Within the current study, I utilised these principles whilst conducting and analysing the transcriptions of the interviews, with an awareness of all the processes involved when working with people and their individual experiences.

In the next chapter, the methodology of the study, the research design, data collection techniques, data analysis and processes are detailed, and the ethical considerations of the current study are outlined.

CHAPTER 4

METHODOLOGY

The aim of the research study was to explore the underrepresentation of women that exists in senior management positions in the field of Information Technology from the perspectives of male and female employees. The research questions were exploratory and descriptive, hence qualitative research methods were well-suited. The study sought to explore the gendered experiences of from the perspectives of male and female employees working in the field of Information Technology (Creswell, 2007; Mallerud, 2001). Most feminist research relies heavily on qualitative methods to provide a voice to women who have previously been marginalised as well as to obtain a better understanding of their experiences (Gergen, 2008; Sprague & Kobrynowicz, 1999). The main advantage for using qualitative research methods in this study was to add toward the production of knowledge. This research adopted a feminist methodology to avoid broad theoretical claims being made by generalising experiences of males onto females by including males and females in the study (Sprague & Kobrynowicz, 1999).

Feminist methodologies involve a process of examining women's experiences and reflecting an ethic of respect, collaboration and caring (Campbell & Wasco, 2000). The methods used are familiar methods of data collection (for example, interviewing, focus groups, and ethnography) that are adapted to be consistent with feminist ideology. The following have been shown to be employed in feminist research: Firstly, women and gender as the focus of analysis; secondly, the validation, giving voice to, and understanding the experiences of women and men who have been marginalised or ignored in traditional research; thirdly, reflexivity of the researcher, which includes the researcher's voice and

experience throughout the research process; fourthly, the rejection of hierarchical relationships between researcher and participant; and lastly, a concern with ethics, for example being respectful towards the participant and their feelings, use of language, and use of the findings (Gergen 2008; Pillow, 2003).

To obtain a rich description on participants' experiences, I used a generic qualitative design as it is exploratory in nature (Cooper & Endacott, 2007). The quality of the data was ensured by incorporating reflexivity throughout the research phases. I will now discuss what procedures I followed with regard to obtaining the sample, the gatekeeper, the organisation, the collection of data and the researcher's role, the management of the data, and data analysis. The ethical considerations in this study are also elucidated upon.

The context of the organisation

The company is situated in Pretoria, the capital of South Africa, from where it provides engineering, management and specialist technical services for public and private sector clients globally. The core of the Information Technology infrastructure services are networking, telephone, desktop and server support across all divisions. The specific divisional applications are managed by divisional heads within the Information Technology department. The company is based on a client-centric business model and envisions themselves as striving towards the ability to deliver the full range of their services globally.

Sources of data

The gatekeeper for the company where I conducted my research study was identified through a friend of mine that worked at the company. The gatekeeper of the company is a white male who is employed as a senior system engineer. I first contacted the gatekeeper electronically by email and subsequently, a meeting was set up to explain the nature of the study.

At the meeting, a letter containing the nature of this study was provided (*see Appendix C*). I communicated with the gatekeeper in terms of what his expectations were so that there would be no misunderstanding during and after the study. The gatekeeper requested I draft a brochure (*see Appendix D*) that could be emailed to potential participants. An email was sent out to employees in the IT division and those that were interested, contacted me.

Population and research sample

The target population for this study was employees in the field of Information Technology. The field of Information Technology was chosen because it presents a traditionally male-dominated career (Wentling & Thomas, 2007). The city of Pretoria was chosen as the sample target population because I found it easily accessible and convenient since the participants would be at work for the scheduled interview. The underrepresentation of women in senior management positions was investigated and the research conducted at this organisation provided possible answers to the problem statement. The name of the

company will not be revealed due to confidentiality purposes which are highlighted in the ethics section.

Sample size and selection of sample

I identified participants by using purposive sampling (Coyne, 1997). The participants chosen for this study are information-rich⁹, and therefore best represented the target population (Patton, 1990).

Most qualitative studies have shown that saturation point¹⁰ is often met by interviewing five to eight participants (Cooper & Endacott, 2007). The study aimed to recruit a target of six to ten participants, but only managed to recruit six. I found it challenging to recruit female participants, and as a result I had four male and two female participants. It was my hope to hear a richer perspective of women's accounts of the field of Information Technology. During the recruitment phase I had two black female participants but they did not commit to the study. I felt despondent when a former employee of the company told me that apparently the employees in Information Technology hardly ever check their email and are too "lazy" to respond. Nevertheless, one of the female participants I had interviewed offered to assist me in obtaining more females for the study. Unfortunately, she informed me that the females in her department were quite hesitant to participate in the current study.

Possible reasons for non-participation could be related to time constraints, inability to understand the study, concerns about backlash following participation in a feminist study, and racial differences primarily due to lack of trust in the researcher (Markanday, Brennan, Gould

⁹ Information-rich refers to individuals containing more knowledge on a specific topic and can give more understanding and insight on that specific topic (Patton, 1990).

¹⁰ Sampling to saturation point refers to interviewing participants until no new information emerges (Durrheim, 2006).

& Pasco, 2013; Shavers, Lynch & Burmeister, 2002). Even though I had more males in my study, it is possible to do a feminist study with males. According to Kampf and Ohmann (1983) the presence of men in women's studies is an increased interest in directing new feminist perspectives on history, literature, sociology, and psychology by including both men and women in gender studies. This is to create a likelihood of men and women to become sensitised to and knowledgeable about issues and topics pertaining to women (Kampf & Ohmann, 1983). Moreover, feminist studies are not solely about women but are needed to give a voice to the marginalised, which is not exclusive to gender (Gergen, 2008).

Selection criteria for this study consisted of: Firstly, employees who have been working for a minimum of one year in the field of Information Technology were recruited for the study. This is to allow employees to appreciate the dynamics that are associated with promotions for a senior management position in the specific organisation (Cross & Linehan, 2008). Secondly, employees between the ages of 18 and above were chosen, since 18 is the legal age to provide adult consent. Thirdly, I recruited both males and females as I was interested in both their experiences within the field. I did not recruit according to the different races that exist in South Africa due to the limited timeframe of the study. However, I acknowledge the potential influence of race in the study, as Apartheid has indeed had a different effect on individuals' experience in the past (Scantlebury & Martin, 2010). Below is a table that summarises the demographic profile of the participants recruited into the study.

Table 1: Demographic profile of the sample

Number of participants	Total of six participants					
Gender	Males (four)			Females (two)		
Marital status	Married (three)			Single (one)	Married (one)	Single (one)
Race	Coloured	White	Indian	Coloured	White	Coloured

Collection of Data and the role of the researcher

I used interviews as it is a natural form of interaction with participants (Kelly, 2006). The interviews followed a semi-structured format to provide structure on the themes that I inquired about (Kelly, 2006). Semi-structured interviews allow themes to be uncovered as well as probing to allow a richer understanding of the participant's experience (Kvale, 1996). An interview guide or protocol (*see Appendix G*) was used to guide the flow of the interview pertaining to the focus areas of the research to be explored (Kvale, 1996). I used myself as research instrument to draw upon implicit bodily and emotional mode that allowed access to the participant's subjective world (Kvale, 1996). Building rapport with the participant is one of the fundamental keys in feminist research (Eagle, Hayes & Sibanda, 2006). Rapport was established by avoiding setting up hierarchical relationships between the researcher (I) and the participants (Campbell & Wasco, 2000; Eagle, Hayes & Sibanda, 2006). I established rapport with each participant before the commencement of the interview by making some small talk just to create some form of familiarity and to lessen potential anxiety.

It is important for the researcher to make a connection as this will allow for trust, and enhance the quality of the data (Campbell & Wasco, 2000). In response to making a

connection, feminist researchers are attuned to the participant's feelings as well as their own. Therefore, for self-reflexivity I kept a reflective journal for awareness of my position during the research (Malterud, 2001; Scantlebury, & Martin, 2010; Taylor, 1998).

During the interview, the information the participants reveal may lead to feelings of gaining nothing in return, which may evoke anxiety and tension after the interview. Therefore, during the interview, I reflected an ethic of respect, collaboration, and caring (Campbell & Wasco, 2000) and used facilitative communication skills. Facilitative communication skills entail clarification, summarising, reflecting and probing on participants' responses (Roger, 2002). Specifically, clarification contributes to member checking¹¹ to enhance credibility of data (Tobin & Bergley, 2004). Member checking can also take place after the interview session when submitting the interview transcript back to the participant. However, I chose not to do member checking after the interview because I have acknowledged in my study that realities are socially constructed and context bound to that designated time. The interviews were scheduled during working hours, and lasted approximately 60 minutes. There were no repetitive interviews on the topic as a means to prevent quasi-therapeutic relationships which is out of the scope of this research (Gergen, 2008). Interviews were conducted in the participants' workplace environment. The participants reserved a boardroom at the company for each interview session. Each of the participants reserved different boardrooms. However, one of the participants did not reserve a boardroom and we ended up holding the interview close to the organisation's cafeteria. The interviews were tape-recorded with the permission of participants and I kept reflective notes. Towards the end of the interview, debriefing information was provided to the participant to

¹¹ Member checking refers to checking with the participant if what they said was correctly interpreted or understood by the researcher (Lietz & Zayas, 2010).

address any potential psychological harm (Blanck, Bellack, Rosnow, Rotheram-Borus & Schooler, 1992). I asked each participant how they found the interview session, and all participants reported that they felt the interview was appropriate and none of the participants displayed any distress. After the interview session I thanked each participant and handed them a Woolworths voucher worth a R150 as token of appreciation for their time.

My reflections upon the interview process

I found that I probed more on certain questions with some participants than with others. In certain situations it was to ensure clarity and depth, as well as to create a flow and avoid jumping to the next question. Question three and one of the probed questions in the interview guide, felt repetitive. Question three asked what the competencies of a senior manager are and the probed question asked what the competencies a good senior manager should display are. I felt it was repetitive because the participants would list the same answers. However, even though the questions felt repetitive, it generated slightly different subject positioning of the participants.

Reflections before and after the interview with each participant

Participant one: is demographically a married Coloured male, mid-thirties with two dependents. When I met with participant one, I felt some anxiety as he led me to the boardroom. Before the interview commenced, the participant and I went down to the cafeteria and I was offered coffee. Rapport was established between the participant and myself as we spoke about my interest for the current study and his family life. The consent form was signed and the procedure of the interview, as well as the purpose of the study, was explained. At the start of the interview, I felt somewhat anxious to get started, which is evident when I welcomed the participant and giggled when I asked him if he knew why he was there. I felt

bit silly for asking, but it was so drilled into me due to the training I received at my internship with the industrial interns. They would usually ask candidates that question before administering a psychometric test. I presume that this question was also posed to make sure that the participant was there out of their own free will.

As the interview took place, I felt quite intrigued with what the participant was telling me. I had some “ah ha” moments as he was telling me things that I have read in literature on studies that included women, and it was interesting to hear this from a male’s perspective.

I felt the participant related to me as we were both Coloured, so there was some shared identity. However, I felt the participant was quite impressionable as he would open the door for me to walk through and offered to assist me with my bags. It can be considered that the participant was being chivalrous¹². Arguably, it is not a bad quality to possess but there are implications for it, especially in the workplace, since it may limit women if they are considered to be weak and in need of protection. This is a theme that is explored in the findings of this study.

Throughout the interview, I continually tried my best not to ask leading questions in response to the participant’s responses. I felt slightly challenged when the participant asked about the gendered situation and perhaps I did not relay what I actually wanted without coming up with leading examples. Nevertheless, the interview ended on a positive note and I thanked the participant for his valuable insights. I asked if he found the questions to be of an

¹² Chivalrous refers to a pattern of behaviour characterized by gallantry toward women (Altermatt, 2001). It is often acted out as men taking care of women.

insensitive nature and he responded “no”, adding that he felt that the questions were relevant and he felt he could be quite open with his responses.

Participant two is demographically a married white female, in her mid-thirties with no dependents. I experienced some anxiety with participant two as well. However, the participant remained smiling and appeared to be calm. Perhaps it was my own anxiety. Before the interview began, I tried making small talk with her to try and build rapport. The participant was very brief during the interview. As the interview progressed, I felt my anxiety lessening. The participant shared that she did not view gender as relevant within her workplace and saw her colleagues as people to work with regardless of being male or female. The participant maintained eye contact through the entire interview. For me, it was really unexpected that the interview session would be so short. This interview session lasted for 16 minutes and 27 seconds. The participant also commented after the interview that she did not expect the interview to be that quick. In retrospect, I feel that I could have probed on certain areas even though the participant gave closed-ended answers.

Participant three is demographically a single coloured in her mid-twenties with one dependent. The participant and I first built rapport before we commenced with the interview. We spoke about where we were from and her dad that works in the military and the fact that I was currently doing my internship at the military. We spoke about life and being a modern woman; meaning that we share housework with our partners. The participant was warm and welcoming. She displayed this through asking questions and sharing experiences of herself with me. When we moved to our venue to conduct the interview, we discovered it was taken by another colleague. We had our interview in the room next to the one we were initially supposed to be in. Soon the venue was interrupted by a tea lady, then by another colleague

that told us she booked the venue we were in. We placed the interview on hold and moved to an outside area where we resumed with the process. It was quite noisy with the traffic, however we still had a productive interview. Afterwards, the participant and I discussed academics, her friend that did his thesis, and cars.

Participant four is demographically a married white male, late thirties with one dependent. The participant and I have met prior to the interview session. He was the gatekeeper I met with to gain access into the company. We were scheduled to meet before but cancelled due to unforeseen circumstances. The participant appeared to be at ease. I tried my best not to lead as I was afraid I might influence his responses. Participant four looked somewhat disappointed when the interview came to an end. He told me after I switched off the tape that he really hopes he contributed. There was a sense of uncertainty he relayed and I immediately assured him that there is no right or wrong answers, but only his experiences. After the interview, I stayed for a little while to chat about the organisation.

Participant five is demographically a married Indian male, late forties with two dependents. Before the interview commenced, the participant and I established rapport by asking general questions, such as from where we both reside, and my study. On the phone he told me that we could conduct the interview in his office. As we walked to the top floor where he worked, I realised it was an open plan setting. The participant said that he did not mind conducting the interview in an open section. The interview took place in an open area unlike the previous interviews that took place in a secluded room. Nevertheless, there was minimal noise that interfered with the interview session. When speaking about gender preferences and work relationships with different genders, I got the sense that the participant got annoyed as he would say he does not care if it is a man or a woman “as long as they can

do the job”. After the interview, the participant informed me that the interview helped him to get things off his chest which made me feel like I intrinsically benefited someone.

Participant six is demographically a single Coloured male, early thirties with no dependents. Participant six and I first built rapport before the commencement of the interview. Throughout the interview, I felt that the participant had a gendered stereotype view of men and women, even though he felt that women can also do the type of jobs men do. I felt that I wanted to bring my point across that it is the way we are raised and not nature that women are feminine and soft and men are technical. In some way I was afraid that even though I was listening, my facial expression could have been viewed in a negative light by the participant or perceived as distant from the situation and tried to portray a neutral facial expression. Nevertheless, the interview session was engaging and quite interactive.

Overall, the interview sessions went well. I felt nervous with the first two interviews but as I continued interviewing I became more at ease with the whole process. Subconsciously, I used a few stop words such as ‘OK’. Once I became aware of it and tried to stop myself, I replaced it with “Hmm”. With the male participants I tried to conduct myself in a very formal manner so as not to come across as flirtatious. I was friendly, with a soft tone of voice, but kept a distant body language posture when we walked together. I tried to be active in body language by leaning closer and nodding at moments to show that I understood what my participants were saying and would clarify to show that I that I was listening and to gain a better understanding.

Self-reflexivity

Reflexivity has been defined as a deconstructive exercise for locating the intersections of the author, other, text, and world, and for penetrating the representational exercise itself (Macbeth, 2001). In another definition of reflexivity, Malterud (2001) defines it as an attitude of attending systematically to the context of knowledge construction, especially to the effect of the researcher, at every step of the research process. In essence, both of these definitions look at the researcher and their take on the topic at hand, as well as others involved in the process. I therefore termed this as self-reflexivity as it takes into account the self. Self-reflexivity is applied during all steps of the research process and therefore the subjectivity of the researcher should be assessed, and, later on, shared (Malterud, 2001).

According to Macbeth (2001), there are two types of reflexivity, namely, positional and textual reflexivity. Positional reflexivity leads the researcher to examine place, biography, self, and other, to understand how they shape the analytic exercise, whereas textual reflexivity leads the analyst to examine and then disrupt the very exercise of textual representation. For the purpose of the present study, I used positional reflexivity whereby I took into account the place, my biography, self, and other.

Self-reflexivity is necessary for this study as it creates descriptions that might be relieved of the gendered, cultural, rational, and still other hegemonies and centricities that the crisis has brought into view (Macbeth, 2001). It is for this reason that self-reflexivity was recommended as a principal method for excavating new foundations for the analytic and representational exercise (Macbeth, 2001).

I incorporated the following in the present study: the researcher's motives, background, perspectives, and preliminary ideas presented, and if the effect of these issues are sufficiently dealt with by the researcher (Malterud, 2001). More specifically, I will start by identifying preconceptions brought into the project by myself as the researcher, representing previous personal and professional experiences, pre-study beliefs about how things are and what is to be investigated, motivation and qualifications for exploration of the field, and perspectives and theoretical foundations related to education and interests.

The preconceptions brought forth into this study are that men and women prefer that men are in positions of authority as they are more able to withstand the pressure of the workplace. In my previous and personal experience, I have found that women in authoritative positions are not taken as seriously compared to men.

Being a Coloured female, I believe that it is not a woman's role to be a homemaker and that this role has been created by society as a coping mechanism. I have experienced that you are looked down upon by other women and older men if you, as a woman, do not cook or clean. This has been a constant challenge for me even though women have obtained equal rights; there are women that still feel this should be part of their feminine characteristics. In the Coloured community that I have grown up in, there were many Coloured women that were housewives. And yet, the women that contributed to the household income still had the obligation of making sure the household was maintained in terms of cooking food, doing the laundry and cleaning.

In my view, women and men should be treated equally and their differences (for example, biology and physiological structure) should be taken into account. Unless the gendered stereotypes are broken, women will always be seen as inferior. Moreover, I am in

complete agreement with South Africa's Employment Equity Act (No. 55 Of 1998) which aims to promote gender equality as its attempt to rectify these imbalances is necessary. This is not aimed to examine power relations between men and women but to look at the differences and similarity between men and women.

In this current research study, the positionings I had in taking up this research were those of a female and researcher in psychology. I also took a predominantly feminist stance. Feminism is a human rights movement that is concerned with changes in consciousness, the empowerment of women, and the achievement of gender equality (Geertsema, 2010). In particular, liberal feminism is just one of the branches of feminism and refers to the simple suggestion that all people should have equal access to resources in our society and should not be denied based on gender (Campbell & Wasco, 2000). Liberal feminism appeals to me even though it has been criticised for overemphasising equality and the promotion of autonomy at the expense of valuing diversity (Enslin, 2003). Liberal feminism appeals to me because feminism promotes non-sexist socialisation and education of children, as well as media presentations of men and women in non-traditional roles, especially men as caring and competent fathers.

In the context of the study, I took into consideration the notion of the "insider/outsider" researcher. This refers to how the researcher's dual identities, dual positions of power and subjugation can further shape and challenge the research (Pillow, 2003). The "insider" researcher refers to being part of the community or having racial commonalities with the participant in the research, whereas an "outside" researcher may position themselves as not being part of a community and therefore make interpretations or assumptions that might not be evident to themselves (Pillow, 2003). The commonalties that I

shared with the participants would have, at times, allowed me an insider's perspective. In particular, the Coloured participants in this study were very comfortable speaking to me. This was evident as they spoke more freely about their work environment and their lives. I cannot say that I had an insider perspective with the participants of other races but I had the privilege of having the opportunity of gaining insight into the way they view reality. However, this places me at an outsider perspective as it's my own interpretations that are being placed on what I think their reality is.

Generally, I felt that I had a good understanding of what my participants were talking about and reciprocity was given when they would say, "You know".

There were moments when I was not in the same position as the participants who were expected to discuss their working environment and gender. Despite this, I did not hide my view on gender equality and referred to scenarios when they appeared to be applicable. I tried not to express too much of my own opinions in fear that I might come across as being offensive. There were times I felt like challenging the male participants' stereotypical views of women but I bore in mind that this was their reality they were allowing me insight into and I had to show respect for their views. All I could do was listen to what they were saying and probe.

There were also moments when a participant would agree with something that I had said, and this could be owing to that he or she either felt the same, or that he or she felt compelled to agree. This could be related to being a researcher in psychology, and may have influenced the domain of knowledge of which I was potentially assumed to be an expert.

Nevertheless, no prominent power relationships existed between myself and the participants. This was owing to the context in which the interviews were conducted, specifically, within the organisation in which the participants worked and me possibly being a masters student.

Data management and analysis strategies

The data obtained from participants is kept under a locked and password protected file which is kept on my laptop. Participants were aware that my primary and co-supervisor will have access to the data (*see Appendix E*). The data is only available upon request.

The interviews were transcribed verbatim (Lapadat & Lindsay, 1999). The process of verbatim transcription was open in that extracts are included and the non-verbal gestures of participants' are noted in my reflective journal and reflected upon (Lapadat & Lindsay, 1999; Poland, 1995). Non-verbal gestures are an expression of the participants' attitude towards social situations and interplay. In order to determine the intention of the nonverbal gesture, the context and nature of conversation was taken into consideration (Vinciarelli, Pantic & Bourlard, 2008).

Non-verbal gestures noted in my reflective journal included facial expressions like smiling, and vocal outbursts like laughter, yawns, coughs, and sighs (Vinciarelli, Pantic & Bourlard, 2008). Laughter tends to reward desirable social behaviour (Keltner & Haidt, 1999 cited in Vinciarelli, Pantic & Bourlard, 2008). I transcribed two of the interviews and sent the remaining interviews to a transcribing company since this would save on time. Interviews that were transcribed by the transcribing company received a non-disclosure agreement form

which was signed and returned to me (*see Appendix F*). After receiving the transcripts, I listened to the interviews to make sure that it was transcribed correctly. The transcripts were also read in conjunction with reflective notes and reread to create familiarity with the data (Burnard, 1991; Terre Blanche, Durrheim & Kelly, 2006). The structure of the transcripts is presented as a dialogue between the researcher and participants. The participants' names and other key identification information were removed for confidentiality purposes. Participants were denoted with the letter *P* and a number next to it as a way to indicate which participant was being interviewed (Poland, 1995).

Thematic analysis was used in conjunction with a listening guide to analyse the interviewed transcripts. A listening guide is a voice-centred relational method. According to Gilligan et al. (2003) the listening guide is a method of psychological analysis as a way of knowing the inner world of another person. It does this by systematically drawing on the person's voice, resonance and relationship, which is seen as ports into the human psyche. The listening guide is useful in revealing complex expressions of human experience which is often multi-layered, and the interplay between the self and relationship, psyche and culture that exists (Gilligan, et al., 2003).

There are four steps involved in the listening guide method, namely; step one is listening for the plot, step two consists of identifying *I poems*, step three involves listening for contrapuntal voices in the text, and step four is the final step of composing an analysis of the text. Each of these steps is designed to bring the researcher into a relationship with the participant's distinct and multi-layered voice. The researcher does this by tuning in or listening to the distinct aspects of the participant's experience within the relational context. I will now explain how the thematic analysis and each step of the listening guide were incorporated into this research study.

