GENDER EQUALITY AND EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES IN THE WORK PLACE: THE

CASE OF THE PUBLIC SECTOR IN SWAZILAND

by

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List of Acronyms

ACCA	Association of Chartered Certified Accountants
ADB	African Development Bank
AHR	Advocates for Human Rights
AIDS	Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome
ANC	African National Congress
ANC	Ante Natal Care
AU	African Union
CANGO	Coordinating Assembly of Non-Governmental Organisations
CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women
COPE	Congress of the People
CSC	Civil Service Commission
DA	Democratic Alliance
DPMO	Deputy Prime Minister's Office
DRC	Democratic Republic of Congo
ECSA-HC	Eastern, Central and Southern Africa Health Community
ERC	Equal Remuneration Convention
EU	European Union
HDI	Human Development Index
HIV	Human Immune Virus
HR	Human Resources
ICESCR	International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights
IFP	Inkatha Freedom Party
ILO	International Labour Organisation
IMF	International Monetary Fund
IMR	Infant Mortality Rate

MBA	Master of Business Administration
MDGs	Millennium Development Goals
MISA	Media Institute of Southern Africa
MMR	Maternal Mortality Rate
MOHSW	Ministry of Health and Social Welfare
MP	Member of Parliament
NCOP	National Council of Provinces
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
NHS	National Health Strategy
PHD	Pull Her Down Syndrome
PMS	Performance Management System
PPCU	Public Policy Coordination Unit
PRSAP	Poverty Reduction Strategy and Action Plan
PRSPs	Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers
SADC	Southern African Development Community
SARDC	Southern Africa Research and Documentation Centre
SDHS	Swaziland Demographic and Health Survey
SGBV	Sexual and Gender Based Violence
SNC	Swaziland National Council
SPSS	Statistical Package for Social Scientists
UN	United Nations
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UNISA	University of South Africa
US	United States
WLSA	Women in Law in Southern Africa

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CHAPTER 1

Background to the Study

1.1 Introduction

Many authors have written extensively on the subject of gender inequality. This section of the study will highlight some of the thinking that has been postulated on this subject and draw attention to evidence of gender inequalities in the workplace and other decision-making structures. An in-depth analysis of these will be undertaken in the course of the study, and an overview of the theoretical discourse will be given in chapter 2.

The historical evolution of restrictions and inequalities in the workplace has been studied and analysed. Haralambos (1991:545) states that in the 1800s women were seen by male factory workers as a threat to their employment, and men called for gradual withdrawal of all female labour from the factories in Britain. He also points out that at that time women were excluded from participation in trade union discussions when laws restricting the employment of working women were passed.

In later years in Britain, Oakley (in Haralambos 1991:546) observed that there was a gradual shift towards the employment of women, coupled with the retention of housewifery as the primary role expected of all women. This trend tends to be the situation in modern society, where women have multiple roles in which they are employed and involved in a vocation, but have other domestic responsibilities for which they engage paid domestic support as a coping mechanism.

The subject of gender equality gained particular attention during the women's decade between 1975 and 1985. During and after this period, significant efforts were undertaken to ensure gender equality in all spheres of life. The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) (1995:29) points out that, as a result, women now

share much more in the benefits of the social services in public and private life, but continue to be denied equal opportunities for political and economic participation. UNDP (1995:29) postulates that the past years have seen unprecedented human development efforts that contributed greatly to the rapid progress in building women's capabilities and in closing the gender gaps. The report states that the widespread pattern of inequality between men and women persists in their access to education, health, nutrition, and even more so, in their participation in the economic and political spheres

Inequalities occur in many other settings, including political settings. According to a report on the proceedings of a conference in Gaborone, Botswana, in April 1999, the average percentage of women in parliament for the SADC region, excluding the DRC, is 15% and only three countries account for this percentage. South Africa stands at 29.8%, which was closest to reaching the 30% target, then Mozambique at 28.4% and Seychelles at 24%. Only 5 SADC countries were at 15% or higher. These were Angola, Mozambique, South Africa, Seychelles and Tanzania. Swaziland had the lowest score of 7.3%. Other countries in the lower category not likely to meet the target were Mauritius, Malawi and Botswana (SADC 1999:7).