Thematic analysis

Thematic analysis was used due to its flexibility that can be applied to a wide range of theoretical and epistemological approaches (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Thematic analysis is comprised of six steps. This included reading and familiarisation with the transcript interviews, recurrent patterns were identified and codes generated from the data (Braun & Clarke, 2006; Kelly, 2010). A systematic analysis (use of the listening guide) of the content was conducted and potential themes and subthemes categories emerged (Ryan & Bernard, 2003). The thematic categories that emerged and meanings created thereof were further explored by using the theoretical framework as a lens as to be elaborated in the findings chapter of the current study (Kelly, 2010).

The listening guides instructions

Step one: Listening for the plot. This step comprises of two parts, namely; a) listening for the plot and b) the listener's response to the interview. The first part entails the researcher familiarising him/herself with the text by reading through it, followed by looking for what is happening and what stories are being told in the text which encompasses when, where, with whom and why.

Gilligan, et al. (2003) state that repeated images and metaphors as well as dominant themes are documented as contradictions and absences, or what is not expressed. For example, when listening for the plot for the first participant, I could hear how participant one, married Coloured male in his thirties, talked about the Information Technology industry, and from listening to him I found that he had a vast amount of experience in the field and therefore is highly knowledgeable about the industry “...*my background over the last 13*

years, its been, the span has been from training to uh technical, to pre-sales, uhm so I've worked in different facets of of of information technology...” What was also conveyed was that the field of IT is constantly changing and to work in this field one has to constantly be updated on the changes that's occurring, which makes the field very proactive. The dominant theme that emerged was work experience. In another extract of participant four, married White male, late thirties, conveyed a level of optimism even though technology changes on a daily basis and makes the job challenging. He still voiced how he enjoyed his job. “...every day is different, every situation is different, every person you work with is different, so yes, the challenges-makes it (hmm) enjoyable as well and that's what's making it nice for me.”

The researcher's responses are also important as the researcher cannot always assume a neutral position (Bansal & Corley, 2011; Gilligan, et al., 2003). It is for this reason that the researcher's responses are analysed, since this contributes to the relational context between the researcher and participant. My position in the study was not neutral. Neutrality is usually found in quantitative studies and that would mean the researcher distances him or herself from their research by having no preconceptions and interpretations of the phenomena being studied. According to Denzin (1989), it is impossible to ever have value-free interpretive research and to be free of the hermeneutical situation. To strive towards neutrality would mean that I am not acknowledging the role I played during the research and may obscure the findings of this study. In the present study, I documented my own responses through self-reflexivity notations. For example, a listeners' response for participant one: I felt frustrated on behalf of participant one when he said that he is in a leadership position but cannot implement his ideas as he claims to be micromanaged from the overseas branch in Australia. In my view, it sounds like he is filled with ideas but it's sad that he cannot implement them

which is potentially mainly due to a clash of cultural views (South African versus Australian culture) when it comes to management.

I cannot say that I agreed totally with the participant's views but I was respectful towards them as I believe it is his reality. I found myself feeling disappointed that the participant would use terms like "he", "him" and "himself" when he spoke about senior management positions, as this suggests to me that his view of senior management is reserved for males. I felt the participant portrayed a picture of a male in a senior position with both masculine and feminine characteristics.

Overall, the main reason I documented my self-reflexivity was in the hope that I would be better able to not take on the experiences of the participants as my own, nor to not allow my own responses to cloud the material the participant would bring and interfere with my ability to listen to and connect with the participant's experience (Gilligan, et al., 2003). However, a certain amount of co-construction is inevitable (Gergen, 2001).

Step two: *I poems*. In this step, the researcher focuses on the text that contains "I", followed by the use of the first person pronoun ("I"). This is done for two reasons. Firstly, it allows the researcher to listen to the participant's first-person voice (every time the participant uses "I") and secondly, it allows the researcher to hear how the participant speaks about and knows him or herself.

According to Gilligan, et al., (2003) there are two rules that govern the construction of the *I poem*. Firstly, when reading through the text, every first-person "I" that appears within the text must be underlined along with the verb and any seemingly important words that

accompany the selected text. Secondly, the sequence in which the phrases appear should be maintained. All the underlined “I” phrases and their accompanying words should be placed on a separate line, like a poem that has a stanza.

The *I poem* picks up on an associative stream of consciousness carried by a first-person voice, cutting across or running through a narrative (Hesse-Biber & Leavy, 2006). In qualitative research, the feminist standpoint is based on the notion that research is in service of ‘truth-telling’ with some researchers grounding this truth in individual experience (Gergen, 2008). Thus, *I poems* are important in feminist qualitative research as it suggests ownership of the individual’s experience and emancipation of their voice.

Step three: Listening for contrapuntal voices. In this step, the analysis is framed into the relationship with the research question. The researcher identifies, specifies, and sorts out the different strands in the interview that may speak to the research question. Once again, this process entails reading through the interview and taking time tuning into one aspect of the story being told, or one voice within the person’s expression of her or his experience. The researcher’s questions shape this listening, which may be based on the theoretical framework guiding the research, or the questions raised by the previous listenings, or both. In particular, when participant five was probed in question one on what made him choose the field of Information Technology, there was a voice of grace as the company at the time gave him a chance to further his studies. In comparison, question four on the interview protocol sheet asked: How do you see policies of the government such as the Employment Equity Act playing out in the workplace? The same participant appeared to voice resentment towards the South African government, feeling that their policies are implemented just for showcasing by the companies.

In this step, the researcher may hear and develop an understanding of several different layers of a person's expressed experience as it bears on the question posed. This means that two or more types of voices may be discovered that answers the research question and may be contradicting.

Step four: Composing an analysis of the text. In this step, the researcher must bring together what has been learned about the participant in relation to the research question. With the research question in mind, the following questions were considered: What have you learned about this question through this process and how have you come to know this? What is the evidence on which you are basing your interpretations? Gilligan, et al. (2003) informs that there may be times that the researcher may need to modify the research question in response to this series of listenings.

The separate listenings should not be seen in isolation but must be brought back into relationship with one another to avoid reduction or loss of the complexity of a person's expressed experience. Specifically, after listening for contrapuntal voices for participant three, I noticed that the voice of frustration move with particular *I poems* more than the others. This voice was more dominant when speaking about work duties, and already emerged at the start of the interview. It was identified that the voice of optimism moves away from the *I-poem*. Here the participant talks about the small incentives they receive should they be on standby or work overtime. The voices took turns, however the voice of frustration appeared louder.

Measures of Trustworthiness

For the purpose of this qualitative study, measures of trustworthiness were used. Trustworthiness is established according to Guba's Model which includes credibility, transferability, dependability, confirmability and authenticity (Guba, 1981; Guba & Lincoln, 1994).

I established credibility by emphasising the need for a space for honesty of participants' responses. In addition, to enhance credibility, I invested considerable time clarifying participants' responses during the interviews and encouraging elaboration. Participants were informed at the start of the interviews that there are no right or wrong answers as a way to ensure honesty of their responses (Shenton, 2004).

During the interviews, I clarified and summarised the participant's responses to enhance the credibility of data (Tobin & Bergley, 2004). Transferability refers to whether the findings can be applied in another context. Therefore a thick description¹³ of the sample and the context was provided to enable transferability (Malterud, 2001; Shenton, 2004). Dependability of this study was enhanced by the "overlapping of method" (Shenton, 2004). This means that there is congruence in the philosophical assumptions (social constructionist paradigm) guiding the research all the way through to the type of data collection and data analysis strategies (Shenton, 2004). Confirmability of this study was established by using disclosure of the researcher's beliefs and assumptions and authenticity¹⁴. I disclosed my

¹³ Thick description refers to providing as much detail or information as possible to the reader (Geertz, 2008).

¹⁴ Authenticity of fairness refers to the representation of all voices pertaining to their thoughts, perceptions, feelings, concerns, assertions and experiences are treated fairly. All stories treated fairly and not marginalised against as the one story being more important than the other or left out deliberately (Onwuegbuzie & Collins, 2007).

beliefs and assumptions to reduce potential bias and discuss this in the next section on self-reflexivity. Authenticity was used as a method to ensure fairness to all participants by representing all participants' voices in the text (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005). This is reflected by incorporating extracts from all participants.

Ethical considerations

Since qualitative research is saturated with ethical issues (Gergen, 2008), permission to conduct the research was requested from the Research Ethics Committee of University of South Africa (UNISA) and the Division of the Institutional Research and Planning of UNISA (*see Appendix A*). By keeping in mind that ethics can be defined as follows: "Ethics is a set of moral principles which is suggested by an individual or group, is subsequently widely accepted, and which offers rules and behavioral expectations about the most correct conduct towards experimental subjects and respondents, employers, sponsors, other researchers, assistants and students." (De Vos, Strydom, Fouché & Delport, 2005), I first obtained access to the company by contacting the gatekeeper and obtaining written consent (*see appendix C*). Once access was granted, I drafted a brochure which was circulated by the gatekeeper to inform the potential participants of the study (*see appendix D*).

Potential participants that decided to take part in the study were contacted via email and briefed about the time and venue of the interview. Prior to the interview, I obtained written informed consent (Willig & Stainton-Rogers, 2008) from each employee that participated in the study (*see Appendix E*). The informed consent letter informed participants

about the overall purpose of the study and that their participation is entirely voluntary (Willig & Stainton-Rogers, 2008). I followed the internationally agreed upon ethical principles as stipulated by the Belmont Report (Amdur, 2011). These ethical principles include respect for persons, beneficence and justice.

Respect for persons

Participants were recruited and voluntarily consented to participate in the study (Willig & Stainton-Rogers, 2008). As mentioned above, the participants signed a consent form which granted their permission to participate in the study. Participants' privacy and confidentiality was protected which ensured anonymity. Only my supervisors and I have access to the recordings. Anonymity is ensured by identification details being removed from transcripts and not being reported upon. The transcriber signed a confidentiality agreement form to protect the participant's identification information (*see Appendix E*) and participants were informed that they could discontinue their participation in the study at any time if they felt they no longer wished to participate.

Beneficence

Towards the end of the interviews, I provided each participant with debriefing information to address any potential psychological harm that could have arisen during or potentially after the interview. The methods for this study were implemented with caution and care. This was done by interviewing participants in a respectful manner, which entailed respecting their opinions and experiences. The participants were also informed that should they wish, they could be provided with a report of the general findings. This study had intrinsic as well as negligible extrinsic gain. Intrinsic gains are that participants provided

unique insights to this study and the profession of Psychology. Extrinsic gain included a Woolworth's voucher worth a R150 as token of appreciation for their time.

According to Grant and Sugarman (2004) previous studies have shown that the use of incentives was considered as a form of undue influence or coercive offer. Thus the ethical issue of undue influence is not about coercion but the corruption of judgement. However, Grant and Sugarman (2004) state that the use of incentives in research is problematic when it is conjoined with one or more of the following elements: research participants are in a dependency relationship with the researcher; the risks of the research is particularly high; the research is degrading; when the participant will only consent if the incentive is relatively large since the participants aversion to the study is crucial; and the aversion is a principled one. In the present study, the incentive was not conjoined to the above mentioned elements and was amicably given to participants as a token of appreciation of their time.

Justice

The participants in this study were current employees in the field of Information Technology and therefore would benefit from the research findings as the study deals with the experiences of employees. All participants were treated with fairness in that all participants' voices in the text were represented as evidenced in the findings (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005).

Conclusion

In this chapter, I have described the methods used in the current study. I also provided the aim and objectives of the study. Based on the aim and objectives, I have described the research design undertaken. In this section, I have also described the participant selection to constitute the sample, data collection, data procedures, data analysis and reflexivity of myself as the researcher. Moreover, crucial ethical concerns were discussed and maintained throughout the research process.

In Chapter 5 of the current study the findings are presented and discussed in light of the literature reviewed as well as the theoretical framework of the study.

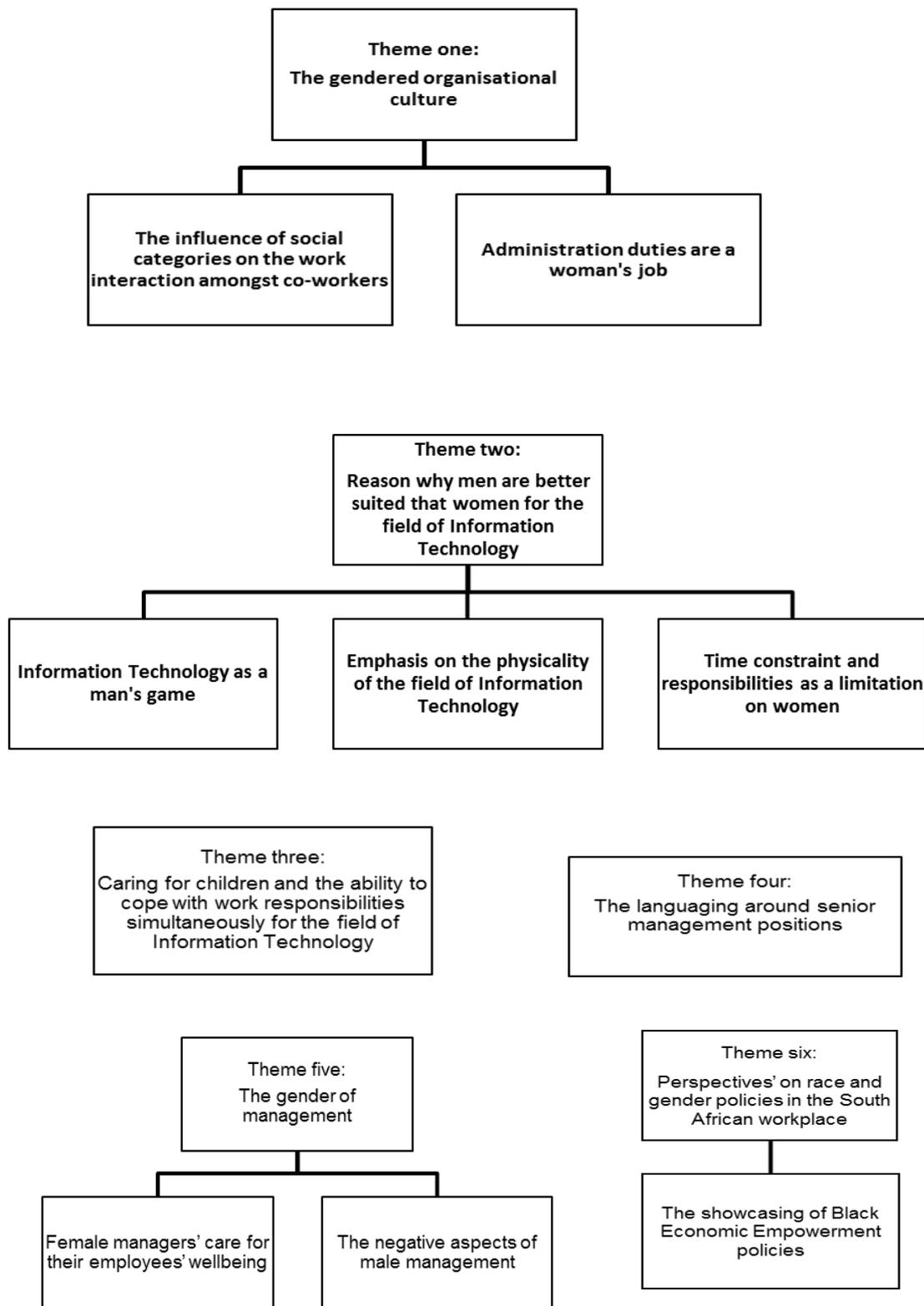
CHAPTER 5

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The following chapter presents the analysis and findings of the transcribed interviews. There are two sections in this chapter. Section A, contains themes whereby the transcripts were analysed using Braun and Clarke's (2006) method of thematic analysis. The method contains six steps that were used as a guideline for the analysis. These steps included reading and re-reading the transcripts, and generating themes and sub-themes for the codes that were of interest to the research question. Section B of this chapter contains the psychological analysis using the listening guide as a way of understanding the inner world of another person (Gilligan, et al., 2003). The literature review and theoretical orientations outlined in previous chapters are drawn upon when discussing the findings.

Section A

Section A of this chapter represents the findings of the study using thematic analysis. Six main themes emerged from the analysis. These main themes were: the gendered organisational culture; reasons why men are better suited than women for the field of the field of Information Technology; caring for children and the ability to cope with work responsibilities simultaneously; the languaging around senior management positions; the gender of management; and perspectives on race and gender policies in the South African workplace. Some of the pertinent thematic categories were then divided into subthemes and described further, elucidating the aims and objectives of the study. The research question is focused toward the gendered experiences of male and female employees in the field of Information Technology.



Above is a diagrammatic representation of the main themes and subthemes identified in the study.

Theme one: The gendered organisational culture

The field of Information Technology is known to be a male-dominated industry (Wentling & Thomas, 2007). This is not only evident in historical and contemporary times, nor only in the demographic composition of the employees, but in the assumptions made, values systems and everyday gender practices that take place. More specifically, this theme encapsulates how employees of different social categories interact with each other, the roles they fulfil and beliefs about men and women's role in the workplace.

Subtheme: The influence of social categories on the work interaction amongst co-workers

Demographic attributes, especially the physical features such as race and sex, are often used as a basis for social categories. Thus, social categories shape how individuals experience their reality as people that have similar social categories are more likely to share comparable backgrounds and experiences. Social categories therefore have an influence on an individual's interaction with others in the workplace. In this theme, the social categories race, gender and age highlight the various types of interactions amongst co-workers.

Extract 1: P4a: *"... if we call it race, white females that I do trust more than white men and the other way around as well... so yes, the females are more loyal. But it tends to get more loyal by age as well as race."* (P4; 100)

Extract one presents tautology when participant four, who is a White male, pointed out that he trusts white females more than white males and he trusts white males more than white females, instead of just stating that he trusts white males and females. Participant four

specifically mentioned gender, race and age, which indicates that he considers loyalty to derive specifically from females that are white and the same age category as he is. The repertoire of trust can be said to represent the same race and age group and in some contexts the same gender. Females are perceived as more loyal, which suggest that females by virtue are supposed to be more loyal than males. However, participant four also mentioned “*the other way around as well*” which one could assume to be the same level of loyalty from his male colleagues. The repertoires of loyalty and trust here represent white females and white males of the same age category as participant four (Chatman et al., 1998).

The findings of the present study is similar to previous findings that have shown that employees who are dissimilar to their colleagues are less likely to trust their colleagues than those who are more similar (Rousseau & Parks, 1993). What is depicted in extract one of participant four is the similarity that is shared with others of the same social category. Previous findings have revealed that similarity in race-ethnicity affected individuals' attitudes toward their work group, as well as perceptions of advancement opportunities (Riordan & Shore, 1997). Also people from similar race-ethnicity groups are perceived to have higher levels of work group productivity, advancement opportunities, and work group commitment (Riordan & Shore, 1997). However, in the present study there was no indication of attitudes toward work groups in terms of group productivity, advancement opportunities and work group commitment. It was found that when it comes to gender, policies such as the Employment Equity Act (1998) and the Black Economic Empowerment (2003) policies aid these aspects, especially advancement opportunities in the workplace (Moletsane & Reddy, 2010).

Extract 2: P4b: *“I’ve got a(n) Indian older woman, she’s much older than me, but the loyal(ty) is not there. So there you might be resulting, yes she’s older than me, why do she need to be loyal? I need to look up to her, or stuff like that...”* (P4; 102)

In extract two, race and age was mentioned again but as it pertained to a female of another race category. In this context, more emphasis was placed on the age than on gender category. In the previous extract, the repertoire of loyalty related to a white female of the same age category. In extract two, the repertoire of loyalty pertains to the respect a younger person gives to an older person and not the other way around. Here Crenshaw’s theory of intersectionality displays an intersection of race, gender and age (Crenshaw, 1989). Trust is not isolated to gender but intersects race. The same can be stated about loyalty that intersects the race and age social group.

Participant four was in a leadership position and emphasised the lack of loyalty he received from an older female employee he was managing. An ideological dilemma is presented when participant four emphasised that there is no loyalty and then he excused why the employee he manages should not be loyal to him. Loyalty is seen as a moral value in most cultures and is usually displayed by a younger person towards an older person (van der Geest, 1997). However, participant four was in a leadership position which involves subordinates reporting to him and showing him respect and loyalty in the context of the workplace regardless of their age, gender and race. As such, it is often the constructed values of the individual brought into the organisation and therefore influenced intrapersonal relations conflict in terms of consensus and conflict.

In the next extract participant three reported on age difference in the workplace.

Extract 3: P3: *“Or it becomes problematic. We are more into like, when it comes to the documentation and admin duties, I think, uhm, it also depends on our personalities and our attitudes towards that, because you also know that the, the men that we are working with, they are not like, it is more older.... older men that we are working with”* (P3; 241)

In extract three, the repertoire presented is an intergenerational difference between participant three who is in her twenties, and her older male colleagues. Participant three voiced that the older male employees in the company would task their administrative duties to their female counterparts, which suggests that the older males in the company view any administrative duties as being part of female colleagues’ duties. Participant three then assumed a defensive position when she stated, *“...I think, uhm, it also depends on our personalities and our attitudes towards that...”* which suggest that there are personality clashes, however, it appears that it tends to happen only with the older male employees. To me the ideological dilemma appears to be dichotomous between the personality and attitudes of the female employees toward administrative duties or the male colleagues’ stereotypical behaviour towards all administrative duties being given to the female colleagues.

There were other participants that felt that it was rather easier to interact with employees of the same gender. The female participants felt they interacted much easier with their female colleagues. This is evident in extract 4 and 5:

Extract 4: P2: *“Uhm, obviously you, you sort of befriend your female colleagues easier”* (P2; 18)

Extract 5: P3: “... *your bond with the females (hmm) also grow because you are sitting with them and so it is a ‘them’, and ‘us’ thing.*” (P3; 126)

The repertoires presented in extract four and five are shared social identities of the participants. Since individuals have something in common, it would be much easier to relate to each other; in this instance their gender. The subject position taken up by participant three in extract 5, was that of distancing when she referred to the men as “*them*” and to the females as an “*us thing*”. This indicated that there was a divide in the physical and social interactions between the male and female colleagues.

One male participant felt that interaction with his male colleagues was much easier compared to his female colleagues. The following sentiment was shared in extract 6:

Extract 6: P1: “*You know, where I’ve worked with female colleagues over two, three, four years, then that relationship developed where, uhm, we could chat about anything. It wasn’t as formal and output driven, uhm, but, uhm, with male colleagues it’s easier to get to that point.*” (P1; 52)

Arguably, when participant one engaged with others of another social category, it took time before relationships were established. This is indicated in extract six, where participant one positioned himself in a space of familiarity with his female colleagues. He mentioned “*two, three, four years*” a period of a few years to establish a relationship with female colleagues that is similar in nature to his male colleagues.

The participants in this study have reported that there are differences in their work interactions, especially with their male and female colleagues. This finding is congruent with the research of Crowley and Elster (2013) which investigated the way men and women hold differences. In the workplace men are friendly towards their colleagues, while women become more personal in that they relate to their colleagues, clients and vendors as friends (Crowley & Elster, 2013). According to Byrne (1971) individuals are more likely to be attracted to individuals who are similar to themselves based on outstanding demographic characteristics. Thus, men and women would instinctively group with those of the same gender, race or ethnicity.

In the present study, different perspectives were noted when it came to minimising the differences in social categories that exist in the workplace. This is evident in extract 7 and 8:

Extract 7: P1: *"I find that I'm probably more formal with my female colleagues than I am with my male colleagues."* (P1; 48)

Extract 8: P2: *"...professionally, you know, with regards to work, we would, uhm, try to treat each other the same..."* (P2; 18)

In extract 7, participant one would treat his female colleagues more formally than he would his male colleagues. The repertoire *"more formal"* suggests that additional cautionary actions are taken when it came to participant one's female colleagues. Participant one's actions therefore suggest that he acknowledges that women are different to men and by being *"more formal"* this would eliminate any possible inappropriate behaviour deemed by women.

In extract 8, participant two used the word “we” which suggest that herself and her colleagues strive to treat everyone professionally in the workplace. It appeared to me that in her frame of reference, the repertoire “*professionally*” refers to treating others equally to eliminate distinct differences that may exist.

Extract 7 and 8 therefore show the different perspectives that participant one and two have taken in the workplace. Participant one had the perspective of men and women being treated differently in the workplace, however, this then reinforces gender stereotypes in the workplace (Nentwich, 2006). Participant two had the perspective of everyone (men and women, different races or background) being treated the same in the workplace, however, this ignores the differences that exists, especially between men and women. The subject positioning that participant one assumed is that of the difference whilst participant two assumes a collective positioning when she used “we” in her statement.

The sameness and difference dilemma presented in the workplace indicates that gender has to be recognised, yet treatment in the workplace enforces an ethic of professionalism as a way to manage potential discrimination that may arise (Tucker, 2014). When male and female colleagues acknowledge each other’s strengths and weaknesses, a healthy work relationship can be established (Tucker, 2014). A healthy work relationship therefore requires boundaries that support professional behaviour and encourage appropriate interactions amongst male and female colleagues.

While sameness and difference were noted, depicted in the workplace were possible gender controversies hidden between the lines. This is evident when participant five stated the following:

Extract 9: P6a: “...I think by just maybe in my line sometimes you can look at a person and then obviously you, you, you’ll just think or in your opinion, you will just say (hmm) it in your mind, I think that this is what you are trying to say, but then obviously it’s not officially said.” (P6; 150)

P6b: “It could be anything, ja (yes). It’s like that (hmm) silent message that you get you know. It’s like read between the lines kind of a thing, but then, ja (yes), I have... In terms of that, maybe on odd occasions, but not, not really something that that I have seen (hmm) quite around.” (P6; 152)

P6c: “No, it’s just that situation that you just now and then get or that odd comment (hmm) that that people give you know. So then, use that reading between the lines it’s not that it’s not what someone said, but it’s just the way you interpret it” (P6; 154)

Participant six’s comments could refer to various remarks regarding gender. However, this speculation could not be confirmed by the participant. I tried to probe participant six to give some examples of a typical odd occasion or comment, but he kept speaking around the topic, which suggests that gender stereotypes are subtly or implicitly enacted in the workplace and is not explicitly spoken about or acknowledged. It is interesting to note that participant five stated that interpretation is left to the individual receiving the comment. Thus, only the individual receiving the comment can say whether they have experienced gender stereotyping by drawing on a second order of interpretive or hermeneutic assumptions such as non-verbal cues expressed at the event (Gergen, 2001).

In this theme, there seemed to be various interactions based on employees' social categories in the workplace. Differences were noted and presented in terms of the social categories gender, race and age. Despite the differences being acknowledged or not, employees try to enforce an ethic of professionalism. It appeared as if there were some form of gender controversies in the workplace, but these could not be pinned down. Gender differences or conflict seemed to be downplayed through subtle or vague acknowledgement.

Subtheme: Administration duties are a woman's job

One of the dominant themes that emerged in the study was that of perceiving administration duties as something that are to be done by women. When participant three was asked what it was like working in the field of Information Technology, she immediately spoke about how the males used the females as secretaries. This was supported by participant two who also felt that male colleagues tend to give female colleagues all their work that contains specific or practical details to document. There was a frustration from the females towards the males in the workplace but participants did not stand up to their male counterparts as to their role which was relegated to the support function of the administration.

Social signals and social behaviours are the expression of the participants' attitude towards social situation and interplay, and they are manifested through a multiplicity of non-verbal behavioural cues including facial expressions, body postures and gestures, and vocal outbursts like laughter (Vinciarelli, Pantic & Bourlard, 2008). The non-verbal gestures such as the laughter, giggling and smiling, were predominant when interviewing the female participants in the present study.

These gestures may serve as a way of enduring the frustration and allows them to cope with the situation. Below are sentiments shared by the female participants in this study:

Extract 10: P3: *“Admin is a woman’s job, you know. It is just that the older guys that we get, they are from an unfortunately, like the older guys are more senior than us.”* (P3; 249)

In extract 10, participant three responded to the dynamics that exist in the workplace. She informed me that the younger male colleagues in the company were more open-minded and stated that it was the older male colleagues in the company that passed on their administrative duties to the female colleagues. Thus, even if egalitarianism may be desired, the dominant orders still potentially remain to be ideological (Gergen, 2011). In extract 11, participant three gives an account of her experience with her male counterparts.

Extract 11: P3a: *“I am also working a lot with like males and if you are female, you also like, they tend to look, give you like the admin stuff [smiles], always like shoving it your way. Ja (yes), so, but you have to like basically stand your ground [giggles]”* (P3; 33)

P3b: *“Like if you, say if you had to type out stuff, because I mean, I always like say, you can’t have the one without the other and filing (hmm) and if you have to create knowledge basis, like they always shove it your way, like all the literature stuff (laughing). I just see, ‘type this’. I’m like ‘ggg, I am not your typist’ (laughing).”* (P3; 37)

P3c: *“Well it’s, it’s sort of like, uhm, because our unit here doesn’t, there is no secretary (hmm), so I think the males in the unit sees all the females, as this can be my*

secretary person and you have to like fulfil that role as well, like if there is copying to be done, they will just give it to you.” (P3; 108)

P3d: *“Because, ja (yes), we have just now accepted it, that they are like that (hmm). Because it is sort of like a, like a little vicious cycle. All the females that join (hmm), we get thrown into this (hmm), we have to do this, so you basically, you don’t fight against it anymore, you just like, ‘they are like that’(hmm), the males and then you just take it up.” (P3; 116)*

The repertoire “*secretary*” implies that women should be in positions that resemble traditionally feminine characteristics, in this instance women being of service to men. In the organisation, this then reinforces perceptions of one’s self and the other in terms of the valued norm (Long & Zietkiewicz, 2006).

The utilisation of the words “*shoving*”; “*little vicious cycle*”; “*thrown into this*”; “*don’t fight against it anymore*” indicates a powerless view that participant three holds about her work environment. The utilisation of these words suggests that when women join the field of Information Technology, they will assume the reality of being submissive. Participant three assumed a transitional position where she went from assertive “*you have to like basically stand your ground; I just see, ‘type this’. I’m like ‘ggg, I am not your typist’*” to a position of timidity “*we have just now accepted it, that they are like that; so you basically, you don’t fight against it anymore, you just like, ‘they are like that’(hmm), the males and then you just take it up*”. The collective noun “*we*” is used when participant three stated, “*we have to do this*” which suggests the lack of power the females hold in the workplace.

Extract 12: P2: “[laughter] Sometimes there are uhm, uhm, men are [sigh], I don’t know, they... I think it’s also because we are more administrative [hmm], they tend to uhm, uhm, they tend to want to give the nitty gritty stuff that they don’t want to do, they tend to want to pass that on to you, uhm, ja (yes).” (P2; 16)

In extract 12, the “nitty gritty stuff” refers to tiresome administrative duties such as specific or practical details to document that needs to be done. It came across that this happens quite frequently and is evident when participant two used the word “tend”. There is also a clear divide in where the female and male colleagues are positioned. The female colleagues are constructed as taking on supportive roles towards the male colleagues’ projects.

Literature has shown that women are overrepresented in clerical, services and health-related occupations (Catalyst, 2013). In particular, women heavily dominate in secretarial occupations (Catalyst, 2013). Feminised jobs are generally characterised as administrative support jobs (Barnette, 2004). This therefore suggests that male employees in the Information Technology industry have constructed women’s roles in the workplace to be that of support. In that, the male employees have constructed their own duties not to be preoccupied with administrative duties but with work that displays their importance as men in the workplace. As such, administrative duties are stereotyped as being a female’s duties and requiring female characteristics, and therefore not considered to be of great value as compared to duties stereotyped as requiring male characteristics (Alksnis et al., 2008).

Setting up women’s roles as being relegated to administrative duties appears to reinforce sex-role socialisation whereby the female employees are viewed as less skilled in

male-dominated environments. The gender binary systems are clear whereby women are placed in support roles and men in the roles that involve decision making and action. The ideological dilemma presented here emphasises the stereotypical prescribed role that women are supposed to assume has spilled over from the traditional home sphere into the workplace.

Theme two: Reasons why men are better suited than women for the field of Information Technology

In this theme, the male participants gave their perspectives on why the field of Information Technology is ill-suited for women to work in. Stereotypical notions around historical and contemporary times were highlighted. The field of Information Technology was alluded to as belonging to men as they were perceived to be the founders of technology. Females that worked in the field of Information Technology would therefore have a tough time breaking through to the upper echelons as a result of the masculine image that the field carries. Physical duties were seen as being inherent to males. And motherly or home-making responsibilities were seen as being inherent to females and were viewed as a limitation because the field of Information Technology occasionally required irregular or late working hours.

Sub-theme: Information Technology field as a man's game

Participants' comments indicated that though women were gaining entry into this field, men would always be ahead due to their historic advantage in the field. There was a belief that the field of Information Technology will always be male-dominated.

Extract 13: P5: *"It's, it's, it's historically more male made it into IT in early days, the trend is changing now (hmm). If you go back to varsity (university), when I were there, there*

was no woman (hmm) doing IT, it was like, way beyond that. I am not saying that you guys didn't, but it's men who take the risk, same thing, if we look at, if you look at Facebook, you look at, uh, all the, the, the cellphone, all the technology that we have today, it's men that's developed it (hmm). There isn't a female you can say, "this lady developed this system". They might be very good at managing, but somehow it's always traditionally a man's game, but it's changing." (P5; 142)

Extract 13 displays three role repertoires of men in the field of Information Technology. Firstly, men were the first to start off the field of Information Technology. Secondly, there were hardly any women who studied Information Technology. The phrase "*way beyond that*" emphasised by participant five indicated that the Information Technology occupation was outside the scope of feminine occupations. Thirdly, participant five stressed that men took risks and as a result technological interventions exist. There is an ideological dilemma present when he gives credit to women being good at managing but then emphasises that men are inherently good at it. Despite roles repertoires being emphasised as masculine in the field of Information Technology, it is possible that when enough men and women share a role pattern, or adopt a new pattern, the institution begins to change, albeit slowly, as a response to old institutional patterns such as gender stereotyping and creating new shared lifestyle (Menaghan, 1989). A psychological symptom like distress is most likely when one's role repertoire is no longer aligned to the normal expectable situation in terms of one's age and gender.

Extract 14: P3a: "*Yes, the female, the amount of female managers have increased, but also like only in your administrative (hmm) or your supporting departments... that would be*

like your HR your – uhm, they have now more senior female managers, but like the top boss, is still male” (P3; 205)

The ideological dilemma in the company was highlighted when participant three emphasised there is only an increase of female management in the administrative and supporting departments and that the hierarchy is still male-dominated. This suggests that the field of Information Technology is still male-dominated from the top and that women will only dominate in the supportive roles.

According to Wajcman (2009) the lack of female technological intervention can be traced back to identity, gender and technology during the childhood of females, where femininity at the time was being reinterpreted as incompatible with technological pursuits. In contrast to Wajcman (2009), there are many technological interventions by women. For example, in the United States of America (USA), the windshield wiper blade was invented by Mary Anderson (1866–1953); Virginia Apgar devised the Apgar score to assess the health of newborn babies (1909–1974); and Ruth R. Benerito (1916–2013) developed the wash-and-wear cotton fabrics (clothing that does not require ironing after washing). Ada Lovelace Byron (1815-1852) was the founder of scientific computing. She is considered to be the very first programmer in history as she specifically tailored an algorithm for the Babbage’s Analytical Engine to compute Bernoulli numbers. The United States Department of Defence gave her first name Ada, written as “A-D-A”, to one of the most important programmes in the world which is used by the U.S Army, Navy and Air Force, universities and other centres of research (Toole, 1996).

Extract 15: P3b: *“And, if you look in the company structure in general as well, there is not a female, uhm, in charge of any business unit. So that is all only male-dominated. The*

only way I feel that you can come in here as a female, is if you are like a shareholder or something that you can buy your shares, uhm, but not really.” (P3; 209)

Participant three placed emphases on how it was tough for a female to work her way up to senior management unless she buys her way there. This possibly suggests that women are not taken seriously in the workplace and may therefore work many years in the same position if ever considered for a promotion. Participant three expressed the ideological dilemma in extract 15 when she emphasised females can secure their place in senior management positions by buying shares but then stated “*but not really*”. This indicates that a female advancing into senior management is so tough that buying shares into senior management would not work as a solution. It is therefore through the negotiation that these roles have emerged through communities consisting on men. There is a shared understanding of women’s roles in the workplace which should be submissive. This therefore translates that women should be excluded from senior management positions as these positions are associated with assertiveness and authority (Agrawal, n.d).

However, participant two did not share this view and had an optimistic outlook that the amount of females will eventually increase since women have just started entering the field. This is evident in extract 16.

Extract 16: P2: “*Ag, I think it’s, uhm, just because females only started getting into the workplace later and, uh, I think with time, you can definitely see it’s- it’s picking up. You can definitely see. It’s, I think as we go along it will, one day, we will be equals [laughter].” (P2; 38)*

The repertoire in extract 16 “*we will be equals*” suggests that participant two acknowledges that there is currently inequality in the field but reasons that it is only due to the late entry of women into the field. I felt that participant two’s laughter was a way to ease the present reality and to add hope to the future or it could be interpreted as possible anxiety on the sensitive topic such as gender which surfaced during the interview.

Industries such as Engineering and Geology were dominated by men for a long time. Over a number of years this has changed as more women started entering these previously male-dominated industries (Miller, 2004). Similarly, the field of Information Technology is a male-dominated industry and with the slow increase of women into these industries, acceptance has slowly taken place. However, the reality conveyed by participants was that at present women that do enter the field of Information Technology are expected to fulfil supportive roles such as administrative duties, finance or sales.

Subtheme: Emphasis on the physicality of the field of Information Technology

Most of the male participants placed emphasis on the physical job aspects of the field of Information Technology and their version of why it would be ill-suited for a female to work in this field. This notion displays the physical side of the occupation as a means to effectively reinforce the division of work by gender.

Extract 17: P6: “*...you know like men they, they, they, they, just go and do things and women are a bit soft subtle organised and IT requires you know well certain or I think a huge part of IT enforce you know like carrying around machines working with jeans, go on the floor, working with cables you know that kind of a thing, so I think if, if you, if you get what I*

am trying to say. Whereas, if you look in a finance department or whatever, you will find a lot of ladies (hmm) there and it's like that in any company I suppose.” (P6; 74)

Extract 18: P4: *“I just don't think women want to crawl underneath tables or in roofs, but if they want to, by all means. That doesn't matter. Uhm, in Engineering, most of the time Engineering these days are consulting jobs. And there are a lot of women who put their hard hat on and they go to site and inspect the stuff. Nothing wrong with that. Uhm, construction might be different. Men are unfortunately stronger than women.” (P4; 270)*

In extract 17, participant six rationalised why men are better suited for the field of Information Technology. He stated that men just go and do things which demands bravery or courage. These traits stated by participant six are relegated as desirable traits in men (Bem, 1974). He also implied that the field of Information Technology does not require any mental activity when he emphasised that the majority of duties involved physical labour such as carrying machines, working with cables, wearing jeans and crawling on the floor. The physical labour of the duties carried out in the field of Information Technology also signifies that the work involves getting dirty, which is not in line with the traditional roles of women.

Participant six described women as being a *“bit soft”*, *“subtle”* and *“organised”*. This choice of words therefore emphasised a perceived mismatch between women and the field of Information Technology. He voiced that women were more likely to be found in occupations such as finance, which suggests that this type of occupation is better suited for women to enact characteristics of being traditionally feminine (Bem, 1974).

There is an ideological dilemma between the roles of women in the workplace in extract 18. In this extract, participant four acknowledges that women are capable of doing masculine duties when he talks about women that go into construction, but there is disapproval when he stated, *“Nothing wrong with that. Uhm, construction might be different. Men are unfortunately stronger than women”*.

In addition, participant four’s choice of words *“Men are unfortunately stronger than women”* suggests that men are more likely than women to be allocated to strength-requiring occupations such as manual work, strength, robustness, mathematical skills, analytical skills, technical demands, exercise of authority whereas women are typed for social, nurturing, and detail-oriented. However, some types of physical labour are the province of women (for example, fine motor skills), other types are more integrated (such as, strength), and yet other types are very much the province of men (like robustness) (Levanon & Grusky, 2012).

The carrying of equipment and picking up heavy boxes were described by male participants as the most physical and masculine aspect of the Information Technology industry.

The physical features of an individual are seen to be an inherent part of the roles that they will perform, such as men are masculine therefore are relegated to strength requiring duties whereas women are feminine and therefore require duties that are not strength requiring, such as administrative duties. This finding is similar to Moletsane and Reddy’s (2010) findings. Their findings revealed that men were viewed as being constructed differently on a cognitive level as well as a biological level. More specifically, women were

viewed as being physically weak and were therefore limited to less physically labour intensive tasks (Moletsane & Reddy, 2010).

It was interesting to note how chivalry presented itself in the data. The emphasis of the physical work environment portrayed the relative valuation of women on the basis of physical attraction. Women's physical attraction therefore limits them in non-traditional occupations and positions them as being in need of protection and the stereotypical roles they need to fulfil. This in turn effectively reinforces binary gender divisions in the workplace.

Even though chivalry may be considered a benign gesture, it can however limit women when it is believed that women should only fulfil certain roles (Altermatt, 2001). The behaviour acted out in the field of Information Technology comes forth as chivalrous and this is with reference to my personal encounter with participant one as he opened doors for me and was very courteous towards me.

In the extract below, participant four presented chivalrously towards females. He stated that one cannot expect women to do certain things such as climbing a ladder, because it is not safe, yet an explanation of how chivalry contradicts job demands is in need of further exploration as such climbing ladders may form part of the job description regardless of the gender of the person. The ideological dilemma is presented by participant four when he stated that there are no limitations to any career but his belief that women are not to be placed in danger. He positions himself as chivalrous as he will not allow any danger to befall women.

Extract 19: P4: *"I don't think any career, there aren't limitations. It's society that creates that. That's the ones that create the issues, not the, uhm, businesses and stuff like*

that. They are open-minded, I mean if you've got the skills and stuff, they will appoint you into whatever position (hmm). But then again there are certain things that you cannot expect a woman to do. You cannot expect a woman to climb up a ladder a hundred metres in the air, it's just not safe. It's not that you're discriminate against you, that's how we were... put together. The women aren't supposed to be put in danger. That's how it is." (P4; 258 & 260)

Chivalry can maintain stereotypes about women in how they should behave and thus coerces women to carry out gendered duties in the workplace. This is similar to the findings of Miller's (2004) study whereby the males treated the female geologist and engineers chivalrously by carrying out physical labour. Here it can be seen how chivalry is presented as benevolent sexism. The behaviours and attitudes of the men toward women are sexist in terms of viewing women stereotypically and in restricted roles, yet these are perceived positively and also tend to bring about behaviours typically categorised as keeping women safe, protecting and respecting them (Glick & Fiske, 1996). It is therefore envisioned that women should be placed in a type of environment that would be stereotypically linked to their nature of being or physicality. In the next extract, it can be noted the type of environment this male participant envisions women to work in.

Extract 20: P6: *"I just feel that that that by, by nature (hmm) I think it's, it's like women would prefer an environment (hmm) if you had to now ask them they would rather prefer an environment that's organised (hmm) it's like 'okay, no chaos' and you know, do soft, soft things"* (P6; 82)

Participant six generalises when he voiced that all women prefer an environment that is organised, with no chaos and which is soft. This choice of words suggests that women cannot handle work environments that require masculine traits and physical labour.

In extract 19, participant four was very vocal when he spoke about respecting women in the workplace. It can be noted that he strongly promoted chivalry. He felt he would not ask a woman to move around tables because he respects women. Even though women are able to do it, participant four felt that it would go against his “*principles*”. These principles of are possibly gender roles that have been defined socially and culturally by the prescriptions and beliefs about the behaviour and emotions of men and women (Anselmi & Law, 1998; Mintz, 2000). It was apparent during the interview how disrespect towards women bothered him. He pointed out that in certain religions, especially within the Muslim countries, women were not regarded as equally important as a man. This is shared in extract 21 below:

Extract 21: P4: *“Uh, United Arab Emirates, Muslim countries, that is religion that plays a role there, not the company. That’s religion, because in the Muslim world you are not allowed to work as a woman (hmm). You’re not allowed to be important as a woman. You’re not even allowed to go to the Mosque if you’re a woman with your man. So that’s religion, that’s not company, but I guess the UAE (United Arab Emirates) companies that’s only in (the) UAE (hmm). They might discriminate against that or make use of that. But the international companies that work in countries like that, they, they much more lenient towards that [coughing]. But again, that’s society. That’s society.”* (P4; 274)

Insofar, there were at least three different repertoires about women and their role in the Information Technology environment that were identified. Firstly, women are better at the

administration duties related to Information Technology; in extract 17, 18 and 19 there is an emphasis that men are physically stronger than women and therefore are made for rough and dangerous environments, while women should work in feminine environments that do not entail physical labour. Secondly, extract 19 and 20 presents a stereotype as to the type of work women should be doing which should be “*soft*” and the environment should be organised and not chaotic. Thirdly, participant four joked about women that do the physical duties such as climbing ladders and crawling underneath tables as not being “*real women*”. This suggests that women should not be acting outside the gender prescript of being seen as feminine. Here it can be seen how the essentialist presumption maintains that female-dominated occupations require abilities (for example, nurturing) that are regarded as prototypically female while male-dominated occupations require abilities (such as strength) that are regarded as prototypically male (Levanon & Grusky, 2012). The male participants appear to have internalised these essentialist presumptions.

The role of incongruity displayed here how men’s social roles, shared cultural set of beliefs and shared expectations of their behaviour is overlapped in the organisational duties (Welle & Heilman, 2005). Women who go against their gendered prescript by taking on masculine duties such as climbing up ladders and crawling underneath tables, are negatively evaluated (Ryan & Haslam, 2007).

The findings of the current study are similar to previous findings whereby women that go against the gendered prescripts regardless of the nature of the job are viewed negatively by their colleagues (Davison & Burke, 2000; Rudman & Glick, 1999; Ryan & Haslam, 2007). It should be noted that the organisation is viewed as a place that is open-minded by participant four. However, the employees that have joined the organisation have embodied and then

reproduced an understanding of what male and female gender roles are, as such the behaviour that is performed by males and females, as well as sex-categories and hierarchal relationships (Nentwich, 2003). It is here that it can be seen that employees are expected to “do gender” in the workplace (West & Zimmerman, 1987). And should women ever dare to “undo gender” they are labelled as “*not real women*” (Butler, 1990; 1993; 2004). It may be argued that women who choose to work in the physical environment of Information Technology will be evaluated as if they have violated a social norm (Eagly & Mladinic, 1994; Glick & Fiske, 1996; 2001; Welle & Heilman, 2005). The finding of this study is similar to that of Miller (2004) whereby the female participants had to strike a balance between being ‘like’ the valued masculine prototype which involved duties or roles that go against the feminine prescript and avoiding any implication that they would be regarded as “not really women”. The language around what it means to be a female employee in the field of Information Technology is closely linked to the stereotypical notions of being a woman.