At this conference it was found that there was inadequate data on women in decision making in the private sector and that further research needs to be undertaken. These are senior-level positions, where policy and management-level decisions are made. The conference recognised the importance of constitutional commitment to gender equality as well as quotas and special measures to ensure the attainment of the 30% target of women in decision making by the year 2005 (SADC 1999:7).

To the contrary, the trends have changed slightly over the years. According to Gender Links (2010:15), the average representation of women in both houses of parliament across the SADC region is 24% This ranges from 7% in Botswana and the DRC to 44% in South Africa (Gender Links: 2010). Comparatively, this is an improvement from what

was reported by SADC (1999) where it was noted that the representation of women in parliament was at 15% excluding the DRC which according to Gender Links (2010) is now accounted for in the 24%. Although this still does not meet the required quota of 30% the progressive changes are noted.

While SADC(1999:7) reported that Mauritius, Malawi and Botswana were in the lowest categories in terms of women representation in parliament , this can also be attributed to the fact that Botswana and Mauritius have not signed the SADC protocol on Gender and Development (Gender Links 2010 : 10). This is significant of the fact that legal and policy reform are instrumental in the transformation of gender trends. It is noted from this analysis that Botswana, although politically progressive is socially conservative as evidenced by the 7% women representation in parliament compared to countries like South Africa with 44% representation who are in the same economic strata(Gender Links 2010:15).

Owing to the slow progression towards equality, United Nations member countries have continued to enforce and make a commitment towards the attainment of gender equality. This has been seen in countries being signatories to major international conventions such as the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), the Beijing Platform of Action, the Millennium Declaration, and others. According to the CEDAW Optional Protocol, countries that are signatories to these conventions and protocols are required to provide equal remuneration, treatment and social security, and not discriminate on the basis of marriage or maternity. Furthermore, states parties are called on to encourage the provision of support to enable parents to combine work and family responsibilities as well as participation in public life. State parties must also ensure adequate health services and eliminate discrimination against women in economic and social life through ensuring that they enjoy the same rights as men for social benefits, bank loans, mortgages and other forms of financial credit (United Nations 2003:18–19).

CEDAW provides a basis for realising equality between men and women through ensuring women's equal access to and equal opportunities in political and public life, including the right to vote and stand for elections as well as in education and employment, thus bring an end to the exclusion of women.

The primary objective of CEDAW grew out of the realisation that attainment of equality required affirmative action by governments to correct historical and cultural imbalances against women in all societies Southern African Research and Documentation Centre (SARDC 2000:136) . All African countries have ratified this convention, the last being Swaziland in 2004. Most countries in Southern Africa are implementing affirmative action programmes that are geared towards ensuring the inclusion of women in public and political life. In Swaziland, during the 2003 elections, there were few women members of parliament (MPs) were elected at the constituencies. This means that there were ultimately much fewer women than men in the House of Assembly. As a result, the appointing authority appointed more women into Senate to ensure a healthier balance.

Gender inequalities manifest in different forms in Swazi society, some of which include wealth, property and land. Land is the major means of production in Swaziland. However, it has been difficult for women who are married by civil rights in community of property to access land in their own right. Most women did not have access to financial credit because of the lack of collateral, and because they could not enter into a legal contract without spousal consent and support. However, with the advent of the new constitution, women are now able to purchase and register title deed land in their own right without prior consent of their spouses. On Swazi Nation Land, women still need the support of their spouse or male child/relative to acquire land. Swazi Nation Land is land that is controlled by chiefs and is often situated in rural areas. This land is given to Swazi citizens, and in return they pay allegiance through obligations such as participating in traditional and cultural activities, including ploughing the fields owned by the chief.

Because Swaziland is a patriarchal society, formal employment has been reserved for men for a long time. Men left their homes in search of employment, which resulted in female-headed households. In a quest to supplement their income, these women accepted employment under severe conditions of discrimination by their male counterparts as they were lower paid than men (WLSA & SARDC 1998:18).