Subtheme: Time constraints and home responsibilities as a limitation on women

The field of Information Technology usually involves time constraints such as working late hours or being on standby should something go wrong. These time constraints were seen as being exclusive to men as they were portrayed to be more flexible with time. Evidence of men’s flexibility with time was highlighted as the male participants talked about women’s home responsibilities that limit them from working late hours.

Extract 22: P4: *“Sometimes people forget (hmm) what industry are we in. Uhm, and yes, then they complain about this and that and but that unfortunately is part of being in IS or IT (hmm). A lot of stuff you can only do if the users are there (hmm). So that is part, that’s part of your choice when you, you, uhm, select this career. And that might also be why*

women don't go into the technical side of it because they need, they probably have more responsibilities at home (hmm). Because in the evenings it's usually kids must bath, food must be made and stuff like that, so ja, that might be a social thing that prevents the women from actually..." (P4; 244)

Extract 23: P5: "The more technical guys, I think it's because, uh, because of the late hours and, uh, guys are more technically trained because they can afford to work late hours they haven't got children to go home and cook for and those kinda things and the nightshift, it's men, it is easier for them to work night shifts. The more technical guys, uh, are men, so you find like if I can think of an example, uhm, you, you learn that the kind of role that a woman plays is more project management (hmm) and, uh, more process management. But when it comes to the technical side, when it comes to the nuts and bolts, it's the men that's important." (P5; 84)

The male participants clearly indicated that women have a second shift to fulfil when they get home (Hochschild, 1989). The above extracts 22 and 23 point to how men still see home duties as part of women's identity and therefore women cannot work late hours. The additional responsibilities, such as bathing the children, cooking supper and cleaning, are seen by the male participants as being exclusively part of women's identity. Participant four creates a notion of why women do not choose occupations such as Information Technology as it may interfere with the other roles they are meant to fulfil as a woman. The repertoires in extract 22 and 23 suggest that women are believed to have more responsibilities than men, such as home life, and therefore prevent them from working late hours. Furthermore, participant five emphasised that when it comes to the machines and nuts and bolts, men are regarded as important in that by virtue of being men they automatically understand machines.

More specifically, women are seen as not understanding the technical side of Information Technology to the extent of males.

Research has revealed that the commitment to family members prohibits women from working shifts or traveling when the job requires them to do so or network with their colleagues after hours (Ahuja, 2002; Moletsane & Reddy, 2010). However, the notion that only men can work late or night shift is contradictory to many careers, for example, nursing where women are either required or have preferred to work nightshift duties (Garey, 1995; Hochschild, 1997). Previous studies highlight the support women receive from their spouse or other family members which privileges them to work late or night shift (Enchautegui, 2013; Kimmel & Powell, 2001; Garey, 1995).

In relation to the present study, even though participant four saw home duties as part of women's responsibilities, he mentioned the supportive role that a spouse plays. This is evident in extract 24:

Extract 24: P4: *"Your home roles have kind of shift, uh the woman is and that is also society (hmm). When we grew up what were we used to? Mom stays at home and dad works (hmm). These days that is not happening anymore, it might be the other way around, so yes, I mean if I can think of, there are a lot of people that work like that. The woman works in Jo'burg in a high class position, she only gets home at seven. So when the man gets home at five, he needs to make food and stuff like that, so things are changing (hmm). But they have been changing every day, every year, it's different."* (P4; 256)

An ideological dilemma between the roles of women in the home is presented in extract 24 where participant four mentions the changing roles of men and women in the home which contradicts his earlier sentiments on the reasons women cannot work late. The phrase “*kind of*” used by participant four in extract 24 suggests that the home roles are open to negotiation where male figures in the household take on household chores but traditional roles are still maintained.

It can be said that the male participants’ perspectives in the study voiced that women should be at home in the evenings because they have home responsibilities to fulfil. On the contrary, other views of women are presented, such as the possibility of working late hours and women going out to engineering construction sites (which was once a masculine domain). The uncertainty around women’s career advancement is most likely due to the language presented in terms of the messages and information women received from the organisation, peers and superiors as well as their commitment to home-life and work (Liff & Ward, 2001). This indicates that even though there is a traditional construction of women’s role in the workplace and home, there is an acknowledgement of women who are capable of doing tasks that are not traditionally feminine and a shift towards gender equality.

Theme three: Care for children and the ability to cope with work responsibilities simultaneously

Having young children and work responsibilities are always a challenging combination for working parents and has been a topic that is well-documented in social science literature and the media (Kimmel & Powell, 2001). However, these challenges tend to differ for male and female employees. The support networks received from spouses and family members have made it much easier for participants to cope with their work situation (Enchautegui, 2013; Kimmel & Powell, 2001; Presser & Cox, 1997).

Participant three alluded to the fact that she has the support of her family members who assist in taking care of her infant. The help of her family in caring for her infant assists in her work career as there is no interference in terms of her working hours in comparison to if she had to collect her infant at day-care during or after her work day. The individual-psychological dimension was identified in participant three's work identity (Kirpal, 2004), which displays how participant three's identity orientation is shaped by her behaviours, deeds, actions and institutional affiliations in order for her to become a better worker in adapting to her dual role as a mother and a female employee in a male-dominated environment. For participant three to cope, she made use of support networks such as her parents to care for her infant (Kimmel & Powell, 2001).

Extract 25: P3: *"I don't think I would have been able to cope if the baby was at daycare because they have strict hours, I must pick her up at four or before five or something like that and that would be more of an issue, but not so, so family, the support from them like helps immensely."* (P3; 283)

With reference to extract 26, participant one felt that his time was his own as his son was with his wife during the marital separation. This allowed him to work the irregular hours that the job demanded. The repertoire *"a lot easier"* in extract 26 suggests that the absence of children allows more flexible hours to attend to work demands.

Extract 26: P1: *"At the time, uh, it was it was pretty easy for me at the time because at the time when I was, when I was-, when I was working in those environments where I needed to work standby etc, I was separated [hmm], so my time was very much my own. I wasn't, uh*

you know, with, uhm, my son at the time or my wife at the time. Uhm, I was separated and, uhm, so I had all the time to myself, so the demands in terms of, you know, my, uhm, my working in the late evenings or in the mornings, or whatever it may be, was, was a lot more, a lot easier, uhm, ja. Where it came to weekends where I needed to see my son, uhm, you know, I would be able to, to, to postpone it for the next weekend and he would be understanding, so, you know yeah.” (P1; 124)

Participant five gave an account of how the gender of his children had facilitated his long working hours. The emotional care element, such as the attention and stimulation for his daughters, was identified to be not of a major concern in his parental needs (Holt & Thaulow, 1996 as cited in Liff & Ward, 2001). The gender of his children being female made it easier for him to work long hours, indicating that he does not have to spend a lot of time with his daughters as compared to if he had a son. The word “*fortunately*” used by participant five indicated a sense of relief. There is a separation of gender socialisation in that participant five argues that fathers parent sons and mothers parent daughters (Raley & Bianchi, 2006). Having daughters in some way gives participant five a partial exemption from his parental duties (Harris & Morgan, 1991). This is evident in extract 27.

Extract 27: P5a: *“Fortunately, in the sense I got two daughters, so I am very lucky, and, uh, the girls and my wife, they got a good relationship..., so they are more like friends and so. If I had a son, it would have been different...” (P5; 176)*

P5b: *“Ja, in a sense, it’s soccer and doing boy’s things, and my wife wouldn’t be able to do this kind of things, you know, things like cars and that, she wouldn’t go under the engine [laughter], if I had a son, I could have. But with the girls it makes it easier... because they got a, that understanding, so it’s okay.” (P5; 178)*

In extract 28, when asked about how she balanced her work and family life, participant two immediately brought up children. It is indicative that when thinking of home life, an image of children emerged in her mind. Since she has no children, there appears to be a sense of ease in being able to cope with work demands. The absence of children or less parental interaction with children makes it easier for participants to meet work demands.

Extract 28: P2: *“I don’t have children [uhm], you know, I, I don’t have that (those) extra responsibilities that takes up your time.”* (P2; 52)

There appeared to be no work-family conflict for participants two, four and five. The above findings highlight the importance of support from informal networks for childcare which assists working parents to better manage their time. In South Africa childcare facilities do not appear to be an option due to the opening and closing times of day-care that would clash with the parent’s work time. Findings of other studies have shown that working parents often choose alternatives such as family members rather than childcare facilities and babysitters (Enchautegui, 2013; Kimmel & Powell, 2001; Presser & Cox, 1997). Also, the presence of other women in the household who serve as caregivers and household support are used for childcare assistance (Enchautegui, 2013). In the present study, the caregivers of the participants’ children were people that had familial ties to the children.

Theme four: The language around senior management

When participants were asked what the competencies were for a good senior manager, the male participants used the pronoun *“he”* as they described and listed competencies. In Schein (1973) research on ‘think-manager-think-male’, managerial characteristics were highly correlated to the stereotypical characteristics of a man. This was not the case in the

present study. Participants in the study elicited both feminine and masculine characteristics for the competencies of a senior manager. The mention of both feminine and masculine characteristics suggests that androgynous style of management is desired within the IT industry.

However, the manner in which the male participants' language senior management, was as if senior management was reserved for a male. Thus, the language used in senior management cannot just be seen as words, but indeed contain some form of acting and performing gender. Since men have been part of the field of Information Technology for a very long time, this suggests that this is the participants' form of life (Nentwich, 2000). It appeared unintentional or unconscious that male participants mentioned male terms when they spoke about the industry as it is inherent that this has formed part of their reality.

The participants acknowledged that there were female senior managers yet they still contain a constructed image in their minds that senior managers are male. The ideological dilemma presented is that the participants mention both male and female characteristics when it comes to senior management, but portray the image of a male exerting these characteristics.

Theme five: The gender of management

This theme refers to the characteristics of males and females that are in management positions. It was noted that the gender of the person in management also held stereotypical notions. For example, being female in management was equated with pleasant feelings that resembled that of a mother, whilst being a male in management was equated with assertiveness and dominance. Studies have affirmed that people generally associate women and men with different traits and link men with more of the traits that connote leadership

(Eagly & Carli, 2007). Participants highlighted positive characteristics when it came to female managers and negative aspects of male managers in the workplace. What follows are the sub-themes that emerged.

Subtheme: Female managers' care for their employees' well-being

The female managers' care for their employees' well-being emerged as a theme. The communal characteristics such as compassion, being soft, sensitive, caring and understanding were highlighted by participants when describing their experience of female management. These feminine characteristics were aligned with being more caring towards employees' well-being. The following sentiments were shared in extract 29 and 30:

Extract 29: P1: *"My experience in both situations have been that I think that the female managers that I've had, have been a lot more compassionate [hmm] and (were) a lot more sensitive to my specific needs where it came to growth prospects or learning or developing myself."* (P1; 104)

Extract 30: P4a: *"Excellent, I love it (hmm). No, I will rather work for a woman than with a man. They more compassionate (hmm), they (are) softer"* (P4; 186)

P4b: *"They know how to work with you. If I look at my mom. Do you know women have a different way of handling things. Not all of them, the ones I know. Okay, so they, maybe I'm wrong, might be, but I believe they've got a more (hmm), I can't say loving, but more caring side than men. And, for me as a manager, I do care about what's happening with my employees (hmm), if it's now at home or at work, or at family, it is important for me*

(hmm). But for a lot of managers, they don't give a damn about your personal life. And that's an issue for me, because your personal life influence(s) your work life" (P4; 188)

The repertoire "*if I look at my mom*" in extract 30 represents a female manager to be viewed as a motherly figure in the workplace. There is a symbolic representation of a female manager in the workplace as motherly. The biological aspect is the manager is a female and possesses the feminine characteristics. These feminine characteristics are a reminder of a mother's characteristics and the female manager is then symbolised as a mother in the workplace. A female manager is therefore constructed from a maternal perspective and becomes a symbol for female managers (Lämsä & Sintonen, 2001). Participant four's comment suggests the idea of female managers fulfilling a maternal function in the workplace such as a 'mother hen'. The sexist ideology integrates the physical features with cultural and psychological features. This view of female managers as the mother hen has become so transparent that it is naturalised. The mother hen has become a generalised perspective and becomes a symbol for female leaders (Lämsä & Sintonen, 2001).

Nevertheless, these feminine characteristics are seen as being of great value in the present study whereas with the previous studies feminine characteristics were less valued than those stereotyped as requiring male characteristics (Eagly et al., 1992; Alksnis et al., 2008). The findings of the present study do not support the findings of Liden (1985), whereby female managers appeared to have less influence on employee well-being.

Participant three had a different view compared to the two male participants. In extract 31 below, participant three perceived a female manager to be much stricter with their female colleagues or subordinates.

Extract 31: P3: *“But I think always like when you have a female like senior, uhm, she is a bit stricter (hmm), because I think she is like (hmm), a bit wary (hmm) that you would because you are both female that you would sort of lose that reporting person respect, that kind of respect with that person, because you are both female”* (P3; 134)

When participant three mentioned in extract 31 that her female senior manager is slightly stricter, this suggests that female managers need to be dictators with other females in an attempt to avoid a perceived lack of respect. The female dictator appears to take on “Queen Bee” syndrome. Female managers in masculine industries tend to demonstrate so-called male characteristics like toughness and aggressiveness, but simultaneously appear somewhat feminine, to avoid being derogated or criticised (Demaiter & Adams, 2009). The language games in the masculine industry are acting tough and aggressive, but still appearing to be feminine (Parton, 2003). Thus, the positioning female managers often take up in these industries are that of men. Hostility in the workplace is interpreted by women as being part of the work environment (Damaite & Adams, 2009). Literature on the “Queen Bee” syndrome has shown women in elite positions act like men, for example behaving in a way that must be tough and authoritative, not supporting or providing mentorships towards other women of lower echelons in the company as they have worked their way up the echelons by themselves (Oakley, 2000; Johnson & Mathur-Helm, 2011). However, when participant three stated *“...because you are both female that you would sort of lose that reporting person respect, that kind of respect with that person...”* it suggest that the dictatorship behaviour is necessary in order to be taken seriously in the workplace as most women relate to each other as friends in the workplace (Crowley & Elster, 2013).

In a meta-analysis of previous studies, it was found that females have more of a transformational leadership style than male leaders, especially when it came to giving support and encouragement to subordinates. In addition, female leaders are more engaged in rewarding behaviours such as appealing to subordinates self-interest, which is one aspect of transactional leadership (Eagly & Carli, 2007).

In the present study it was found that women were more likely to interact with others as friends. However, when women are placed in a leadership positions the idea of interacting with others as friends cannot continue as this style of interaction would hinder their leadership ability. This was highlighted by Eagly and Carly (n.d) who argue that women may exert their feminine style but how much they exert this feminine (friendly) style in the workplace, needs to be limited.

Subtheme: The negative aspects of male management

The identified negative aspects of male management refer to participants' dissatisfaction with the style of leadership they had experienced by their male managers. Participants in the study placed great emphasis on the soft skills (for example people skills) for management rather than the technical skills that is required for the Information Technology industry. This highlights the subjective nature of individuals as the technical ability in performing a task is not of priority to them, but the human interaction.

Extract 32: P4a: *"I think the people skills is (are) more a woman thing (hmm). That's why we've got bad managers."* (P4; 178)

P4b: *“Because they don’t have the people skills. They’re good in their job by all means, but they’re not good with working with the people. Uhm, the women on the other hand I guess would be a better manager (hmm), but they might not have all the skills in the field”* (P4; 180)

Extract 33: P3: *“Like I used to work like under somebody that was [sighs] – in some ways he was good and in others like with technic-, he was very good technically (hmm), but he sucked basically, he lacked big time... and, uhm, he had no people skills, he was like a dictator... like there is just one way and sometimes it would not be the, like right way and then after something fails and you... only then were you like asked to give an opinion and I mean like that is a bit too late... because you have wasted time now... and then he wouldn’t like commend you for that, it would just like, ‘okay, move on, don’t want a brownie point from me’, or something like that. So, I thought that was a bit bad, as well as his, he wasn’t very ethical in his ways of working. You know, you must always like lead by example and he didn’t do that, so, ggg, I always feel that...”* (P3; 191)

In extract 32, the repertoire *“bad managers”* is being equated to male managers. It is also indicated that there are no females in management when participant four stated that people skills is more of a woman thing as the reason for them having bad managers. This suggests that the males in management exert traditional masculine characteristics.

Participant four emphasised that women are not good at the technical aspects in the field of Information Technology but would be better managers based on their feminine characteristics.

Extract 33, displays the emphasis participant three placed on good ethics and morals since she felt this characteristic was not displayed in the previous male manager she had. The construct “*brownie point*” refers to the recognition for the work of employees. Even though participant three acknowledged that the manager she had was good in the technical aspects of his job, due to his poor people skills however, she constructed a negative view of him as a manager.

The agentic characteristics of management are not seen as sufficient in the workplace. Earlier findings have shown that males are more likely than females to take up aspects of transactional leadership involving corrective and disciplinary actions that are either active (timely) or passive (belated) (Eagly & Carli, 2007). In the past, agentic traits were associated with effective leadership and in turn, men were usually associated with these agentic traits. In the present study, agentic traits alone were not seen as effective leadership in the field of Information Technology.

There were participants who felt that gender preference of management is an individual preference. Some looked beyond the gender and at the character of the individual in management.

Extract 34: P1: “*Uh, my, my experience, their, their (sigh), look I think this is a very individual thing, you know, whether it be male or female, it’s, it’s very individual*” (P1; 104)

Extract 35: P6: “*Well, for me – I don’t because the thing is you do get male bosses and then you also a male so you can just sit there you can talk, you, you can speak your mind depending on, on, on, on, on your, your boss’s character, you know. But, then, you also do*

get a male boss that's just full of nonsense (hmm) and then you get like your lady managers you know and you also get the ones that are also full of dust (hmm). So it just, it just comes down to the type of personality that you have regardless of male or female.” (P6; 138)

It is interesting to note participant six's choice of words in extract 35 when talking about the male and female management. He used the words “*lady managers*” when talking about females in management positions but does not say *gentleman managers* when referring to males in management, thereby indicating chivalry being directed towards women. Instead, he refers to the males in management as “*male bosses*”. Although managers and bosses may refer to being in charge of people, there is still a hierarchy of the terms in relation to each other. It appears to me that participant six has given the males a higher status compared to females in superior positions.

The long history of male domination in leadership roles has made it difficult to separate the associations of leadership with males. However, the findings of this study suggest that there is an appreciation for the feminine characteristics and not just the masculine characteristics in the workplace. These findings are aligned with Schein's (2001) work around the perceptions of management characteristics and demonstrate how it has changed over time. Regardless of the gender of the manager, androgynous characteristics (Schein, 2001) appear to be the preferred style of management in the workplace.

Theme six: Perspectives' on race and gender policies in the South African workplace

When participants talked about policies in the workplace, it triggered talk around race and gender as well. This is not surprising given that South Africa has a social and historical

role regarding the identity construction of individuals being heavily influenced by the racist Apartheid system.

As soon as participants were asked about the policies in their workplace, they immediately referred to the Black Economic Empowerment (BEE) (2003) policy. The Black Economic Empowerment policy was put in place to rectify the dispossession of previously disadvantaged groups. Thus, gender and race are constructed together in South Africa, especially in terms of workplace legislation. Though some participants saw the benefits of the policy, others saw it as a form of window-dressing or tokenism for business. Some of the participants in the study chose the route of not commenting on any work policies which could be indicative of their ignorance of the policy or preferring a neutral stance regarding installation of democratic legislation.

Subtheme: The showcasing of Black Economic Empowerment policies

The showcasing of Black Economic Empowerment policies was a prominent theme that emerged. There were participants who saw the purpose of the policy but felt that it was not being implemented correctly. Participants' views on the Black Economic Empowerment policy were that companies just used the policy as a way to get business for the company by meeting the minimum requirements of the South African government quota. Four participants shared their sentiments below:

Extract 36: P1: *“Uhm for me, it's largely its largely, especially in IT organisations and corporate, uh, you know, you know, we've got a historic, I don't know what's the, I think the common word is 'disposition' or something, in terms of how management was, you know, with the with white males that dominated senior management and I still feel that that is being*

carried through, you know, whether we like it or not, there's, uhm, there's, there's a term that they use, 'old boys club', you know, that still largely exists in organisations and corporate culture in South Africa, for you to break into that, it's probably got to be, uhm, largely because the pressures of BEE are being are being put on it, that's my view. My fear around all of these things is that, you know, you can get you can get given the opportunity in terms of senior management, uh, when you're not a white male, but do you get the support from your colleagues and your you're, your peers in terms of making a success of that role? [hmm]. You know, I think management is largely about who you are able to, and especially on your, on your leadership team, how you are able to, to, uhm, to, to, win the support of your colleagues, to help you drive through an implementation or drive through, uh, a goal or vision and, uh, if your if your support is not there, because you've been appointed based on, on, on policy, you know, you're not going to make a success of that role [hmm], you know..."

(P1; 90)

Extract 37: P3: *"Private sector, ja. I think private sector basically just does the bare minimum to – to meet"* (P3; 227)

Extract 38: P3: *"Yes. Basically, only, they only want the numbers (hmm) of that. So, ag, I don't feel like that they implement it that much but as well as with this company now they have, uhm, started like a female, (hmm) ggg, type of... Ja (yes), to empower women in the– in the industry."* (P3; 229)

Extract 39: P5: *“I mean, I’ve, I’ve met a quite a few senior BEE people. In fact, guys like Cyril Ramaphosa¹⁵, I know them personally (hmm). Tokyo Sexwale¹⁶ and Cyril they’re okay. I am talking here in some of the companies I work with, senior BEE persons, they can’t even spell read, I’m giving an example, so what are they doing there? (hmm) You understand, they’re not contributing at all, yes, they look very fancy, they drive fancy cars, from the perception, these guys look good, but they they’re just there for the front. It is very, very few BEE that you can say that is contributing, and that I don’t blame, I, I blame the government and I blame businesses. The government allow(s) it to happen.”* (P5; 150)

In extract 36, participant one’s use of the repertoire *“old boys club”* is a particularly important term in feminism. In the context of this study, *“old boys club”* described what senior management looks like in the field of Information Technology. The *“old boys club”* in this context consists mainly of white males. It is documented in literature that these informal male social systems usually exclude women and less powerful males (Oakley, 2000). In most instances family responsibilities take precedence and women have to attend to dual roles (Moletsane & Reddy, 2010). Women are viewed as being more committed to family members after work hours and therefore cannot network with their colleagues after hours (Moletsane & Reddy, 2010).

Participant one emphasised that the reality of senior management is strongly dominated by white males and this was evident in the repertoire *“whether we like it or not”*.

¹⁵ Cyril Ramaphosa serves as the deputy President of South Africa under President Jacob Zuma since 2014. He was elected as Deputy President of the Africa National Congress (ANC) in December 2012.

¹⁶ Tokyo Sexwale served in government as the Minister of Hunan Settlements of South Africa under President Jacob Zuma since May 2009 to July 2013.

Participant one also voiced that the only way to break through the “*old boys club*” would be through the need of companies to comply with the Black Economic Empowerment policies.

Extract 36 and 39 displays a concern on behalf of participants one and five that the policy is just recruiting people to satisfy the government quota but it is not growing the person for that position. There is also the notion that the only way one will break into senior management is based on the help of Black Economic Empowerment policy, and not due to one’s own merit. The company therefore uses recruitment strategies that involve recruitment based on gender and race, and not on actual merit to fulfil top positions. Thus, the findings of this study revealed that when recruitment strategies are based solely on policies such as Black Economic Empowerment (2003) and Employment Equity Act (1998) policies are not enough when it comes to the person appointed making a success of the position. Therefore, it is argued that support structures need to be put in place for the person appointed for the position or they will not make a success of the given position. Whereas, earlier findings have suggested that women should not be advanced too quickly as they would be taking on more than they can handle and consequently they will experience burnout (Moletsane & Reddy, 2010). This rationale behind burnout in the workplace suggests that when inexperienced people are recruited solely on the basis to fulfil the South African BEE quota they will experience burnout when they are promoted too quickly. Also suggested, is that women, unlike men, are more susceptible to burnout.

Apart from policies being seen as a showcase to obtain business, participant three highlighted some disbelief in the company’s motives for starting a women’s movement. This proposes that the company is portraying itself as a gender-friendly environment that cares about women’s well-being. Regardless of a company’s motives for starting a female

movement, if they are seen as maintaining gender imbalances, a company may be viewed negatively and this could have a negative impact on the global competitiveness of the economic growth and sustainability of the company (Moletsane & Reddy, 2010).

There were also strong feelings of blame and resentment voiced by the participants towards these policies of government. This represents some form of male backlash as the participants felt that women were only promoted on fulfilment of the quota and not what women have to contribute towards the company's goals. This finding is similar to the findings in the literature (Moletsane & Reddy, 2010; Wylie, 2011).

Gender-blind policies recruitment policies and strategies are used to recruit women based on gender and not actual merit into top positions, whereas gender-blind retention strategies prevent women from remaining in companies (Moletsane & Reddy, 2010). It was found that recruiting too many women in senior management positions will result in burnout as they would be seen to be taking on more than they can handle due to a lack of skills for the position (Moletsane & Reddy, 2010).

Wylie (2011) found that there was an inability to recruit and retain previously disadvantaged people at professionally qualified and management levels. There was also resentment expressed toward Black shareholders as they have contributed little towards previously disadvantaged development and are in privileged positions. The organisational culture was dominated by white males and there were ineffective Human Resource Management strategies. As such, Employment Equity, Black Economic Empowerment and Affirmative action were seen to create racial divides within the workplace in South Africa (Wylie, 2011).

Thus, women applying for a particular position are constructed in terms of their political identity which still fashions tokenism in the company (Gergen, 1999). In extract 40, this resentment towards the government is evident:

Extract 40: P5a: *“It’s a big fuss, it’s a big fuss. The whole government, the problem is, eish, I don’t know if going to quote me but, I am really disappointed in the, our democracy (hmm). And the reason for that is that ... Uh, the ANC in the eighties and nineties, started in the eighties, and I am, I have been involved in the struggle quite heavy, and you found that the government ... uhm, they took over the government (hmm) but they did not take over the economy (hmm) of the country. So they left the economy and, uh, ... to the previous regime. So they are just managing a government, so they’ve got no say, so BEE and all this kind of things was just a front (hmm). So lot of people started using it as an opportunity, I’m talking, the, uhm, using this advantage phases, in order to get business (hmm). So there isn’t a real contribution. So you find the economy still been owed by the minority (hmm), they still control it (hmm), and they put a lot of the flyers they are not really committed (hmm), even though they say they are, and the government doesn’t care a damn because they made an agreement to take over the government and not the economy (hmm).” (P5; 146)*

P5b: *“They don’t care, again it’s, it’s, I don’t like using the term ‘black’ and ‘white’, and I am South African, but they don’t care, the need to employ a woman, but wouldn’t say ok, we employ a woman, how is she going to add value to our system(hmm). The only reason they employ a woman, so they can get that contract, so they need the number. So the first woman who come(s) knocking on the door, they take her (hmm). So it’s unfair on that woman, because she might not even know the job, she is just there to ... and, and that’s the*

fact. And I wish the policies do change, and that's why I am very disappointed in the current government” (P5; 154)

The other participants in this study felt they could not comment on the policies in the workplace. One participant felt that the policies of government were implemented for diversity while most of the participants voiced that the Black Economic Empowerment and Employment Equity Act policies were not implemented correctly. In reflection, the present study did not draw out on family-friendly policies that were implemented and how they are utilised by employees. It therefore remains unclear whether the employees currently utilise family-friendly policies in the workplace.

Summary of section A's findings

The interview transcripts were analysed using a thematic analysis as proposed by Braun and Clarke (2006) and were arranged and presented in themes and sub-themes. The main themes that emerged in the analysis were: the gendered organisational culture; reasons why men are better suited than women for the field of Information Technology; caring for children and the ability to cope with work responsibilities simultaneously; the languaging around senior management positions; the gender of management; and perspectives on race and gender policies in the South African workplace. Some of these main themes were further subdivided. The sub-themes that were identified for the theme ‘the gendered organisational culture’, included: The influence of social categories on the work interaction amongst co-workers and administration duties is a women’s job. The sub-themes that were identified for the theme ‘reasons why men are well-suited and women are not for the field of Information Technology included male participants’ perspectives on why the field of Information

Technology is ill-suited for women to work in', were: Emphasis on the physicality of the field of Information Technology; Time constraint and responsibilities as a limitation on women; and Information Technology field as a man's game. The sub-themes that were identified for the theme 'the gender of management' were: Female managers' care for their employees' well-being; and the negative aspects of male management. The sub-themes that were identified for the theme 'perspectives on race and gender policies in the South African workplace centred on how participants talked about policies in the workplace', included: The showcasing of Black Economic Empowerment policies.

Section B

In this section of this chapter, the listening guide (Gilligan, et al., 2003) was used. There were four steps used in the listening guide, namely, listening for the plot, identifying '*I poems*', listening for contrapuntal voices in the text, and composing an analysis of the text.

Step one listened for what stories were told by each participant and included a listener's response whereby the researcher reflected on those stories of the participant. Step two focused on the text that contains "I", followed by the use of the first person pronoun ("I"). Firstly, I compiled a complete '*I poem*' of the entire transcript for each participant. Thereafter, I only selected *I poems* that were gender-related. Step three involved listening for contrapuntal voices and step four comprised the analysis of the text by bringing together what has been learned about the participant in relation to the research question. I will now go through each step of the listening guide with each participant.

Participant one

Step one: Listening for the plot

Listening for the plot

In listening for the plot we hear participant one, a married Coloured male in his thirties, describe his working relationship as healthy in terms of getting along with his colleagues. However, he did not ignore the different interactions that he has with his male and female colleagues. Being married and a heterosexual male, participant one viewed his interaction with his male colleagues as being easier in terms of speaking about anything whereas with female colleagues, he viewed his interaction to be more formal unless he knew the person three years or more. This suggests that there is a conscious set of boundaries in how individuals interact with each other unless there is more commonality. In this instance, participant one voiced that he would interact easier with other males as he too is a male. Other studies have reported that it is easier for individuals of the same social categories to get along (Byrne, 1971; Rousseau & Parks, 1993; Riordan & Shore, 1997; Crowley & Elster, 2013).

Furthermore, participant one speaks about the competencies of a senior manager as if it is a male's job. This is evident when he refers to "him", "his" or "he" on numerous occasions even though he has been managed by a female before. This suggests the reinforcement of leadership as a male position. This use of male pronouns indicates that it is a norm that leadership is languaged as male.

"...he must be able to, to, to have goals... He uses his leadership etc ...in terms of good senior management, for me is, is, uh creating, uhm, creating sustainability in terms of

his uh employees or his, to follow. ...I think a good senior management builds his team so that it doesn't just depend on, on an individual driving the entire unit, you know. When he is visible, you know, uhm, it must be it must be for a specific purpose... I think visibility for, for his unit in terms of being there for the people who report to him, uhm, making sure that they know that his, his presence is there and that he can support them in what they do..." (P1; 74)

According to participant one, the model of leadership is stereotypically a white male style. In his view, as a result of the BEE pressure from the South African government, more people are appointed into positions through tokenism. With that said, he stated that his fear is that there is no support in terms of the person making a success of the role they have been appointed in. He claimed even though BEE pressures happen, he himself has never been exposed to this. This conveys to me a sense of belief in himself that the position he is in is not because of his skin colour but because he is knowledgeable. Participant one, in relation to his work, emphasises that he is knowledgeable when he mentions his years of experience in the field and the duties he fulfils in the company.

In further listening to the interview, there was a sense of silencing as well as frustration in terms of the leadership participant one is under: *"I feel very, uhm, stifled in that sense [hmm] in that I'm micro-managed in [company's name]..."; "I was appointed in a, a leadership role of certain, in a certain way, uh, and I'm not being given that leadership space..."*

Even though he voiced being in a leadership position, he felt he could not implement his ideas. This stems from two areas, namely, he is under the Australian team which means a different culture, and that he is being micro-managed: *"I'm really being managed from*

Australia so there are cultural issues around that, just in terms of how Australians view things and how Australians apply themselves versus the South African dynamic.”; “I find that I feel the, the management that I’m experiencing at the moment is very micro-managing.”

As a result, he voiced that there appears to be lack of vision to drive the department he is in: *“I don’t see and feel the vision, uh, to-, to drive this department to be as successful as it possibly could.”*

The listener's response to the interview

I felt frustrated on behalf of participant one when he said that he is in a leadership position but cannot implement ideas. This felt rather sad.

As a woman, it was pleasing to hear that both communal and agentic traits were used to describe the competencies for senior management as it was once viewed that senior management only possessed agentic characteristics. However, I found myself feeling disappointed that the participant would use terms like “he”, “him” and “himself” when he spoke about senior management positions. This language indicated to me that senior management was still seen as being well-suited for males. In reflecting, I became aware that I was rooting for gender equality in the workplace and therefore experienced feelings of disappointment when I recognised there were signs of male leadership still being entrenched.

Step two: *I poems*

1. I find that I’m probably more formal with my female colleagues than I am with my male colleagues.

2. I personally feel that when it comes to your female colleagues, you, you kind of keep it, I keep it a lot more formal or professional unless I've worked with them for a really long time.
3. I don't feel that [company's name] have enough programmes in place, uhm, to to, to, grow, uhm, to grow senior managers internally.
4. I think a good senior management builds his team so that it doesn't just depend on, on an individual driving the entire unit, you know.
5. I think the common word is 'disposition' or something, in terms of how management was, you know, with the, with white males that dominated senior management
6. I think it's important that an organisation [hmm] and, and not that it be dictated by policy
7. I think the culture has to, to change where it's not a culture of this is what senior management looks like [hmm] and, you know, we're doing this to fill policy.
8. I think I've, I've, I've been very blessed and it's gone pretty well, so I can't say that I've had gender specific.
9. I think that the female managers that I've had, have been a lot more compassionate [hmm] and a lot more sensitive to my specific needs where it came to growth prospects or learning or developing myself.
10. I find that I feel the, the management that I'm experiencing at the moment is very micro-managing [hmm].
11. I feel very, uhm, stifled in that sense[hmm] in that I'm micro-managed in [company's name] [hmm] and that's looking at the role that I was appointed in[hmm], you know, I was appointed in a, a leadership role of certain, in a certain way, uh, and I'm not being given that leadership space [hmm].

12. I don't see and feel the vision, uh, to, to drive this department to be as successful as it possibly could. So, uhm, those are some of the challenges that I that I have.

In the passage below, the '*I poem*' highlights how much easier the physical and mental activity of participant one became when engaging in duties that involved irregular working hours. His reflections on this time are filled with ownership on his part when he says "*my time was very much my own*".

13. I was when I was working in those environments where I needed to work standby etc, I was separated [hmm], so my time was very much my own.
14. I wasn't, uh, you know, with, uhm, my son at the time or my wife at the time.
15. I had all the time to myself, so the demands in terms of, you know, my, uhm, my working in the late evenings or in the mornings, or whatever it may be, was, was a lot more, a lot easier

Although in the full text, the participant's confidence in the work he does is apparent, by listening to this *I poem* we can hear how his description of his time is as being dominated by his own inner thoughts, feeling stifled, and not seeing or feeling the vision for his department. Compiling several *I poems* from this interview highlights how much participant one thinks and feels in terms of reflection, as "*I think*" and "*I feel*" is repeated like a refrain.

Step three: Listening for contrapuntal voices

In light of the research question about male and female employees' experiences in the field of Information Technology, I noticed three possible contrapuntal voices in the *I poems*, namely, a voice of frustration; a voice of silence; and a voice of interpersonal freedom.

Frustration

The voice of frustration is reflective of the current way in which participant one viewed how the organisation operates, especially in terms of who gets appointed for a job and the support thereof. Also, participant one mentioned his fear around the implementation of the BEE policy when an individual is appointed for a particular position to fulfil quota.

Some examples within the text include *“I think if you haven’t been positioned for that position, if that makes any sense, you know, you, you, it’s a shot in the dark, uhm, you know, you’re not, you not, it’s very unlikely that you will just be given that, that opportunity. So that prevents one from actually applying”*; *“I still feel that, that is being carried through, you know, whether we like it or not, there’s uhm, there’s, there’s a term that they use, old boys club, you know, that still largely exists in organisations and corporate culture in South Africa, for you to break into that, it’s probably got to be, uhm, largely because the pressures of BEE are being are being put on it, that’s my view. My fear around all of these things is that, you know, you can get, you can get given the opportunity in terms of senior management, uh, when you’re not a white male, but do you get the support from your colleagues and your your, your peers in terms of making a success of that role?”*

Participant one used the term *“old boys club”* to describe the nature of senior management. The *“old boys club”* is an informal male social system that usually excludes women and less powerful males (Oakley, 2000). He refers to the *“old boys club”* as consisting of mainly of white males, thus the powerful males in this informal network would be the white males. The only way in which this *“old boys club”* can be hindered is with the

aid of the Black Economic Empowerment policies. The policies would readdress gender and race.

Silence

I detected a voice of silence in terms of participant one feeling restricted from expressing his leadership abilities within the company. Presented are “gender neutral” challenges that participant one faces.

Some examples within the text include: *“I find that I feel the, the management that I’m experiencing at the moment is very micro-managing [hmm]. You know, very focused on detail, very focused on specific, uh, outputs which are which are which, has its place, but when you appoint a person in a certain role, you know, you need to give them some space to be able to implement their visions, and, and, and their, their uh, you know, the way they see fit in their environment and I feel very, uhm, stifled in that sense[hmm] in that I’m micro-managed in [company’s name] [hmm] and that’s looking at the role that I was appointed in[hmm], you know, I was appointed in a, a leadership role of certain, in a certain way, uh, and I’m not being given that leadership space”; “I don’t feel and see the vision that I think is required at that level, you know. I don’t know if it’s not shared with us or not shared with me, but I don’t see and feel the vision, uh, to, to drive this department to be as successful as it possibly could. So, uhm, those are some of the challenges that I, that I have.”*

Interpersonal freedom

A voice of interpersonal freedom from restricting parenting responsibilities was conveyed as participant one spoke about his time being his own and having free time. This period occurred when he was separated from his wife at the time.

Some examples within the text include *“it was it was pretty easy for me at the time because at the time when I was, when I was when I was working in those environments where I needed to work standby etc, I was separated [hmm], so my time was very much my own. I wasn't, uh you know, with, uhm, my son at the time, or my wife at the time. Uhm, I was separated and uhm, so I had all the time to myself, so the demands in terms of, you know, my uhm, my working in the late evenings or in the mornings, or whatever it may be, was, was a lot more, a lot easier [hmm], uhm, ja (yes). Where it came to weekends where I needed to see my son, uhm, you know, I would be able to, to, to postpone it for the next weekend and he would be understanding, so, you know, yeah.”*

It should be noted that child contact is limited by the virtue of interpersonal relationships. Since participant one was separated from his wife at the time, his child lived with his wife who is the mother of the child. According to Kelly (1994), most custody decisions around where children should spend most of their residential time have emphasised the primary caretaker of the child. The primary caregiver has usually been identified as the mother who is the parent who takes primary responsibility for their care, such as breast feeding children (Harris & Morgan, 1991; Kelly & Lamb, 2000). According to Kelly and Lamb (2000), children benefit from the extensive contact with both parents that foster meaningful father-child and mother-child relationships. Thus, mothers are no longer being seen as the sole caregiver of children as there are fathers who are being recognised in the primary caretaker role of children.

In participant one's scenario, having his own time was possible when his son was with his wife, which allowed him to work the irregular hours the Information Technology industry demanded of him.

Overall, the voices identified are all related to the context of the workplace and take turns to tell a story about what participant one experienced. The voice of frustration can be said to move with particular '*I poems*' where the participant spoke clearly and directly when he used phrases "*I think*", "*I don't feel*" and "*I don't see*". The other voices identified can also be considered to move with particular passages in the '*I poems*'. These voices do not oppose each other. In particular, the voice of frustration and the voice of silence tell a story of the dissatisfaction that participant one was experiencing in the workplace. The voice of interpersonal freedom reflects back to a time when participant one worked demanding hours in the Information Technology industry and was not very active in his son's life at the time.

Step four: Composing the analysis of participant one

Through the analysis of the participant's description of his experiences in the field of Information Technology, we hear that the ideal senior manager is viewed from a white male perspective. This is evident when participant one mentioned that it is a white male model that South African companies use, as well as when he described the competencies of a senior manager with pronouns such as "*he*" and "*his*".

Moreover, participant one fears that with BEE policies in the workplace, an individual may be promoted into a senior position but will not necessarily receive the support from colleagues or peers in terms of making a success of that position. In turn, we hear an internal conflict in terms of the frustration and silence that exist in his ability to drive the vision of the

department and feels that he is being micro-managed by his international colleagues. This leads to the speculation that participant one is not receiving the support of his colleagues to make a success of the position he is in.

Based on the evidence in the transcript, it is impossible to know whether this internal conflict still exists. However, participant one informed me two weeks after the interview was conducted that he resigned and started work at another company.

Participant two

Step one: Listening for the plot

Listening for the plot

In listening for the plot, we hear participant two, a married White female in her thirties, acknowledging that there are differences between how one would work with male and female colleagues but yet to strive to treat both professionally. She referred to the male colleagues as “*they*” and female colleagues as “*we*”. Participant two gave an account of the working relationship with her male colleagues where they would pass the tasks that they did not want to do onto the female colleagues. It became apparent that the male colleagues in this company do not consider administrative duties as part of their job but rather that administrative duties are a female’s job. “*...I think it’s also because we are more administrative [hmm], they tend to uhm, uhm, they tend to want to give the nitty gritty stuff that they don’t want to do, they tend to want to pass that on to you...*”

When it comes to work, professionalism is what is being strived for but different interactions between men and women still exist and according to participant two, it is just the

way things are. For example, previous studies have shown that women relate to each other as friends in the workplace (Crowley & Elster, 2013).

“Uhm, obviously you, you sort of befriend your female colleagues easier so that would create a different type of a, uhm, ja (yes), but, uhm, professionally, you know, with regards to work, we would, uhm, try to treat each other the same, ja (yes).”

Participant two acknowledged that there are more males than females in the industry, however she portrayed a level of optimism of more females working in the Information Technology industry than when she stated: *“I think it’s, uhm, just because females only started getting into the workplace later and uh I think with time, you can definitely see it’s, it’s picking up. You can definitely see. Its, I think as we go along it will, one day, we will be equals...”*

Stress appears to be a major factor for participant two for she described the industry she is currently working in as stressful, and again when she was asked how she balances work and family life. The impact of stress can become overwhelming for her *“When I get stressed it’s as if I can’t focus on anything else”*. She generalises stress as a condition that all women struggle with, *“I think that is something that women tend to suffer, you know, to struggle (hmm) with more than what males do”*. Research indicates that oestrogen is a hormone found in women which causes women to feel and remember stressful events longer than men do (Crowley & Elster, 2013). For example, harsh feedback or cutting remarks that are taken personally by women are experienced as stressful events in the workplace (Crowley & Elster, 2013).

The listener's response to the interview

There was a sense that participant two's department is not as highly valued as the other department (Engineering division) of the company which was described as bringing in the money. To me, stress also appeared to play a huge role in participant two's life. I felt she took on a generalised approach when she said that women struggle to cope with stress as I feel that there are men that struggle with stress as well.

Step two: *I poems*

1. I think it's also because we are more administrative [hmm], they tend to uhm, uhm, they tend to want to give the nitty gritty stuff that they don't want to do
2. I think its, uhm, just because females only started getting into the workplace later and uh I think with time, you can definitely see its its picking up.
3. I think as we go along it will, one day, we will be equals {laughter}.
4. I don't have children or anything like that
5. I think it's also because I don't have children [uhm], you know, I, I don't have that extra responsibilities that takes up your time.

In the above passage, it can be noted that the participant thinks a lot as "*I think*" is repeated many times throughout the interview. When listening to this '*I poem*' participant two's reasoning behind certain situations can be heard when she uses the word "*because*".

Step three: Listening for contrapuntal voices

In this section I noted, two possible contrapuntal voices in the '*I poems*'; a voice of devaluation and a voice of optimism.

Devaluation

Participant two displayed a notable awareness of devaluation of her work. This voice displayed a sense of devaluation in the work that is done by the administrative team as well as the division (Information Technology division) in which she works.

Some examples in the text include *“Sometimes there are uhm, uhm, men are (sigh), I don’t know, they, I think it’s also because we are more administrative [hmm], they tend to uhm, uhm they tend to want to give the nitty gritty stuff that they don’t want to do, they tend to want to pass that on to you...”*

“Within [company’s name] there are, uhm, leadership and mentorship, uhm, programmes... we are in the business support [hmm] section of the company. So you don’t really get exposed to those things, uhm. They normally focus those things more on the, uhm, uhm, delivery side, you know, people that bring in money, uhm, [hmm]. So people that work on projects and that, they would get exposed to that type of mentorship, uhm, programmes.”

Optimism

A voice of optimism is relayed as participant two also looks on the brighter side of the industry. In that, participant two believed that more women will enter the field of Information Technology even though the industry may currently be male-dominated.

Some examples in the text include: *“Ag, I think it’s, uhm, just because females only started getting into the workplace later, and, uh, I think with time, you can definitely see it’s, it’s picking up. You can definitely see it’s, I think as we go along it will, one day, we will be equals”*

None of the contrapuntal voices move with particular *I poems* more than others. The voices do not move separately from the '*I poems*'. The relationship that exists among the contrapuntal voices is that they are all located within the workplace. There is a sense of devaluation in the type of work her department does. However, she is still optimistic about women moving into the Information Technology division of the workplace. It appears as if these voices take turns. These voices appear to oppose one another as they are not in complete harmony with one another. They go from negative to positive, in that devaluation is negative while optimism is considered to be one of a person adopting a positive disposition.

Step four: Composing the analysis

Through the analysis of participant two's description of her experiences in the field of Information Technology, there are some positive as well as negative aspects in the field. The positive highlights can be identified where participant two mentions that although the field is challenging "*it keeps you on your toes*". The negative aspects can be identified as the stressful nature of the job.

She did not voice familiarity with policies in her workplace and therefore was not able to answer how the policies would influence advancement towards senior management positions. It appeared as if participant two avoided answering the question on policies due to the fear that she might misrepresent the company.

Participant three

Step one: Listening for the plot

Listening for the plot

In listening for the plot, we hear participant three, in her twenties, a single Coloured female, describe the field of IT. *“Hmm, It is an ever-changing field. And, sjoe, there is always new challenges, very challenging field, I am also working a lot with like males and if you are female, you also like, they tend to look, give you like the admin stuff (smiles), always like shoving it your way. Ja (yes), so, but you have to like basically stand your ground”*

In her opinion, male employees were always using the female employees to do their administrative work or expecting them to be their secretary. There appeared to be a sense of devaluation of administrative duties and such duties being delegated as a female’s job. In addition, participant three conveyed silencing amongst her and her female colleagues, where they have given up fighting against doing their male colleagues’ work.