Education plays a major role in formal employment. Illiteracy is higher among women, meaning that most women are unemployed. Formal employment is governed by the Employment Act, which does not allow discrimination based on gender. However, women are not well protected, and there are clear cases of discrimination based on gender and marital status. For example, the Employment Act of Swaziland prohibits women from working in mines. Although the act provides for equal pay for equal work, this is not always the case. Women are sometimes paid lower salaries and are found in the low-paying sectors such as garment manufacturing, crop production, secretarial and clerical services as well as the teaching and nursing professions (WLSA & SARDC 1998:18).

Another issue of concern in the act is the provision for maternity leave. The stipulated period for paid maternity leave is 12 weeks, but most employers do not adhere to this stipulation. Because women cannot afford unpaid maternity leave, they return to work within a few days of childbirth, which could compromise their own health and that of the infant, resulting in maternal and infant mortality. Women have ventured into small entrepreneurial businesses, and faced the challenges of low expertise, of weak managerial skills, and being denied collateral. Even when loans are granted there has to be spousal consent, which causes women to assume a minority status before the law.

The issues raised in this section will be explored in detail in line with objectives of the study which are highlighted in section 1.3 of this chapter as well as in greater detail in chapter 4.

1.2 Research problem

Swaziland, like many African countries, is patriarchal. Women are still treated as secondary citizens and regarded as minors in society. This is as a result of socialisation, which then manifests in the domestic and workplace settings. In the workplace, these inequalities come in the form of biases in recruitment and professional development, as well as the socio-economic and cultural issues related to gender inequalities. These issues include beliefs and practices which people may bring to the workplace. These suggest that since women are minors, then it follows that they cannot occupy high-level positions in the workplace, and therefore cannot even be remunerated at levels that match their positions. On the socio-economic and cultural fronts, for a long time women have had limited access to economic and property resources. Women married in community of property could not register title deed land in their own right. There have, however, been changes with the new constitutional dispensation in which provisions stipulate that women can now purchase and register property in their own right. The delayed changes in the law surrounding these issues are embedded in the strong and rigid culture of Swazi society.

Biases have been seen in cases where the most senior and intensive positions in organisations are occupied by men, and the softer occupations occupied by women. The 'intensive' positions are regarded as those that are more challenging, such as the positions of senior executives, whereas the 'softer' occupations are the support positions, such as clerical and administrative positions that are not as attractive in terms of remuneration and other incentives.

The absence of gender policies in the workplace hinders progression towards gender equality, as there is no framework to ensure deliberate efforts and actions towards gender equality. Such a framework would ensure competitive selection and recruitment and eliminate biases. It would entail guiding principles, practice and ethos towards ensuring equal opportunities in the workplace, regardless of gender.

This issue is compounded by the absence of a monitoring and reporting system that will track the improvements and progress that are being made in closing the gaps that exist in this area. The data on gender monitoring is outdated and inadequate and there is need to ensure up-to-date reporting. This study will attempt to address these challenges.

1.3 Research objective

The primary objective of this study is to investigate the extent of gender inequalities in the workplace in the government sector in Swaziland, and to provide possible solutions that address the identified gaps and challenges.

The secondary objectives are to highlight the subject of gender by providing theoretical perspectives and to also present a socio-cultural and economic context of gender in Swaziland. Furthermore, the secondary objectives are to undertake research on gender equality in the public sector of Swaziland, analyse findings, draw conclusions from those findings and make recommendations for action and implementation.

The study focuses on the government sector, because official statistics are more likely to be available, hence it is a more viable sector to study. The data on the public sector reveals the trends and practices on gender equality that have occurred over time. The study focuses on perceptions of how women are treated in the workplace and whether there are equal opportunities for male and female in the workplace. The study also

reports on the numbers/percentages of women that can be found in high-level positions during the last few years.

1.4 Limitations of the study

The main limitation of the study is that it focuses only on the government sector. Therefore it does not provide us with the information to allow for comparisons across sectors.

1.5 Importance of the study

The study is important as there is limited research data on the subject. The data needs to be added to and updated and contributes positively to the broader body of knowledge in this field.

1.6 Research methodology

The study uses primary and secondary data. The primary data is obtained from in-depth interviews with key informants in government. The secondary data takes the form of literature to provide the background and theoretical context. In collecting the data, quantitative and qualitative methods have been used. This assists in complementing one data source with the other and validating the findings. A detailed elaboration on methodology is provided in greater detail in chapter 4.

1.7 Research techniques

In collecting the data, interviews were conducted with the key informants through in-depth interviews and a designed questionnaire. Closed and open-ended questions were used. Reports and other related research that has been undertaken in the country was also reviewed.

Sampling

Purposive and convenience sampling have been used with the key informants for this study, and include men and women in government service. The key informants are human resources (HR) officers, male and female senior executives in government, and other categories of staff. The sampling has been done to find out the respondents' perceptions on the issue that is being researched, because it affects both male and female in the workplace.

Data analysis

Data has been analysed using qualitative methods such as themes. Statistical software has also been used and data is presented in tables and graphs.   The details on research technique are explored in chapter 4 of the study.

1.8 Clarification of terms

A brief description is given below of the key terms used in this dissertation. The terms will however be addressed more comprehensively in the chapters to follow, particularly in chapter 2.

Affirmative action: A deliberate action to ensure that women participate in decision-making processes. These actions are usually adopted by governments to ensure conformity with policies that promote female participation. It is a quota system in which a proportion of decision-making positions are allocated to females. An example is the 1997 SADC Declaration on Gender and Development, in which heads of governments took the decision to ensure full representation of women and men in the decision making of member states and SADC structures at all levels, and to achieve at least a 30% target of women in political and decision-making structures by the year 2005. This target has been reviewed to 50% by 2015.

Equal opportunities: A policy decision to ensure the equal participation and involvement of males and females in development initiatives.

Gender: Assigning male and female labels to social roles and attributes as if they arose from sexual differences, although these attributes are acquired through a process of socialisation.

Gender awareness: An ability to identify problems arising from gender inequality and discrimination, even if they are not obvious.

Gender bias: The tendency to make decisions or take action based on gender, which could be both negative and positive.

Gender discrimination: Differential/prejudicial treatment of an individual based on a gender stereotype.

Gender division of labour: The roles, responsibilities and activities assigned to women and men based on gender

Gender equality: Men and women enjoying the same opportunities, rights and obligations in all spheres of life. An equal sharing in the distribution of power, resources and opportunity.

Gender equity: The quality of being fair and just. Fairness and justice in the distribution between women and men of benefits and responsibilities, access to resources and opportunities to exercise control.

Gender mainstreaming: A strategy of integrating gender concerns in the analysis, formulation and monitoring of policies, programmes and projects, to promote gender equality and the empowerment of women in development initiatives.

Gender roles: These are socially constructed roles and responsibilities assigned to women and men in a given culture. Society often sees these roles as being defined by sexual differences. Gender roles entail socially constructed roles that men and women play and the expectations placed on them. Gender roles are learned, vary from society to society, and change over time.

Triple role of women: This entails the threefold role played by women in society. These roles are reproductive, productive and societal in nature.

Women empowerment: A process by which unequal power relations are transformed and women gain greater equality with men. At a much higher level, this could include the extension of all fundamental social, economic and political rights to women. At individual level it includes processes by which women gain greater self-esteem and control over their own lives and personal and social relationships.

1.8 Chapter layout

The layout of the dissertation is presented below . It highlights the order in which the chapters are presented.

* The background to the study

* Literature on gender equality

* Gender and the socio-cultural and economic context of Swaziland

* Study design and research methodology

* Data, analysis and discussion

* Conclusions and recommendations

* References

* Appendices

1.9 Conclusion

This chapter has provided the background to the study, highlighted the research problem, the aims and objectives of the study and what it attempts to address. The chapter also provided a general summary of the methods and techniques used in the study. Working definitions of terms and concepts that are used throughout the dissertation have also been presented including the layout and presentation of chapters.

Chapter 2 provides an analysis of the literature on gender, providing some global and regional perspectives on the subject of gender.

CHAPTER 2

The literature on gender equality explored

2.1 Introduction

Chapter 2 presents a detailed analysis of the literature, and it encapsulates and highlights women's representation in the workplace with particular reference to global trends. The chapter offers key working definitions to contextualise the discussion. The chapter also highlights important areas that relate to the quantification of women's work, which bring to the fore discrepancies in the methodology of collecting data and evidence. It highlights the socio-economic status of women globally, focusing on the role of education in women's meaningful participation in the workplace. There is an analysis of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and reference is made to selected MDG country reports.