“we have just now accepted it, that they are like that (hmm). Because it is sort of like a-, like a little vicious cycle. All the females that join (hmm), we get thrown into this (hmm), we have to do this, so you basically, you don’t fight against it anymore, you just like, they are like that(hmm), the males and then you just take it up.”

Participant three placed much emphasis on soft skills (Neela, 2011), which encompasses communication, people skills, being moral and ethical. In particular, experience seemed to surface as emphasis was placed on being ethical. Participant three gave an example of her previous male manager who worked at the company who was not ethical in her eyes. It

is unknown as to whether this male manager was a dictator to both males and females or only to female employees.

“he was very good technically (hmm), ... uhm, he had no people skills, he was like a dictator (hmm), like there is just one way and sometimes it would not be the, like right way and then after something fails and you (hmm), only then were you like asked to give an opinion and I mean like that is a bit too late (hmm), because you have wasted time now.”;
“he wasn’t very ethical in his ways of working”

She acknowledged that there are more male senior managers in the Information Technology industry. She conceded that there were female managers but most of them were in Human Resources (HR) or administration, and were ultimately managed by a male senior manager. There appeared to be a realistic view, as such an awareness of gender discrimination in society, from participant three when she relayed the following: *“The only way I feel that you can come in here as a female, is if you are like a shareholder or something that you can buy your shares”*

The listener’s response

I felt that participant three was very open in sharing her experiences in the workplace with me. There was a journey she took me through where she explained how she found herself in the field of Information Technology. When she spoke about how the male colleagues would ‘dump’ their administrative work on the female colleagues, I couldn’t help but think of the literature on how administrative duties are seen as a female job and felt that it is hard work too, yet it is not seen as an important. It is also interesting to note that participant three views female managers as stricter, which suggested to me that female managers need to

be dictators with other females in an attempt to avoid a perceived lack of respect. Research on the “Queen Bee” syndrome has shown women in elite positions act like men, for example behaving in a way that must be tough and authoritative, not supporting or providing mentorships towards other women of lower echelon in the company as they have worked their way up the hierarchy by themselves (Oakley, 2000; Johnson & Mathur-Helm, 2011). However, in my opinion, it appears that the dictatorial behaviour appears necessary in order to be taken seriously in the workplace as most women relate to each other as friends in the workplace (Crowley & Elster, 2013).

Step two: *I poems*

1. I am also working a lot with like males and if you are female, you also like, they tend to look, give you like the admin
2. I just see, “type this”
3. “I am not your typist”
4. I mean, it is your knowledge base
5. I think the males in the unit sees all the females, as this can be my secretary person
6. I have never seen since I have been here like they give...
7. I think it is just a man thing
8. I think they, that they think that
9. I don't know if there is a male secretary in this company even
10. I don't know if that is just a way for them to make like you feel comfy,
11. I think always like when you have a female like senior, uhm, she is a bit stricter
12. I think she is like (hmm), a bit wary (hmm) that you would because you are both female that you would sort of lose that reporting person respect

13. I think it is about twenty one years ago, something like that, that it (the Information Technology industry) has grown always being male dominated
14. I feel that you can come in here as a female, is if you are like a shareholder or something that you can buy your shares, uhm, but not really.
15. I think private sector basically just does the bare minimum to – to meet
16. I don't feel like that they implement it (BEE policies) that much
17. I guess if they were to look at promoting a person and they were taking that policies into, uhm, consideration, that they would, it would give me an advantage over my male counterpart
18. I think if, if I didn't have my parents (hmm), that would also make it difficult
19. I don't think I would have been able to cope if the baby was at daycare
20. I must pick her up at four or before five or something like that and that would be more of an issue

In this passage, the '*I poem*' highlights the psychological conflict participant three is engaged in, in her workplace. Her reflections at this time were filled with a wider range of action such as working, seeing, typing. She also verbalised her reflections about situations in the workplace. In this section, participant three asserted herself in the workplace when she says "*...you have to like basically stand your ground*" which could also possibly be received as her being a rebel in the workplace. In contrast to the assertive image, she expressed her appreciation towards her parents that have assisted her with childcare of her infant. She appeared to be aware of the role her parents play, not only in her care of her infant, but also in her life. This is evident when she says she does not think she would be able to cope, which suggests the strain this would have on her. In this sense in South Africa, working mothers are

placed in a position of relying on family members to look after their children during working hours.

Step three: Listening for contrapuntal voices

There were so many different voices presented by participant three. The voices selected were those that were prominently gender-related. The following voices identified for this section were: the voice of frustration, the voice of silence, the voice of disgust, and the voice of situational awareness.

Frustration

A voice of frustration is present as participant three spoke about the work context whereby her male colleagues would be inconsiderate by using the females to do their administrative duties even when the female colleagues may be very busy with their own work.

Some of the examples in the text include *“I am also working a lot with like males and if you are female, you also like, they tend to look, give you like the admin stuff (smiles), always like shoving it your way. Ja, so, but you have to like basically stand your ground”*; *“... I just see, “type this”. I’m like ggg, ‘I am not your typist’”*; *“A job like or a task to do scanning or copying they’d like, even if you like crazy busy with also real things, they would rather take that from you and give you like it.”*; *“ I think it is just a man thing. They just like assume that (slight pause) you are a female you must, because I think they that they think that, because, I don’t know if there is a male secretary in this company even.”*

Silence

Yet juxtaposed with participant three's assertiveness is a voice of not standing up for oneself and just accepting for the sake of keeping the peace. There is a sense of suffering in silence by participant three and her female colleagues.

Some examples in the text include: “... *we have just now accepted it, that they are like that (hmm). Because it is sort of like a, like a little vicious cycle. All the females that join... we get thrown into this (hmm), we have to do this, so you basically, you don't fight against it anymore, you just like, they are like that... the males and then you just take it up*”; “...*if you like, setting up a knowledge base, because I mean, it is your knowledge base (hmm) and like uh it is your referrals and information (hmm), so you are suppose(d) to put that if you find a resolution or anything, you should put that into words and it always gets like, it is seen as admin stuff... That documentation of things (hmm) always gets – you do it (laughing).*”

Disgust

There appeared to be a voice of disgust in the way participant three spoke about the previous male manager and his manner of managing.

Some examples in the text include “...*he was very good technically (hmm), but he sucked basically, he lacked big time (hmm), and, uhm, he had no people skills, he was like a dictator (hmm), like there is just one way and sometimes it would not be the, like right way and then after something fails and you (hmm), only then were you like asked to give an opinion and I mean like that is a bit too late (hmm), because you have wasted time now.*”

There is also no recognition for the work of employees: *“And then he wouldn’t like commend you for that, it would just like, ‘okay move on, don’t want a brownie point from me’ or something like that. So, I thought that was a bit bad, as well as his, he wasn’t very ethical in his ways of working. You know you must always like lead by example and he didn’t do that, so, ggg, I always feel that...”*

Situational awareness

This voice represented participant three’s awareness of her work environment. She is aware that the Information Technology industry is mostly occupied by males and expressed that even though women have infiltrated into the industry, these are only in the supporting functions of the company.

Some examples in the text include *“Uhm, I think it is also like the company itself (hmm), it’s an – it’s an old male-dominated company and it has come (hmm) from whenever it started. I think it is about twenty one years ago, something like that, that it has grown always being male dominated. Yes the female, the amount of female managers have increased, but also like only in your administrative (hmm) or your supporting departments.”*; *“That would be like your HR, your – uhm, they have now more senior female managers, but like the top boss, is still male.”*

According to participant three the only way women will really break into senior management is if they buy shares into the company since working one’s ways up would either take a very long time or women just would not be promoted to that level: *“I feel that you can come in here as a female, is if you are like a shareholder or something that you can buy your shares, uhm, but not really.”* It should be noted that when participant three says *“but not really”* this creates doubt on her behalf which suggests that the chances of women

breaking into senior management are so slim that buying shares would not even help the situation. In contrast, previous research shows that barriers, such as pregnancy, lack of family-friendly policies, and family responsibilities, balancing between work and family life, unequal division of household chores and duties, creates a “sticky floor” and prevents women from breaking through the “glass ceiling” (Cross & Linehan, 2008; Davis-Netzley, 1988; International Labour Office, 2001). Research done by Cross and Linehan (2008) suggests that women feel pressurised to self-impose the glass ceiling on themselves.

In participant three’s opinion, the policies of government, such as BEE, were not being implemented correctly in the country: *“Private sector, ja (yes). I think private sector basically just does the bare minimum to – to meet”; “Yes. Basically, only, they only want the numbers (hmm) of that. So, ag, I don’t feel like that they implement it that much but as well as with this company...”*

However, she appeared aware that the policies in the company may be favourable towards her promotion: *“but, I guess if they were to look at promoting a person and they were taking that policies into, uhm, consideration, that they would, it would give me an advantage over my male counterpart”*

After listening for contrapuntal voices, I noticed that the voice of frustration moves with particular *‘I poems’* more than the others. This voice was more dominant when speaking about the work duties and already emerged at the start of participant three’s interview.

Overall, the relationships that exist among the contrapuntal voices are work, family and career advancement. The voices do take turns, however the voice of frustration came

across as louder. Nevertheless, the voices do not appear to be in opposition with each other and tell an overall story of the work dynamics that she experiences.

Step four: Composing the analysis

Participant three's experience in the field of Information Technology can be described as challenging and requiring one to be able to stand your ground. The challenging aspect of the Information Technology field is that the field is constantly changing, which continually presents new challenges. Being able to stand your ground referred to females not being taken advantage of by their male colleagues in terms of them passing their administrative duties onto their female counterparts.

According to participant three, the ideal senior manager should have people skills and communicate with others. She also mentioned that a manager needs to be responsible, honest and demonstrate good ethics and morals. Furthermore, participant three felt that the soft skills were more important than the hard skills. She placed more emphasis on good ethics and morals since she felt this characteristic was not displayed by the previous male manager she had.

Participant four

Step one: Listening for the plot

Listening for the plot

In listening for the plot, we hear participant four, a White married male in his late thirties, mentioning that the company is multiracial and pointing to how he gets along with others from different races: "*We get along, uhm it's multi-racial (hmm) so I enjoy working with people*".

In particular, participant four's working relationship with his female colleagues appears to be much better than with his male colleagues. *"it's easier for me to handle conflict situations with the female."*; *"I will easily, more easily discuss issues with a female colleague (hmm) and that will result in an informal discussion that at the end, situations are resolved"*; *"By where the males, no, uhm, because both are stubborn, you want to get your feelings across and your emotions and stuff..."*

For participant four there appeared to be a sense of trust when it came to the female colleagues, which cut across not only the gender boundary but also along the categories of race and age. There also seems to be a higher level of trust for someone of the same race and age but more so towards women of the same race. *"white females that I do trust more than white men and the other way around as well (hmm), so yes, the females are more loyal. But it tends to get more loyal by age as well as race."*; *"The older the person or the closer the person's age to myself (hmm), the more loyal. The younger the person, the less loyal..."*

When describing the competencies of a good senior manager, participant four would use the pronouns *"he"* as if a senior manager is self-evidently a male position. *"Uhm, a manager never, can never show that he's unsure (hmm)..."*

However, participant four claimed that women have more of the competencies to be a good senior manager compared to men. *"I think the people skills is (are) more a woman thing (hmm). That's why we've got bad managers"*.

He uses his mother as an association with management, which tells me that she likely managed the household: *“If I look at my mom. Do you know women have a different way of handling things... more caring side than men. And for me as a manager, I do care about what’s happening with my employees...”*

Career-focused women are the suitable type for senior management. *“That’s why you get your career focusing women (hmm), and your non career focusing woman”*

It is interesting that he speaks of change in gender roles when describing the type of woman in management. *“The woman works in Jo’burg in a high class position, she only gets home at seven. So when the man gets home at five, he needs to make food and stuff like that, so things are changing”*

The field of Information Technology sometimes requires that employees work long hours and it is for this reason that participant four feels that there is a lack of women in the industry. This displays a stereotyped role of a woman’s role in the home: *“And that might also be why women don’t go into the technical side of it because they need, they probably have more responsibilities at home. Because in the evenings it’s usually kids must bath, food must be made and stuff like that, so ja (yes), that might be a social thing that prevents the women from actually...”*

Furthermore, it is apparent that there may be conflicting issues for participant four. He states that the field of Information Technology is open to women but then continues to blame society for the way things are whereby women and men are treated differently. It is interesting to note how he feels advocates for the industry for hiring women but then

contradicts himself when he reveals that it would go against his principles if a woman was to climb up a ladder even though the job might require these duties as women should be kept safe.

“I don’t think it’s the industry’s fault that it’s not happened. It is society’s fault that it’s not happened, because you, first of all it’s dangerous for women to work late hours, that’s, it’s just maar how we’re set together...” ; “It will go against my principles, but it’s okay. I don’t mind, but it goes against my principles”

The listener’s response

When listening to participant four’s interview, I gathered that he is going through change himself. I found myself thinking of males when he spoke about senior positions yet I found myself seeing the changes he is adapting to himself.

Step two: *I poems*

1. I get along quite good with all my fellow employees
2. I will easily, more easily discuss issues with a female colleague
3. I do trust more than white men and the other way around as well
4. I cannot classify male and female together and say both of them are the same
5. I cannot classify, uh, Black and White, Coloured, Indian, it doesn’t matter
6. I need to look up to her, or stuff like that, so it’s difficult to give you a straight answer in that.
7. I think a lot of people might (hmm), or does not look up to the manager because of his lack of people skills

8. I can understand on the technical side women don't want to climb underneath tables or in roofs and stuff, that's understandable
9. I just close my eyes and look at this building, it's more male
10. I think the people skills is more a woman thing
11. I will rather work for a woman than with a man
12. I asked the Procurement guys why aren't there women that apply for the, these current jobs?
13. I mean in South Africa there are more women than men (in the population)
14. I just don't think women want to crawl underneath tables or in roofs, but if they want to, by all means

In this passage, the '*I poem*' highlights how much more physical and mental activity participant four is engaged in when it comes to women in the field of Information Technology. His reflections are filled with a wider range of action on his part such as asking, discussing and working. Listening to this '*I poem*' we can hear how his description is dominated by his own inner thoughts and concerns of why women are not entering the field of Information Technology. There is also the conflict around the type of work women should be doing in the field of Information Technology.

Step three: Listening for contrapuntal voices

The following voices selected for this section were: the voice of preference, the voice of concern, the voice of blame, the voice of confliction, and the voice of resilience.

Preference

Personal preference is expressed when participant four speaks about his female colleagues. He also expresses trust exists especially if the individual is closer to one's own age category. Highlighted here are the social categories that are similar to participant four's own social category which he displays a preference for.

Some examples in text include *"I can't say there's different challenges, uhm, maybe it's personal, but it's easier to handle conflict with the female. Some of them, okay. I will easily, more easily discuss issues with a female colleague (hmm) and that will result in an informal discussion that at the end, situations are resolved. By where the males, no, uhm, because both are stubborn, you want to get your feelings across and your emotions and stuff, uhm, but not in a case that it's bad. But it's easier for me to handle conflict situations with the female."*; *"Uhm, yes, there are, if we call it race white females that I do trust more than white men and the other way around as well (hmm), so yes, the females are more loyal. But it tends to get more loyal by age as well as race"*; *"The older the person or the closer the person's age to myself (hmm), the more loyal. The younger the person, the less loyal. So if that, and that is society, that's not work... I've got an Indian older woman, she's much older than me, but the loyalty is not there..."*

Concern

For participant four, there are many factors that represent a voice of concern. There is a concern with the lack of women joining the field of Information Technology.

Some examples in the text include *"the more you climb the ladder, I believe the less time you have to actually be part of the team (hmm). And that's an issue for me."*;

“unfortunately and I asked that question to quite a lot of, uhm, procurement agencies (hmm). They can’t answer me, but they say that’s how it is. So it’s not that society brought that up, that’s how it is.”; “I don’t know, that’s why it bothers me. Uhm, I can understand on the technical side women don’t want to climb underneath tables or in roofs and stuff, that’s understandable, but in the development side and in the infrastructure side where you physically focus on a specific product, I don’t know why the women, I don’t if it’s not interested for them, or if they’re not wired to do things like that, I don’t know. But you got me.”

There appears to be a fixation that women are not allowed to carry out physical duties. Participant four associated the behavioural, social and cultural attributes associated with the physical characteristics of the person. He sees a woman and therefore expects women to be involved in the duties that resemble feminine stereotypical duties. When participant four said *“they’re not wired to do things like that”* this possibly suggests that he was thinking that women are not biologically primed to be interested in the field of Information Technology.

Blame

This is a voice of blame which targets society and religion as the main instigators of the lack of women in the field of Information Technology.

Some examples in the text include: *“women don’t go into the technical side of it because they need, they probably have more responsibilities at home (hmm). Because in the evenings it’s usually kids must bath, food must be made and stuff like that, so ja (yes), that might be a social thing that prevents the women from actually...”*; *“I don’t think it’s the industry’s fault that it’s not happened. It is society’s fault that it’s not happened, because you, first of all it’s dangerous for women to work late hours, that’s, it’s just maar (but) how*

we're set together. Okay some women won't mind (hmm), but they not real women"; "So ja, it is, I don't think any career, there aren't limitations. It's society that creates that. That's the ones that create the issues, not the, uhm, businesses and stuff like that. They are open-minded, I mean if you've got the skills and stuff, they will appoint you into whatever position (hmm)."

It is contradicting when participant four stated that the company was open-minded to hiring people if they have the skills to do the job, but then he says that women should not be put in danger. Should there be women willing to do the job, then he joked that they are not real women. The phrase "*real women*" suggests that participant four is arguing that real women are traditionally feminine.

Participant four indicates that oppression of women is carried out in countries whereby women cannot be allowed to do a simple thing such as sit next to men.

"In some cultures and some countries, they don't respect the women, they're not even allowed to sit on a chair next to them, so it's society, it's cultural, but I think the industries in South Africa aren't closed for anything"; "So that's religion, that's not company"

Conflict

A voice of conflict arose as participant four argued that women should not be placed in danger and that women should not do certain jobs. At the same time, he stated that if a woman is comfortable with crawling underneath tables he will not stop her but then he stated it would go against his principles.

Some examples in the text include: *“But then again there are certain things that you cannot expect a woman to do. You cannot expect a woman to climb up a ladder a hundred metres in the air, it’s just not safe. It’s not that you’re discriminate against you, that’s how we were...”*; *“...Put together. The women aren’t supposed to be put in danger. That’s how it is.”*; *“It’s her choice”*; *“It will go against my principles, but it’s okay. I don’t mind, but it goes against my principles.”*; *“And there are a lot of women who put their hard hat on and they go to site and inspect the stuff. Nothing wrong with that.”*; *“Men are unfortunately stronger than women.”*; *“Physically stronger and that’s not the women’s fault, that’s just how we’re built.”*

Resilience

A voice of resilience was present as participant four experienced difficult times under management but did not allow it get to him.

Some examples in the text include *“My last, before I got the boss I have now, it was bad for me (hmm). It was a militaristic kind of gentleman.”*; *“it was bad for me”*; *“it wasn’t a good experience, but you learn to live with it, you have to. And I’ve been doing it for flippen ten years”*

He mentioned that the manager he had was a *“militaristic kind of gentleman”* which therefore suggests that management’s style was more of a dictatorship. It is also contradicting when he uses the two terms ‘militaristic’ and ‘gentleman’ together, since militaristic refers to harsh and gentleman refers to softer mannerisms. However, this could be a linguistic error as English is participant four’s second language.

All of the voices moved with particular '*I poems*'. The voices took turns to be expressed and did not move separately from the '*I poems*'. There are two voices that seemed to be in opposition with one another, which were the voice of conflict and the voice of concern. In particular, the voice of concern emphasised the lack of women joining the field of Information Technology. Whereas, the voice of conflict emphasised that women should not be placed in danger and that women should not do certain jobs, yet he stated that if a woman is comfortable with crawling underneath tables he would not stop her but it would go against his principles. This potentially represents benevolent sexism which can unintentionally restrict women from working in environments that are in contrast to the prescribed roles women are expected to fulfil in society.

Step four: Composing the analysis

Participant four displayed an enjoyment in the field of Information Technology even though he found it challenging. The characteristics participant four used to describe the ideal senior manager represented an androgynous style. It was noted that participant four used the pronoun "*he*" when he mentioned the competencies of an ideal senior manager. This makes me wonder if he sees the ideal senior manager as a male.

Participant four claimed not to know what the policies are in his workplace, yet stated that the company was implementing the Employment Equity Act, which had resulted in the diversity of the company. He mentioned two reasons for the lack of women in the field of Information Technology at the company. Firstly, there was a lack of women in the field in South Africa. Secondly, the company was not at fault for the lack of women in the company as it is up to the women to apply for these jobs. In my opinion, I feel that participant four's

reasoning is conflicted as he is concerned about the few women in the field but conjures up stereotypical reasons as to why the field is ill-suited for women.

Participant five

Step one: Listening for the plot

Listening for the plot

In listening for the plot, we hear participant five, a married Indian male in his late forties, took up a neutral position when describing the competencies of a senior manager, as well as when it came to working with his colleagues. However, participant five made a distinction in the behaviour of males and females pertaining to the working conditions:

“...some of the projects I worked with, and they were highly pressured projects (hmm), and s ... woman’s stress levels somehow is strong, so you find that they perform better in a more stress environment, believe or not. Whereas guys under stress environment, they always find an escape...” Earlier, it was mentioned by participant two that stress is something that women tend to suffer from whereas in contrast participant five stated that women were equipped to handle stressful environments. Earlier findings have shown that men and women are socialised in different ways to cope with stress (Ptacek, Smith & Dodge, 1994). Women’s coping styles are emotion-focused whereas men are relatively more problem-focused (Matud, 2004; Ptacek, Smith & Dodge, 1994).

According to participant five, one of the reasons why there are more men in the field of Information Technology, is based on history. He however conveyed a stereotype when speaking about why the technical workers were males and their limited involvement in family or home life *“The more technical guys, I think it’s because, uh, because of the late hours and, uh, guys are more technically trained because they can afford to work late hours they haven’t got children to go home and cook for and those kinda things and the nightshift, it’s men, it is*

easier for them to work night shifts". Somehow, participant five did not take into consideration the amount of women that work night shift jobs, such as nurses.

Participant five voiced resentment towards the government. Tokenism was referred to when participant five expressed that the Black Economic Empowerment (BEE) policy is only a front for the sake of securing contracts. "*...some of, most of the companies wants senior people just for show case. So we've got to a BEE person sitting there and they give **him** a senior position while **he** is not contributing or doing anything even though **he** can. But they hire **him** for the wrong reason (hmm), not because of skills...*" It is interesting to note that while participant five was speaking about the Black Economic Empowerment policy and hiring potential candidates for senior management positions, he used the pronoun "*he*" and "*him*" which is different from when he described the competencies of senior management and took up a gender neutral position.

The listener's response

When listening to participant five's interview, I could hear that he came across as open-minded to changes that have occurred over the past two decades. The role of government has been a prominent theme for him from the Apartheid regime until to date.