Case studies and illustrations reflect the situation in various countries and organisations, as models that have been tested and used in other countries are referenced.

2.2 Gender equality and inequality defined

'Gender refers to the economic, social and cultural attributes and opportunities associated with being male or female' (UNFPA 2009:1). The United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) notes that biological characteristics are associated with societal roles and expectations, but they vary from society to society and change over time. For example, for several decades the roles of women were those of child minding and care giving. However, with changing times, women are taking over roles and responsibilities which were once believed to be those of men.

A discussion on gender equality would be incomplete without a definition of 'gender equity' because these terms are interrelated. 'Gender equity is the process of ensuring

fairness and equal distribution of resources among men and women. Equity leads to equality and where gender inequality exists it is the women who are excluded in relation to decision-making and access to economic and social resources' (UNFPA 2009:2). This quotation upholds the view that the empowerment of women is a critical aspect of promoting gender equality, identifying and addressing power imbalances, and giving women the opportunity to manage their own lives as a means of ensuring meaningful inclusion in the development process.

Gender equality ensures that access to resources is not weighted in men's favour, so that men and women participate fully as equal partners in development (UNFPA 2009:2).

Over and above the differences in the roles of men and women, systemic inequalities are prevalent throughout society. Across the world there is evidence of women's inferior status and their inaccessibility to resources, opportunities and under representation in decision-making processes, which undermine the attainment of women's full potential (UNFPA 2009:2). These include laws, policies, systems and practices that exclude women from accessing resources. These are often based on culture and tradition and are heavily influenced by the socialisation process (UNFPA 2009:2).

Gender mainstreaming is an important factor in ensuring gender equality. According to UNFPA (2009:2), 'gender mainstreaming is a strategy for integrating gender concerns in the analysis, formulation and monitoring of policies and programmes'. Gender mainstreaming strengthens the legitimacy of gender equality values by ensuring deliberate efforts to address gender gaps in the development agenda. For example, in development planning in the last few years, there have been efforts to engender national development plans such the Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers (PRSPs) in order to ensure that in all matters of development there are efforts to address gender issues and concerns in a more inclusive manner.

Although gender equality is not a new phenomenon, in some societies it has been misconstrued, as explained by (UNFPA 2009:4) 'The achievement of gender equality has implications for both men and women. It is therefore important to view gender as an aspect of men's identity as it is often common to view male characteristics and attributes as the norm and those of women as an exception to the norm.' This often results in the common misinterpretation of gender issues to mean women's issues.

'Equal opportunities for women and men refers to the absence of barriers to economic, political and social participation on the grounds of sex' (Olgiati & Shapiro 2002:2). An example is an environment that offers equal access for men and women to the resources which enable them to realise their goals and potential, especially in the workplace.

'Equal treatment of women and men is the absence of discrimination on grounds of sex, either directly or indirectly' (Olgiati & Shapiro 2002:2).

Taken together, these definitions emphasise the importance of non-discrimination to facilitate men and women to reach their full potential in the workplace.

According to the International Labour Organisation (ILO), 'gender equality is a fundamental human right and an essential condition for achieving effective democracy' (ILO 2009:1). In its constitution, the ILO notes that all human beings have the right to pursue their material wellbeing and their spiritual development in conditions of freedom and dignity, of economic security and equal opportunity (ILO 2009:1).

UNFPA confirms this assertion by stating that 'gender equality is first and foremost, a human right' (UNFPA 2009:1). UNFPA asserts that women are entitled to live in dignity, free from want and fear, and notes that empowering women is an indispensable tool for advancing development and reducing poverty.

This section has brought out the differences between equality and equity. Whereas equality means the enjoyment of same opportunities, obligations and rights among men and women, equity means the quality of being just and fair in the distribution of opportunities and access to resources by males and females.

2.3 Gender equality and the international development agenda

There is a strong case for gender equality globally. The importance of gender equality is underscored by its inclusion in the Millennium Development Goals. Gender equality is critical for the achievement of the other seven goals (UNFPA 2009:1) The UN global conferences, which included the International Conference on Population and Development (1994), the Beijing Conference (1995), and the Millennium Summit (2000), which gave birth to the MDGs, continue to promote gender equality. The UN Secretary-General, addressing top government officials in Guatemala in January 2009 at the Second Ministerial Meeting on the Non-Aligned Movement on the Advancement of Women, stressed that 'women's empowerment is key to realising other major international development targets' (UN News Service 2009:1).

Since the adoption of the MDGs, there has been remarkable progress on the gender agenda, with countries working to reduce inequalities in education, employment and political representation (UN News Service 2009:1). While these positive strides have been noted, the UN Secretary-General indicates that more needs to be done for young girls who cannot afford to go beyond basic primary education, and that women continue to face higher unemployment rates than men as well as lower wages.

In this meeting the UN Secretary-General called for the empowerment of women to promote respectable work principles such as labour standards, social protection and recognition of worker's rights, to increase women's access to political decision making, as well as addressing women's health, including sexual and reproductive health and eradicate gender based violence (UN News Service 2009).

While some proponents argue that there is remarkable progress in achieving gender equality globally, others have observed that progress has been slow, especially in Africa. Reasons that have been attributed to these delays are related to systemic challenges in organisations and regional structures. For example, the African Union's gender policy, although it was initiated in early 2006, was delayed until late 2007 owing to inadequate capacity within the AU Secretariat. The AU (2007) notes that although there have been notable improvements at African regional level in the policy, legal and institutional frameworks, gender inequality is a persistent development challenge in Africa. This has been attributed to the socio-economic and cultural issues that present barriers in implementing some of these policies.

In more tangible terms, these systemic challenges continue to manifest in different forms and as noted by the AU, 'Statistics continue to show that access to resources is not equitable between women and men across the continent. Violence against women and girls in conflicts and situations of insecurity is reaching an alarming stage' (Heyns & Killander 2007:2). This is an indication of the situation of gender in different parts of the world, with Africa making the slowest progress.

The United Nations (UN) confirms this observation by stating that research has shown increased participation of women in decision making has a positive impact on development priorities and poverty reduction and this has a positive effect on them, as well as on their communities (UN 2009).

2.4 Gender: a historical perspective

One of the defining movements of the 20th century has been the relentless struggle for gender equality, led mostly by women, but supported by growing numbers of men (UNDP 1995:1). This argument suggests that the struggle for gender equality has been led by women, resulting in the subject of gender being misconstrued as a women's

issue. This has resulted in the exclusion of men in the process. The result of this has often been a general rejection and reluctance of men to participate in programmes related to gender equality. This has led to relatively slow progress in attaining gender equality and equal opportunities in countries, especially in Africa, owing to the misconstruction of gender but also to the heavy influence of culture biases.

2.5 The quantification of women's work

There is great concern about under-reporting women's contribution in official government statistics. Adepoju and Oppong (1994) note the value of women's work and underscore the importance of ascertaining and measuring the contribution that women make.

This outcry began in the women's decade (1975–1985) and there have been repeated appeals for statistics to more accurately reflect the true extent of women's labour force activity. In 1985 the ILO, at its 71st session, passed a resolution on equal opportunities and equal treatment of men and women in employment. According to the (ILO 2009: 30) existing statistics do not adequately reflect women's participation in the labour force. Hence efforts should be made to improve statistical data collection and analysis in order to reflect more fully the contribution of women in productive activities and other aspects of their employment. Efforts should be made to ensure accurate data collection at country level to inform planning and policy level decisions.

The ILO (2009) observed that while women fill a significant proportion of the labour force, their proportion of earnings is low.

Given these and other related scenarios, the reasons for under-reporting include the methodology. Labour force participation is often measured by the minimum number of hours that a person must have engaged in. The estimates often exclude other

contributions in the labour market, as well as ineffective training of data collectors, and questionnaires and data collection tools often having omissions.

The Nairobi Forward Looking Strategies in 1985 called for improved data collection. The UN called for timely and reliable statistics on the situation of women, indicating that statistics have an important role to play in eliminating stereotypes, and enhancing the movement towards full equality. The Forward Looking Strategies urged governments to collect statistics and make periodic assessments in identifying stereotypes and inequalities (UN 1986: 9).