Step two: *I poems*

1. I think it's because, uh, because of the late hours and, uh, guys are more technically trained
2. I haven't experienced anything women or man's quality of work
3. I worked with, very few people work up their way to senior positions.
4. I like getting my hands dirty

5. I like to get involved
6. I like fixing things
7. I mean, it doesn't mean you drive a car, you are a mechanic
8. I met quite a few senior managers who are female who are very good.
9. I were there, there was no woman (hmm) doing IT
10. I am not saying that you guys didn't
11. I can show you a lot of woman that are doing it, today, I mean you're a typical example

This way of expressing himself was in contrast to his description in another section of the interview. There are negative emotions expressed from participant five such as, "I blame", "I don't like" and "I am very disappointed".

12. I blame the government
13. I blame businesses
14. I don't like using the term black and white
15. I am South African
16. I wish the policies do change
17. I am very disappointed in the current government

Although in the full text, the participant's passion for his job was apparent and this was evident when he stated "*I like*". By listening to this *I poem* one can hear how dominant his inner thoughts are towards the government and their policies.

Step three: Listening for contrapuntal voices

There were many voices present but the most dominating voice was the voice of resentment, and it was therefore selected for this section.

Resentment

A voice of resentment is present on several occasions. Firstly, it is heard as he speaks about the Apartheid era. Secondly, resentment is voiced towards government and their policies that the companies implement for the purpose of tokenism (Oakley, 2000; Rudman & Glick, 1999).

Some examples in text include: *“Who you know ja (yes), and the colour of skin in South Africa. So, some of, most of the companies wants senior people just for showcase. So we’ve got to a BEE person sitting there and they give him a senior position while he is not contributing or doing anything even though he can. But they hire him for the wrong reason (hmm), not because of skills, but, and also what happens is when a senior position do become available (hmm), you find it, I found it mostly outside this company.”*; *“I blame the government and I blame businesses. The government allow(ed) it to happen.”*; *“They don’t care, again it’s, it’s, I don’t like using the term ‘black’ and ‘white’, and I am South African, but they don’t care, the need to employ a woman, but wouldn’t say okay, we employ a woman, how is she going to add value to our system(hmm). The only reason they employ a woman, so they can get that contract, so they need the number. So the first woman who come(s) knocking on the door, they take her (hmm). So it’s unfair on that woman, because she might not even know the job, she is just there to ... and, and that’s the fact. And, I wish the policies do change, and that’s why I am very disappointed in the current government”*

In the above extract it is indicated how women are seen as tokens in the company. The women are only selected for the corporate image and for profit.

Step four: Composing the analysis

Participant five's experience of the field of Information Technology is an enjoyment. It was not a field that he chose but rather one that chose him. Despite there being challenges in the field, he relayed he enjoys what he does and would not aspire towards senior management. The ideal senior manager was portrayed as a person that should have similar values as participant five. There was much emphasis on the soft skills compared to the technical skills in the workplace. He took up a position that does not language any specific gender when describing the ideal senior manager. He also assumed an objective stance when he stated that he has not experienced disparity in a women or a man's quality of work, which suggested that he does not look at the gender of the person doing the work. Furthermore, participant five presented a lot of resentment towards the Black Economic Empowerment policies of government and he did not see the benefit in having these policies in the workplace. It was very interesting to note how participant five made reference to the Apartheid era and contrasted it with the present. It would appear that participant five, more than other participants, spent some time speaking about policies and the relationship between government and businesses. This may have something to do with his age as he is in his forties, while the other participants are much younger and therefore do not directly relate to the Apartheid era.

Participant six

Step one: Listening for the plot

Listening for the plot

In listening for the plot, we hear participant six, a single Coloured male in his early thirties, assume a position that does not language any specific gender when describing the competencies for senior management. And yet, he voiced a dominant heterosexual model that exists and the roles men and women appear to play.

“I think it’s, it’s, it’s more of a hmm- you know like men they, they, they, they just go and do things and women are a bit soft subtle organised...”

“I, I just feel that that that by, by nature (hmm) I think it’s, it’s like women would prefer an environment (hmm) if you had to now ask them they would rather prefer an environment that’s organised (hmm) it’s like okay, no chaos, and you know do soft, soft things”

“it’s, it’s like in by nature you are man (hmm) and by nature you would like a woman”

“No, it’s just that situation that you just now and then get or that odd comment (hmm) that that people give you know. So then, use that reading between the lines it’s not that it’s not what someone said, but it’s just the way you interpret it”

It is indicated by participant six that the field of Information Technology is a physically laborious industry and therefore the suggestion that women are better suited for

“softer” careers that do not involve physical labour. Softer careers are careers that allow women to exert traditionally feminine characteristics.

The listener's response

After listening to the interview of participant six, the thoughts that came to my mind were that participant six is part of the generation of new strides in technology. When I heard participant six mention the attributes about women as belonging to the stereotypical roles, I felt disappointed because from my personal stance women, or any person, should not be confined to a category but should be allowed to excel in whatever they can do. I also felt that given participant six's age, I expected that there should have been some acceptance to the changing roles of women in the workplace instead of an entrenched stereotypical one.

Step two: *I poems*

1. I think they will be the least of the in terms of the ratio or something (refers to women in the field of Information Technology)
2. I think it's more, more not to say that women can't do it there's no such thing,
3. I think a huge part of IT enforce you know like carrying around machines working with jeans
4. I just feel that that that by by nature (hmm) I think it's, it's like women would prefer an environment
5. I would say like nature, nature.
6. I mean it's it's, it's like in by nature you are man
7. I shouldn't have used that as an example
8. I would use my manager as an example he's very straight forward
9. I would just say having people skills

10. I mean if, if, if you have like a manager that you feel that doesn't listen to you
11. I think where you will see a greater percentage
12. I think if I can in terms of percentage
13. I can say 60 to 80% of the things that you can do

In the above passage, participant six expressed his thoughts about the field of Information Technology and women's role in the industry. He also expressed his emotions when he says "*I feel*".

Participant six was apologetic when he stated "*I shouldn't have used that as an example*". He made an example of how it is by nature that a man would be attracted to a woman. His apology possibly indicated that he felt that he was inappropriate in voicing heterosexism.

Step three: Listening for contrapuntal voices

The voice of abstraction and the voice of contentment were identified in this section of participant six.

Abstraction

The voice of abstraction here includes subtle messages that are not verbalised but are said indirectly. According to participant six, there have been those occasions at work whereby subtle suggestions were made and interpretation was left to the person receiving the message. However, the interpretations are subjective and not always accurate. Also, subtle suggestions are vague and could be interpreted as anything. This indicates that possible gender controversies are hidden between the lines and may be open to many interpretations.

Some examples in text include *“I think by, just maybe in my line sometimes you can look at a person and then obviously you, you you’ll just think or in your opinion, you will just say (hmm) it in your mind, I think that this is what you are trying to say, but then obviously it’s not officially said.”*; *“It could be anything, ja (yes). It’s like that (hmm) silent message that you get you know. It’s like read between the lines kind of a thing, but then, ja (yes), I have... In terms of that, maybe on odd occasions, but not, not really something that that I have seen (hmm) quite around.”*; *“No, it’s just that situation that you just now and then get or that odd comment (hmm) that, that people give you know. So then, use that reading between the lines it’s not that, it’s not what someone said, but it’s just the way you interpret it”*

Contentment

A voice of contentment is present and is displayed when participant six spoke about his work relationship with his colleagues, as well as preference of manager. According to participant six, his interaction with his male and female colleagues is one and the same. With regard to the gender of management, he displayed no preference for a male or female manager as for him it came down to the character of the person. This suggests the participant six was looking at the character or personality beyond the gender of the individual in management.

Some examples in text include *“Well, for me – I don’t, because the thing is you do get male bosses and then you also a male so you can just sit there you can talk, you, you can speak your mind depending on, on, on, on, on, your, your boss’s character, you know. But, then, you also do get a male boss that’s just full of nonsense (hmm) and then you get like your*

lady managers you know and you also get the ones that are also full of dust (hmm). So it just, it just comes down to the type of personality that you have regardless of male or female.”

The voices do not move completely with the ‘*I poems*’. However, the voices tell a story about how participant six experienced and indicated no dissatisfaction in the workplace.

Step four: Composing the analysis

Participant six, as most of his colleagues interviewed, enjoys the field of Information Technology. When speaking about senior management, he placed emphasis on the soft skills as well as academic skills. Participant six assumed an objective position when describing the competencies for senior management, however, when it comes to the field of Information Technology there is a gendered stereotype of the type of work women should be doing.

Conclusion

The present study highlighted that gender preference for senior management is not essential. This portrayed a sense of acceptance towards change that is taking place in traditionally masculine industries. The perceptions of management styles have changed over time which suggests that an androgynous style of management is slowly being adopted in the workplace. However, it is apparent that gender stereotyping is still dominant in the workplace and is emphasised in the physical duties and irregular hours of the field. Subsequently, there is a continual process of negotiation that women undergo in their lives, where they continually reconstruct their identities in light of the job and role they should play. Furthermore, female participants expressed a voice of frustration towards their male colleagues that viewed administrative duties as a woman’s job.

In light of the Black Economic Empowerment policy, South African companies implemented the policy as a way to rectify the effects of Apartheid. Thus, previously disadvantaged groups are given first privilege when it comes to job recruitments. In the current study, there were voices of frustration and resentment when it came to the Black Economic Empowerment policy, which was seen merely as a way to get business for the company by meeting the minimum requirements of the government quota. The increase of women into the workplace may leave men feeling frustrated and result in male backlash. In the present study, some form of male backlash was identified as a result of the Black Economic Empowerment policy being implemented incorrectly. Male backlash may present another limitation to women entering the field of Information Technology if it is not addressed.

The participants provided understandings of the underrepresentation of females in senior positions in the field of Information Technology. The listening guide, used in conjunction with thematic analysis, identified the inner world of the participants by systematically drawing on the participant's voice, resonance and relationship within the field of Information Technology. The study revealed that participants' experience portrayed an interplay between the self and relationship, psyche and culture that exists within the organisation.

The manner in which the participants in the study referred to the field of Information Technology strongly represented a gendered nature in the organisation. The sexist beliefs as to why women are not well-suited in the field of Information Technology may keep women out of the field. Thus, if women are underrepresented in the field, they will be

underrepresented in senior management positions. Women that are in the field of Information Technology, and that make it into senior positions, are represented in the support function of the organisation.

The male participants in this study viewed parenting to be a responsibility for mothers. This view poses as a challenge especially for working mothers who want to break through to senior management. However, with the support from family members, especially for women, the burden of work responsibilities is currently a lot less demanding.

Participants spoke about senior management as a position reserved for males. This type of languaging can affirm masculine images, which may prevent women from moving even further up the echelon of the organisation. Furthermore, women who are in management are represented as motherly figures and men are viewed negatively for not exerting feminine characteristics such as people skills. Thus, an androgynous style is preferred for senior management. However, if women in management take on more masculine characteristics, they would be perceived as being strict.

Furthermore, with the help of policies women have gained representation in the workplace and entry into senior positions. However, these policies are seen as a way to fill the South African government quota but not to fill the positions with skilled people. This creates resistance towards the policies, and the people that do receive these positions based on government quota, may receive backlash. This may lead to people not wanting to apply for the position or to stay in the lower echelons of the organisation.

The study therefore tells us that the field of Information Technology is socially constructed by the employees in the company. It is the reality of the employees that further

shapes the organisation to be gendered as a coping mechanism to make sense of the men and women's roles.

In the next chapter (chapter 6), I will provide a conclusion of what the study has aimed to achieve. Also, I will address the recommendations and limitations of the study.

CHAPTER 6

CONCLUSION

The present study makes a contribution to gaining insight into employees' gendered experiences in the field of Information Technology within the South African context. The aim of the study was to explore employees' experiences at a company that has an Information Technology department. The objectives of the study were met in the following manner; the study offered insight into the views of male and female employees of different social categories in relation to the ideal senior manager in the field of Information Technology and has shown that these views are gender stereotyped. There is an understanding to the negotiations male and female employees make with regard to their roles in the organisation and their families in order to balance work and family life. The available support networks stem from family members when it comes to employees meeting work demands. And in particular it is the Black Economic Empowerment policies from the South African government that have an influence in the field of Information Technology.

The analysis of participants' experiences involved the use of thematic analysis and a listening guide. By using these methods of analysis, I was able to identify themes and listen on an interpersonal level to the influence the workplace has on them. The findings of the study are located within the theoretical framework of social constructionism of gendered identity, as well as the role of language in constructing gender in the workplace.

The theoretical framework has therefore offered an understanding into the realities of the participants and how their realities are constructed. It is through language that certain

forms of life are negotiated, specifically pertaining to being a male or female in the field of Information Technology. The forms of life negotiated provide an understanding of the lack of female leaders in the field of Information Technology. The gendered stereotypes placed on males and females in the workplace are therefore perceived to be a form of life in this study.

Strengths of the present study

The strengths of this study are its contribution to the discipline of Psychology and related disciplines such as Gender Studies and Human Resource Management. Psychology is the study of the human mind and its functions that affects human behaviour in a given context. In addition, Psychology is also an institution which informs everyday life and behaviour, thus males and females in this study were viewed as being subtly compelled to regulate themselves and to conform to the stereotypical norm of the field of Information Technology. The study therefore adds insight into the type of behaviour which reinforces gender stereotypes to be carried out when it comes to gender in the workplace. Human Resource Management would benefit as the findings provide insight into the dynamics that exist in the workplace and how to go about making the workplace a healthier context to work in.

Despite twenty years of democracy in South Africa, the study has shown that there is still much work that needs to be done to discard gender stereotyping which, as a result, limit women in the workplace. The present study reiterates previous studies that reveal that the field of Information Technology is a gendered organisation which needs to address the underrepresentation of women in senior management positions in the field of Information Technology. The gender stereotyping creates a gender binary system in the organisation

whereby women and men are suited for traditional stereotypical roles in the organisation. Also benevolent sexism is displayed in the form of chivalry from men towards women by restricting women from taking on any physical duties. The 'benevolent' sexism therefore retains the notion that women are physically weaker than men and therefore cannot work directly in the field of Information Technology and should be confined to carrying out traditional feminine-related duties, such as administration duties within the field of Information Technology. There is a symbolic image of women that is associated to that of being a parent. For example, females are viewed as the mother parent and are expected to fulfil home responsibilities, and this precludes them from working late hours. Also, females that are in management are symbolised as the 'mother hen' or maternal figure towards subordinates who are in need of nurturing care and guidance, which emphasises traditional feminine characteristics as opposed to agentic leadership characteristics.

Unfortunately, women are still viewed as the primary caregivers for children. The study has shown that women and men in the field of Information Technology are highly reliant on family support when it comes to family responsibility. However, for women, this has formed part of their individual orientation when it comes to balancing work and family responsibilities. This finding adds to the existing body of literature when it comes to women that are parents who are entering the field of Information Technology.

The present study adds new insights by highlighting the languaging around senior management positions. In this research senior management was languaged as a position that was occupied by males with an androgynous style of managing. However, males that exerted only masculine traits were viewed negatively. The study offered insight into the views of

male and female employees of different social categories in relation to the ideal senior manager in the field of Information Technology.

In terms of senior management positions, the Black Economic Empowerment policies are seen as window dressing for the company. When discussing workplace policies, participants automatically mention the Black Economic Empowerment policy. The study has found that the only way to break through to senior management positions is with the aid of the Black Economic Empowerment policy. However, the policy has created a notion that people are only appointed for the position on race and gender and not their skills. As a result thereof, the study discovered that potential backlash towards people of colour and women may take place if the policies are not implemented correctly. This finding therefore adds to the body of literature that have focused on political transformation in the workplace within the South African context.

Limitations of the present study

Practically, it was challenging recruiting participants into the study and I had to make use of snowballing as a method of recruitment. Snowballing was done by asking participants to refer me to potential participants that may be interested in the study (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005). More research needs to focus on how to recruit participants effectively for gender studies. Qualitative methods used in this study have given a deeper understanding to the experiences of the participants. The male participants that participated in the study gave rich insights into their perspectives. Recruiting more females into the study became a challenge as only two females participated in the study. One of the female participants that took part in the study informed me that her female colleagues were reluctant to participate in the study. It would have been of interest to gain more insight into the females' perspective regarding the

field of Information Technology and explore if there is a shared experience and to understand their hesitation or reluctance to speak about their experiences. One would assume that as a result of the field of Information Technology being male-dominated it would be expected that less females would be working in this industry. However, the study discovered that most females are highly represented in the administrative section of the field of Information Technology. Future studies could focus on recruiting more women into their study to hear their perspectives on the field of Information Technology.

The present study only looked at employees in the field of Information Technology at one company due to time constraints. However, findings can be contrasted with other male-dominated organisations such as Engineering, Geology or simply other Information Technology companies for further investigation or exploration. In addition, a similar study could be carried out with a male researcher conducting the interviews to see what findings will emerge.

The present study sought to understand how participants coped with family responsibilities and work demands. The research showed that family support networks helped tremendously when it came to balancing work and family. Further research could explore the available support networks at work by specifically probing around what family-friendly policies there are to assist in balancing between family and work demands. Further studies could also research what male participants' views are around paternal leave and if they utilise these. This could add insight into whether parenting is solely relegated to mothers only and if family-friendly policies should be geared more towards female employees.

Furthermore, the preliminary study has indicated that future studies may wish to do a longitudinal study using discourse analysis. Nevertheless, a listening guide was used in conjunction with thematic analysis for the analysis section of the study, which yielded an in-depth insight.

Recommendations

The participants in the present study recognised the changing roles of women in the workplace, as well as in the home. However, stereotypes still remain though behaviours such as ‘benevolent’ sexism that can be seen as having negative outcomes on women in the workplace whereby women are limited to stereotypical work. A possible programme in the workplace should focus on ways to diminish gender stereotypes and promote healthier work interactions. Workplace policies mentioned in the study by participants, such as Employment Equity Act and Black Economic Empowerment that promote previously disadvantaged groups, can be seen to cause backlash. As much as these policies come from a need to readdress inequality under Apartheid to promote women into leadership positions, there is much resentment towards these policies. This finding can assist Human Resources to be more cautious as to how they implement the policies of government in the workplace, as the present study shows how race and gender are inextricably tied together within the South African context.

Human Resources should prioritise training new employees to be competent in the designated position. Human Resources should also focus on programmes that are able to empower men by training them to be open-minded about transformation. The present study

also shows that there is a need for family-friendly work policies in the workplace so that employees can better balance between family and work needs.

Concluding remarks

The study established that there is still an underrepresentation of women in senior management positions. And yet, when women do break through to senior management positions, it is only in the support function of the organisation and with the aid of Black Economic Empowerment policies.

Even though strides have been made, this exploratory study revealed the challenges that continue to persist in previously male-dominated industries, thereby highlighting the work that still needs to be done before ‘true gender equality’ can be attained. While policies have been put in place, the lived realities and spaces where these have been implemented, continue to remain unchanged. The lived realities include the role of women in South Africa as still constructed according to the prescribed stereotypical roles, such as women being seen as secretaries or taking on “*softer*” duties. These stereotypical notions can discourage women from taking on the physical duties in the Information Technology industry as they may be seen as “*not real women*” by male colleagues.

Furthermore, as much as some things change, others continue to remain the same. Such as the changes in the characteristics for senior management, as the study has shown that the role of management is no longer viewed as having only masculine characteristics but rather calls for an androgynous style of management. However, the aspect that remains

unchanged is that the ideal manager is still viewed biologically as a male figure in the field of Information Technology.

The study concludes that gendered stereotypes are employees' reality inside and outside the workplace. And even though there is an acknowledgement of an alternate reality of gender equality, this reality of gender imbalances is still more fitting or evident currently in South Africa as they are familiar with it in their daily lives.

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APPENDIX A: ETHICAL CONSENT



ETHICAL CLEARANCE FORM FOR HIGHER DEGREE RESEARCH PROPOSALS

SECTION A CANDIDATURE DETAILS

- A1 Full name of candidate Errolyn Lauren Long
- A2 Academic and professional qualifications: BSc Human Life Science, BSc. Hons Psychology
- A3 Personal particulars
- 3.1 Student number: 46563105
- 3.2 Email address: lynnielauren@gmail.com
- 3.3 Phone number: 0732344720
- 3.4 Supply your current address: 74 Miller Street, Triomf, 2092, Johannesburg.
(required only if it differs from the address given when you registered at Unisa)
- A4.1 Promoter/supervisor
- 4.1.1 Name: Puleng Segalo
- 4.1.2 Department: Psychology
- 4.1.3 Contact number or email address: segalpj@unisa.ac.za
- A4.2 Co-promoter/co-supervisor (if applicable)
- 4.2.1 Name: Christine Laidlaw
- 4.2.2 Department: Psychology
- 4.2.3 Contact number or email address: laidlc@unisa.ac.za



SECTION B DETAILS OF RESEARCH PROJECT

B1 Title of the thesis/dissertation

Gendered experiences of male and female middle managers in the field of Information Technology: Aspirations and expectations toward a senior management position.

B2 Supply a short abstract of the proposal (maximum of 300 words)

There have been several studies that have examined the underrepresentation of women in senior management positions (Eagly & Karau, 2002; Liff & Ward, 2001; Moletsane & Reddy, 2010; Oakley, 2000; Rudman & Glick, 1999). These studies highlight and point to how women in senior positions experience stereotypes in their various places of work. There is a need to explore the experiences of women in middle management as there is a dearth of studies in this area.

The problem this study intends to address is the underrepresentation of women in senior management positions. The main objective of the study is to explore and describe the gendered experiences of male and female middle managers in the field of Information Technology. The study further aims to understand the gendered experiences of male and female middle managers towards senior management positions in the field of Information Technology.

This study will be guided by a social constructionist paradigm drawing on Julia Nentwich’s concepts such as ideological dilemma, repertoire and positioning as a theoretical framework. Participants will be recruited into the study by using a recruitment plan and a semi-structured interview protocol will be used as a method of data collection. Participants will be briefed about the overall purpose of the study and informed that their participation is voluntary. Consent forms will be signed before the interviews commence. Face to face individual interviews will be conducted and each will be approximately 60 minutes. Interviews will be tape-recorded with the permission of participants. Interview transcripts will be transcribed and the data will be analysed using thematic analysis.

It is envisaged that this study will contribute towards describing the underrepresentation of women in senior management positions. This research will be beneficial to women that are aspiring towards senior management positions in the field of Information Technology. Employees will become more sensitised to gender issues and the interlinkages to senior management positions.



B3 Specify the objectives of the research, as described in your full research proposal

The primary objective of this study is to explore and describe the gendered experiences of male and female middle managers in the field of Information Technology. Since gender inevitably intersects with other categories such as race, class, sexuality and global capitalism (Hansjee, 2011), these will also be taken into account in how participants experience their gender within their workplace. The study will gain insight into the views of male and female middle managers of different social categories in relation to the ideal senior manager in the field of Information Technology and if these views are gender stereotyped (Booyesen & Nkomo, 2010).

Secondly, the study seeks to understand the negotiations male and female managers make with regards to their roles in the organisation and their family in order to balance work and family life.

Thirdly, to explore the available support networks male and female middle managers have towards aspiring senior management positions in the field of Information Technology (Johnson & Mathur- Helm, 2011, Hofmeyr & Mzobe, 2012).

The final objective of this study is to describe the impact the workplace policies have on middle managers aspiring towards senior management positions in the field of Information Technology (Nkuna, 2010).