2.6 Women's representation in the workplace: global trends

Women have attained critical mass in the professional and managerial ranks of a significant percentage of United States (US) companies, especially financial and services organisations, and constitute the largest segment of the increasingly diverse US labour pool (Levin & Mattis 2006:61). In 2004 women constituted 46% of all US labour force participants, which was a rise from 29.6% in 1950, and held 50% of all managerial, professional and related occupations in US companies up from 36% in 1976. Women in the US are a highly educated group. Corporate women earned 57.4% of all bachelor's degrees, 57.1% of all master's degrees, 43% of 'first professional' degrees and 47.1% of doctorates in all fields, including almost one third of all science and engineering degrees and over half of all non-science PHDs. Levin & Mattis (2006: 61) noted that while women rank high in these fields of study, they are under-represented in master of business administration (MBA) programmes.

This presents a picture contrary to most African settings, especially in managerial and professional occupations, which are predominantly occupied by men. For example, in Swaziland in 2007, of the 130 senior government positions, only 31 are occupied by women. In government ministries and departments – such as Public Works and Transport, Correctional Services, Police Service, Enterprise and Employment, as well

as Housing and Urban Development – there are no women in the higher positions (CANGO 2008: 10).

Ghana, however, has shown a different picture. Ghana stressed the importance of promoting women's education and employment in its policies. According to the IMF (2004:92) the objective of the government of Ghana in the education sector was to reduce the gender gap in school enrolment. The medium term was to develop scholarships and other incentive schemes to ensure the retention of girls in school.

In terms of economic productivity, Ghana's policy thrust was to enhance women's access to and control of productive resources. In 2003, the Ministry of Women and Children's Affairs in Ghana established the Women's Development Fund. Financial support was also provided for women engaged in commercial activities, agricultural production and processing. This resulted in the creation of new jobs for women throughout the country (IMF 2004:4).

Today the situation in Ghana shows improvement in women's achievement of economic self-sufficiency, and security from gender violence and discrimination. The last few years have been dedicated towards the attainment of MDG 3. According to the IMF (2004:135) equal access to education, among other measures, is a key step towards gender equality. The IMF notes that MDG 3 is on track and the target for this goal is likely to be achieved (IMF 2004:135).

This demonstration of commitment by the government of Ghana is evidence of the gains that countries can make if gender equalities and equal opportunities are prioritised and placed at the top of the development agenda.

In the United States of America the subject of inequality in the workplace can be explained through disaggregation by colour. For example, approximately 13.6% of board seats at Fortune 500 companies in the United States were held by women in 2003; women of colour held just 3% of these seats. Increasing women's representation in top corporate boards is painstakingly slow, represented by a slight increase from 9.6% in 1995, to 11.7% in 2000, to 13.6% in 2003 for white women and for women of colour only 0.5% since 1999 (Levin & Mattis 2006: 63).

The challenge of ensuring diversity in the workplace is that diversity is viewed as a peripheral human resource issue rather than a central business one (Levin & Mattis 2006:65).

In their analysis of inequalities and their compilation of cases at Harvard Business School, the authors note that these cases do not illustrate the women's successes and failures as business professionals, but as women. This is the tendency in considering women for promotion. More often than not, performance appraisal and career reviews are not necessarily used by leadership to determine a woman's potential ability for leadership, but these decisions are often made because she is female. Comparatively, in Swaziland, diversity cannot be used to measure specific differences such as colour, language and other definitions, because there is only one ethnic group and discrimination is only seen between male and female as opposed to female to female based on the diverse characteristics in women such as race, colour and ethnicity.

Levin and Mattis (2006) document the case study of Ann Hopkins, who was the only woman out of a class of 87 candidates nominated for partnership at Price Waterhouse. She was not regarded as qualified to be a partner. Rather her nomination was put on hold to allow more time for her to 'demonstrate her skills and allay concerns about her'. A partner who had originally supported her nomination withdrew his support, and another partner joined him in opposing her re-nomination. Eventually she was told that it

was unlikely that she would ever become a partner at Price Waterhouse (Levin & Mattis 2006:66). This case demonstrates the extent to which women need to demonstrate their greater potential over men if they want to be appointed in senior positions. This illustrates that often women are measured on the basis of gender, and not their capabilities.

2.7 International labour conventions and their relationship to gender

A number of international conventions and recommendations promote and uphold gender equality in the workplace. These conventions are legal instruments which place obligations on member states to translate them into national laws and practice to ensure conformity with the provisions of the conventions, as well as periodic reporting obligations to the ILO on their application in law and in practice. This means that countries that have ratified these conventions, by virtue of their signatures to the conventions, are expected to enact related laws that facilitate the implementation of the convention and then provide periodic progress reports to the ILO.

Three main ILO conventions that prohibit discrimination and promote equality on the basis of sex are the Equal Remuneration Convention of 1951, the Discrimination (Employment and Occupation) Convention of 1958 and the Workers with Family Responsibilities Convention of 1981 (ILO 2009:2).

These conventions provide for special conditions of work and protection to ensure that the reproductive capacity of workers is not endangered by exposure to particular situations in the workplace.

Other conventions provide for social security protection for women in pregnancy and childbirth. These provisions are intended to mitigate against gender inequalities and discrimination that may emanate against women, based on women's confinement

during pregnancy and child bearing when women may not have equal opportunities. Safeguards against this are important, as often women who are pregnant are not considered favourably for employment compared with men because employers will prioritise productivity and profits over and above childcare because at these times productivity would otherwise be low.

The ILO observes that there should be no debate that measures based on the sex or biological characteristics of women such as the ILO maternity protection convention of 2000 are necessary for the achievement of true equality, but other protective measures based on gender in terms of perceptions about the capabilities or the appropriate role of women in society have came under scrutiny, as they can be advantageous to women's employment and promotion prospects or deny them entry into certain jobs (ILO 2009:3).

There is therefore a need for supportive legislation which ensures that equal opportunities are created so that men and women achieve equality because of the barriers that prevent women's equal participation with men in the labour force.

2.8 Implementation, enforcement and monitoring of gender equality conventions and programmes

Governments and private sector organisations have used various methods to ensure that agreements are implemented at micro and macro level. Collective agreements constitute one such instrument that has been used in many countries in a process of negotiation, which results in a written agreement between the employer and employees negotiating for equal opportunities in the workplace. Collective agreements provide for wider consultation between parties on the key indicators that define and measure equal opportunities in a particular workplace (ILO 2009:6).

Some countries have put in place legislation to eliminate employer and employee biases that includes provisions dealing with affirmative action, training and promotion, pregnancy, childbirth and parental leave, childcare facilities, breastfeeding breaks, and the principle of equal pay for work of equal value (ILO 2009:6).

Documented court cases and tribunals have been important sources of law in overcoming inadequacies in gender equality laws that are applied in practice. The creation of a legal framework to safeguard the violation of worker's rights is important in ensuring that equality measures are enforced in the workplace.

The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) has institutionalised the office of the ombudsperson to ensure equal treatment of employees in the workplace. This office handles not only gender equality issues but also human and worker rights violations which may be imposed by employers on employees. It also ensures that there is generally a work environment that is conducive to efficiency and effectiveness of employees by providing the necessary protection of workers' rights.

Workers' and employers' organisations are also important in increasing the bargaining power of workers and employees. The use of information and research institutions is important to inform policy, laws and programmes through reliable up-to-date gender disaggregated data, including researching and evaluating the impact of policies and programmes on the relative situation of women and men.

The ILO (2009:8) acknowledges that achieving gender equality is challenging. However, efforts have been made by countries to ensure equality through various mechanisms. These include policies that promote conditions conducive to the participation of women in the labour force, such as educational and training plans and the provision of gender-sensitive occupational guidance to help increase the participation of women in previously male dominated fields.

Organisational programmes that equip women to adequately and effectively participate in the labour market need to be adopted to ensure that the implementation of the conventions into policy and practice is enforced (ILO 2009:8). Corrective actions to address past inconsistencies in gender balance include setting quotas for women's participation in decision-making positions from which they have previously been excluded; promotional measures to redress the causes of discrimination; and supervisory machinery to monitor progress on the measures that are put in place ILO 2009:8).

Establishing an independent authority to monitor and investigate gender discrimination in the workplace is preferable to creating a gender equality department in the