B4 Describe the method by which you will conduct your research, including details on the research design and techniques of data analysis

The research questions are exploratory and descriptive and therefore qualitative research methods will be well suited to answer these research questions. Qualitative research methods will be used as of the following reasons. Firstly, as mentioned before, I am not focusing on measuring individual scores. Secondly, the study seeks to explore the social phenomena as the individual experience the field of Information Technology (Creswell, 2007; Mallerud, 2001). Thirdly, feminist research relies heavily on qualitative methods to provide a voice to those who have previously been marginalised as well as to obtain a better understanding of their experiences (Sprague & Kobrynowicz, 1999; Gergen, 2008). Thus, the study is concerned with the experiences of male and female middle managers in the field of Information Technology (Boonzaier & Schefer, 2006). The main advantage for choosing qualitative research methods is because it has served to add toward the production of knowledge by correcting the past Western tradition which had only taken into account the unique experiences of upper-class, white males (Sprague & Kobrynowicz, 1999). This avoids broad theoretical claims from being made by generalising experiences of males onto females by including both males and females in the study (Sprague & Kobrynowicz, 1999).

To obtain a rich description on participant's experiences, I will use a general qualitative design as it is exploratory in nature (Cooper & Endacott, 2007). Rigour will be ensured by incorporating reflexivity and by closely considering the sample followed by the way in which the data will be collected and analysis process (Cooper & Endacott, 2007). Thus, I will embody an ethic of caring through the process of the participants that share experiences (Campbell & Wasco, 2000).

The descriptive dimension in the study will focus on describing the specific elements of the field of Information Technology in relation to the participants. I will use face-to-face semi-structured interviews as a form of data collection. The transcripts will be transcribed verbatim (Lapadat &

Lindsay, 1999). The process of verbatim transcription will be open. With open I mean that the transcripts will include the participants' words and nonverbal gestures. Transcripts that are transcribed by another person other than the researcher will sign a nondisclosure agreement form (*see appendix F*). Nonverbal communication or gestures will be noted in reflective journal (Poland, 1995). The transcripts will be read in conjunction with reflective notes and read through to create familiarity with the data (Burnard, 1991; Terre Blanche, Durrheim & Kelly, 2006). The structure of the transcript will be presented as a dialogue between the research and participant. The participant's name will be removed for confidentiality purposes and denoted with the letter *P* and a number next to it as a way to indicate which participant was interviewed. Thematic analysis will be used as due to its flexibility that can be applied to a wide range of theoretical and epistemological approaches (Braun & Clarke, 2006). After familiarisation with the transcript interviews, recurrent patterns will be identified and codes will be generated from the data (Braun & Clarke, 2006; Kelly, 2010). A systematic analysis of the content will be conducted which will give rise to potential themes and subthemes categories will emerge (Ryan & Bernard, 2003). The thematic categories that emerge and meanings created thereof will be further explored by using the theoretical framework as a lens (Kelly, 2010).

B5 Describe the source of your research participants, and how you intend to find a sample (not required for purely theoretical studies)

I seek to recruit male and female middle managers that are in the field of Information Technology. The company is situated in Johannesburg. It is one of the leading furniture retailers in South Africa and in its vision to always strive to efficiently support on-going improvement of services relating to governance, compliance and customer service.

The company provides a core IT infrastructure services such as networking, telephone, desktop and server support across all divisions. The specific divisional applications are managed by divisional heads within the IT organisation.

Selection criteria will be used to recruit participants (Durrheim, 2006). Selection criteria will assist in obtaining participants that best represent the field of Information Technology Durrheim, (2006). The selection criterion for this study will be based on the following four characteristics. Firstly, middle managers will be recruited for the study. Middle managers in the field of Information Technology will be recruited as few studies have focused on middle management. Secondly, employees should be working for two years or longer for the company. This is to allow employees to appreciate the dynamics that is associated with promotions for a senior management position. Thirdly, employees that are between the ages 18 and above.

Furthermore, the gatekeepers for the company where I have planned to conduct my research study have been identified. The gatekeepers of the company are the Human Resources Manager (HRM) and the implementation of transformative Change Manager. The gatekeepers will first be contacted telephonically and informed of this study. Letters containing the nature of this study will be emailed to the gatekeeper (*see Appendix C*).

B6 Describe whether your data collection techniques will fall in any of the categories below

B6.1	Personal, social or other information to be collected directly from research participants (e.g. questionnaire or interview)	X	No
B6.2	Participants are to undergo psychometric testing ^a	Yes	X
B6.3	Participants are to undergo a physical examination ^b	Yes	X
B6.4	Participant behaviour will be observed directly (live or by camera)	Yes	X
B6.5	Identifiable information will be collected about people from available records (e.g. medical records, staff records, student records, etc.)	Yes	X
B6.6	Other data collection method that may impact on anonymity or privacy of participants	Yes	X
B6.7	If question B6.6 was answered 'yes' please supply details:		

B7 If question 6.2 (relating to psychometric testing) was answered 'yes', please answer the questions below

B8 Give the age range of participants in this study ^c 18 years and above

B9 Describe procedures that will be used to obtain informed consent from research participants and other relevant affected persons (such as parents and guardians)

I will first obtain access to the company by contacting the gatekeeper and obtain access in writing (*see appendix C*). Once access is approved, I will hand out a pamphlets which will inform the potential participants of the study (*see appendix D*). Potential participants that decide to take part in the study will be contacted and will be further briefed about the time and venue of the interview. I will obtain informed consent from employees that will participate in the study (*see Appendix E*). The informed consent letter will inform participants about the overall purpose of the study and that their participant is entirely voluntary.

B10 If any risks are posed by the research project, describe these as well as steps that will be taken to limit the possibility of harm to research participants (any discomfort, pain/physical or psychological problems/side-effects, persecution, stigmatisation or negative labelling should be considered. Also see Appendix 5A for a list of possible risk factors)

Participants will be recruited and will voluntarily consent to participate in the study. Their privacy and confidentiality will be protected which will ensure anonymity. Anonymity will be ensured by identification details being removed from transcripts and not be reported. The transcriber will sign a confidentiality agreement form to protect the participant's identification (*see Appendix E*). I will provide the participant with debriefing information to address any potential psychological harm that

could have arose during or after the interview.

^c For participants 18 or older, the informed consent form should be submitted. For minors or in cases where diminished responsibility exists, a consent form to be signed by the parent or legal guardian must be submitted.

B11 Do the intended research participants fall under the category that can be described as “vulnerable participants”^d

Yes	No
-----	----

B12 If question 9 was marked ‘yes’, please provide details and steps that will be taken to protect these participants:

N/A

B13 Are participants likely to incur any costs by participating in this research?

Yes	X
Yes	X

B14 Will any kind of compensation or reward be presented to research participants?

B15 If Question 5 (above) was answered ‘Yes’, please supply details:

N/A

^dSee the *Policy on Research Ethics of UNISA*, page 1 and especially page 15, paragraph 3.10

B16 Will any arrangements for indemnity be made?

Yes	X
-----	----------

B17 If Question 5 (above) was answered ‘Yes’, please supply details:

B18	Will any special arrangements be made for steps to be undertaken in case of adverse events or harm is experienced by the participants attributable to their participation in the study? (E.g. debriefing, counselling etc.)	X	No

B19 If Question 5 (above) was answered 'Yes', please supply details:

Debriefing information will be made available. UNISA Psychotherapy Clinic- 012 429 8930

B20 If countries other than South Africa are involved in the research project, list the countries here, as well as the nature of the involvement of each:

N/A

B21 If institutions other than Unisa (e.g. clinics, hospitals or schools) are involved list the relevant institutions here and specify the nature of the involvement of each

N/A

B22 If question 21 above is answered 'yes', will any of the institutions listed require ethical clearance from an appropriate ethics committee at Unisa before the research study can proceed?

Yes	No
-----	----

<p>The form should be accompanied by the following appendices when ethical clearance is requested:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. A copy of your full research proposal. 2. A copy or copies of each of the consent forms which you will use (for research participants, and parents/guardians for minors or cases where this is required) 3. Any other documentation that is of direct relevance to ethical clearance.

SECTION C CANDIDATE’S DECLARATION

I Errolyn Long, declare that I have read the Policy for Research Ethics of UNISA and that the contents of this form are a true and accurate reflection of the methodological and ethical implications of my proposed study. I shall carry out the study in strict accordance with the approved proposal and the ethics policy of UNISA. I shall maintain the confidentiality of all data collected from or about research participants, and maintain security procedures for the protection of privacy. I shall record the way in which the ethical guidelines as suggested in the proposal has been implemented in my research. I shall work in close collaboration with my promoter(s)/supervisor(s) and shall notify my promoter(s)/supervisor(s) in writing immediately if any change to the study is proposed. I undertake to notify the Higher Degrees Committee of the Department of Psychology in the College of Human Sciences in writing immediately if any adverse event occurs or when injury or harm is experienced by the participants attributable to their participation in the study. I have taken note of paragraph 5 of the Policy for Research Ethics in which integrity in research is detailed and have read and understood UNISA’s Policy for Copyright Infringement and Plagiarism (see Appendix 10).

Student: Errolyn Long

Signature

Date

Supervisor:

Signature

Date

A list of issues which may require special consideration or ethical sensitivity is given below. The list can be used to evaluate your project as an aid to filling in the Ethics Clearance Form.

Section 1: RESEARCH TOPICS

- 1.01 research about parenting
- 1.02 investigating sensitive personal issues
- 1.03 investigating sensitive cultural issues
- 1.04 explorations of grief, death or serious/traumatic loss
- 1.05 depression, mood states, anxiety
- 1.06 gambling
- 1.07 eating disorders
- 1.08 illicit drug taking
- 1.09 substance abuse
- 1.10 self-report of criminal behaviour
- 1.11 any psychological disorder
- 1.12 suicide
- 1.13 gender identity
- 1.14 sexuality
- 1.15 race or ethnic identity
- 1.16 any disease or health problem
- 1.17 fertility
- 1.18 termination of pregnancy

Section 2: RESEARCH PROCEDURES

- 2.01 use of personal data obtained from external agency without participant's knowledge
- 2.02 deception of participants
- 2.03 concealing the purposes of the research
- 2.04 covert observation
- 2.05 audio or visual recording without consent
- 2.06 recruitment via a third party or agency
- 2.07 withholding from one group specific treatments or methods of learning, from which they may otherwise benefit (e.g., in therapy, medicine or teaching)
- 2.08 any psychological interventions or treatments
- 2.09 administration of physical stimulation
- 2.10 invasive physical procedures
- 2.11 infliction of pain
- 2.12 administration of drugs
- 2.13 administration of other substances
- 2.14 administration of ionising radiation
- 2.15 tissue sampling or blood taking
- 2.16 collecting body fluid
- 2.17 genetic testing
- 2.18 use of medical records where participants can be identified or linked
- 2.19 drug trials and other clinical trials
- 2.20 administration of drugs or placebos

Section 3: PARTICIPANT VULNERABILITY

- 3.01 suffering a psychological disorder
- 3.02 suffering a physical vulnerability
- 3.03 people highly dependent on medical care
- 3.04 minors without parental or guardian consent
- 3.05 people whose ability to give consent is impaired
- 3.06 resident of a custodial institution
- 3.07 people who are unable to give free informed consent because of difficulties in the understanding of information (e.g. language difficulties)
- 3.08 members of a socially identifiable group with special cultural or religious needs or political vulnerabilities
- 3.09 those in dependent relationship with the researchers (e.g. lecturer/student, doctor/patient, teacher/pupil, professional/client)
- 3.10 will it be possible to identify any participant in any final report when specific consent for this has not been given?

Section 4 - RESEARCH WHICH MAY PUT RESEARCHERS OR FIELD WORKERS AT RISK

- 4.01 research being undertaken in a politically unstable area
- 4.02 research involving sensitive cultural issues
- 4.03 research in countries where criticism of government and institutions may put participants and/or researchers at risk

APPENDIX B: UNISA POLICY STATEMENT ON PLAGIARISM



POLICY FOR COPYRIGHT INFRINGEMENT AND PLAGIARISM

1. PREAMBLE

Where a student or researcher's work is not authentically his/her own, such work does not qualify as an academic output, whether this is a student assignment or employee research, and will be viewed as plagiarism, which is defined as the appropriation of another's work, whether intentionally or unintentionally, without proper acknowledgement. Copyright is the specific intellectual property right, which an author acquires in accordance with the Copyright Act, No. 98 of 1978 in respect of a protected work. Copyright infringement includes the infringement of the economic rights of the right holder and the moral rights of the author.

Academic dishonesty is a denial of ethical values; it undermines the credibility of research results and is a negation of sound academic practice. No value is added if copyright is infringed or where unethical research practices are used. Material gained through dishonesty adds nothing to existing knowledge: there is no growth in the independence of the writer's intellectual involvement and the writer's academic integrity is compromised. Unethical research practices undermine the purpose of education by casting doubt on the institution's ability to promote sound and efficient scholarship.

2. AIM

The aim of this policy is to empower Unisa employees and students to uphold ethical standards and to give the University of South Africa the power to act in cases where contraventions of ethical academic standards occur. A further aim of this policy is to inform employees and students of the rights of copyright holders and to provide staff and students with guidelines for ethical research and study practices.

All academic work, written or otherwise, submitted by an employee or student is expected to be the result of his/her own skill and labour. The economic rights of a copyright owner are infringed when a person knowingly or unknowingly makes an unauthorized reproduction or adaptation of a substantial part of another person's work. Moral rights are infringed when the author of a work is not given due acknowledgement by means of clear quotations and clear acknowledgements giving details of the publication concerned.

3. COPYRIGHT INFRINGEMENT

3.1 Copyright is infringed where any of the copyright owner's exclusive rights are performed without authorization.



3.2 Statutory exceptions limit the copyright owner's rights in permitting that a copyright work to be reproduced or adapted by any fair dealing with a work for the purpose of research or private study, criticism or review of that work or for the purpose of reporting on current events in a periodical. The source of the work as well as the name of the author must be mentioned.

3.3 The following will be an infringement of a work and will not be exempted as fair dealing:

3.3.1 failure to indicate clearly (e.g. with quotation marks or indent and different font) phrases or passages taken *verbatim* (word-for-word) from a published or unpublished text without crediting the original text and author;

3.3.2 paraphrasing of an article, a book or an electronic text without acknowledging the source(s) and the author of the work. This amounts to reproducing a text in different words as the author, by changing the word order of the text, the sentence types and the style of the author;

3.3.3 using more than a substantial part of the work will not be fair dealing, even if an acknowledgement of the source and the author is given.

4. PLAGIARISM AND OTHER DISHONEST PRACTICES

4.1 Unethical use of another person's work for research or study purposes may, in addition to the infringement of the copyright owner's economic rights, also infringe the author's moral rights and constitute a criminal offence.

4.2 The following will amount to the infringement of an author's moral rights:

4.2.1 failure to acknowledge the author where phrases or passages are taken *verbatim* (word-for-word) from a published or unpublished text;

4.2.2 use of a summary of a work which contains the ideas of others and presents the essence of an argument in language that condenses and compresses the original language of the source without acknowledging the author of the work;

4.2.3 using the patch-writing (cut-and-paste) method, where pieces of other persons' works, including those taken from the internet, are blended with one's own words and phrases without acknowledging the author of the source work;

4.3 Dishonest practices may also amount to criminal offences, such as fraud, theft and criminal copyright liability. Such dishonest practices include the following:

4.3.1 copying information from another person (e.g. another student's assignment or portfolio) and submitting identical work where such work is not the result of teamwork and indicated as such by all participants,

4.3.2 buying an essay from a ghost-writing service and pretending that it is one's own work;

4.3.3 asking someone else to do an assignment on one's behalf.

5. CONTRAVENTION OF THIS POLICY

A student or an employee who is guilty of the infringement of copyright or unethical practice will be subject to the applicable disciplinary code.

6. AVOIDANCE OF LIABILITY

6.1 Acknowledging sources ensures:

6.1.1 compliance with the provisions of the Copyright Act and universally accepted scientific practice;
and

6.1.2 that the reader of the work could satisfy him/herself that the authenticity and integrity of the sources
and the research methodology have been upheld.

6.2 Citation is a form of respect for the relevant author's proprietary rights.

6.3 Fair use is a form of respect for the author's economic rights.

APPENDIX C: LETTER OF PURPOSE



Dear Sir/Madam

My name is Errolyn Long. I am currently completing a research report in fulfillment of my Master's degree in Research Psychology and Consultancy at the University of South Africa. This research aims to explore and describe the experiences of aspirations and expectations towards senior managerial positions for male and female middle managers in the field of Information Technology. This study will contribute to the discipline of psychology in gaining an in-depth understanding of the gendered experiences that exist in the workplace.

I hereby ask permission to access employees (middle management level) in the field of Information Technology of your company that are willing to participate in my study. All volunteering participants in the study will remain anonymous in that, while their words will be made known, their identities will remain confidential. The interviewing process will take place for approximately 60 minutes. Interviewees may refuse to answer any question and may withdraw at any point that they wish. Non-participation or withdrawal in the study will not have any negative consequences for you in any way.

Debriefing will be made available should it be required. Debriefing and information resources will be provided to the organisation. Each interview will be audio-recorded and later transcribed. The recordings will be transcribed and kept and locked away for at least 5 years. After a period of 5 years the transcripts will be destroyed. The transcriptions may be included in the appendix of the final work with all identifying remarks and names changed. Feedback regarding the study's outcomes will be made available in the form of a report of the findings to those interested. No monetary compensations will be given. However as token of appreciation to participants that will offer their time to the study will receive snacks and refreshments after the interview.

You are in no way required to participate in this study. If you have any queries do not hesitate to ask me. It is necessary for me to obtain your informed consent before I can begin the study.

Your support is greatly appreciated.

Yours faithfully

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be "Errolyn Long", written over a horizontal dashed line.

Errolyn Long

Cell no: 073 234 4720

Email: lynnielauren@gmail.com

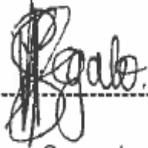
A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be "Ilse Ferns", written over a horizontal dashed line.

Acting Head of Psychology Department: Prof. Ilse Ferns

Telephone number: 012 429 8210

Email: fernsi@sun.ac.za





Primary Supervisor: Dr. Puleng Segalo

Telephone number: 012 429 8292

Email: Segalpi@unisa.ac.za



Co-supervisor: Christine Laidlaw

Telephone number: 012 429 8294

Email: laidlc@unisa.ac.za



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APPENDIX D: BROCHURE FOR MASTER'S RESEARCH



INFORMATION SHEET

Project Title: The gendered experiences of male and female employees in the field of Information Technology: Aspirations and expectations towards a senior management position.

What is this study about?

This is a research project being conducted by a Master's student in the department of Psychology at the University of South Africa (UNISA). We are inviting you to participate in this research project because you contain valuable insight into the field of Information Technology. The purpose of this research project is to explore and describe reasons for aspiring towards senior management positions in the field of Information Technology.

What will I be asked to do if I agree to participate?

You will be asked to participate in an interview. The information provided is for research purposes only. The interviewing process will take approximately 60 minutes and will be audio-recorded (with your permission).

Would my participation in this study be kept confidential?

We will do our best to keep your personal information confidential. To help protect your confidentiality, the recordings will be transcribed and locked away for at least 5 years.

After a period of 5 years the transcripts will be destroyed. The transcriptions may be included in the appendix of the final work with all identifying remarks and names changed. This means that while your words will be made known, your identity will remain confidential.

If we write a report or article about this research project, your identity will be protected to the maximum extent possible.

What are the risks of this research?

There are no known risks associated with participating in this research project.

What are the benefits of this research?

Feedback regarding the study's outcomes will be made available in the form of a report of the findings should you be interested. No monetary compensation will be given. However, as a token of appreciation for your time, a Woolies voucher worth R150.00 will be offered after the interview.

While the research may not directly benefit you personally, the findings may help the researcher learn more about the field of Information Technology and gain an in-depth understanding of the gendered experiences that exist in the workplace. We hope that, in the future, other people might benefit from this study through improved understanding of the field of Information Technology and gender.



Do I have to be in this research and may I stop participating at any time?

Your participation in this research is completely voluntary. You may choose not to take part at all. If you decide to participate in this research, and at any point feel you do not want to continue, you may stop participating and this will not be held against you in anyway.

Is any assistance available if I am negatively affected by participating in this study?

Should you experience feelings that make you uncomfortable such as fear, embarrassment or fatigue; debriefing and information resources will be provided to you.

What if I have questions?

This research is being conducted by Ms. Errolyn Long, a student at the University of South Africa. If you have any questions about the research study itself, please contact Errolyn Long at: 073 234 4720 or email: lynniel Lauren@gmail.com

Should you have any questions regarding this study and your rights as a research participant or if you wish to report any problems you have experienced related to the study, please contact:

Higher Degrees Committee of the Department of Psychology in the College of Human Sciences:

University of South Africa

PO Box 393

UNISA 0003

South Africa

This research has been approved by the University of South Africa's Senate Research Committee and Ethics Committee.



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APPENDIX E: INFORMED CONSENT FORM



Informed Consent

Study title: Gendered experiences of male and female employees in the field of Information Technology: Aspirations and expectations towards senior management positions

Researcher: Ms. Errolyn L Long

This research aims to explore and describe the experiences of aspirations and expectations towards senior managerial positions for male and female employees in the field of Information Technology. This study will contribute to the discipline of psychology to gain an in-depth understanding of the gendered experiences that exist in the workplace.

I understand that voicing my opinions may cause some anxiety. I realise that the study will require approximately 60 minutes of my time and that the interview will be audiotaped (research procedure).

I know that my participation is voluntary (voluntary consent) and I have the right to withdraw from the study during anytime I wish to do so. If I have any questions strictly relating the study or being a participant I can contact the researcher. I can reach the researcher on her cell: 073 234 4720.

I hereby give full consent to participate in this study. I have been assured by the researcher that my identity will be protected in this study or when the study is published. Only the researcher, her supervisor and co-supervisor will have access to the data.

Participant's name

Date

Participant's signature

Researcher's signature

Date

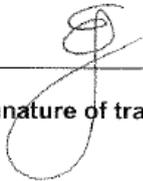


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APPENDIX F: NONDISCLOSURE FORM



I Elaine Gekhele (Transcriber's name), declare that I shall maintain the confidentiality of transcribing of data collected from or about research participants, and maintain security procedures for the protection of privacy. I will not disclose any information of the participants of this study.



Signature of transcriber

13/6/13
Date



APPENDIX G: INTERVIEW PROTOCOL



Researcher's interview protocol:

Demographic profile of participant

1. Participant number: _____
2. Age: _____
3. Race: _____
4. Gender: _____
5. Marital status: _____
6. Number of dependents: _____
7. Occupation title: _____
8. Duration of being in the profession: _____

Interview questions:

<p>1. What is it like to work in the field of Information Technology? <i>Probe: What kind of duties do you carry out?</i> <i>What made you choose the field of Information Technology?</i></p>
<p>2. How would you describe your working relationship with your female/male colleagues? <i>Probe: In what way is it similar or different to your male colleagues?</i></p>
<p>3. What would you say are the competencies for a senior management position? <i>Probe: How would you go about obtaining these competencies?</i> <i>What kind of support networks would one need that is trying to aspire towards a senior position need?</i> <i>What do you think are the competencies a good senior manager must display?</i> <i>Is senior management comprised of more males or females? And why do you think that is?</i></p>
<p>4. How do you see policies of the government such as the Employment Equity Act playing out in the workplace? <i>Probe: How do the policies of government play a role in career advancement in your workplace?</i> <i>Have you ever been exposed to gender issues in your workplace?</i></p>
<p>5. What other responsibilities do you engage in when you are not at work? <i>Probe: Are you able to balance these responsibilities with you work responsibilities?</i> <i>If No, why is that? If Yes, what coping mechanisms are you using?</i></p>

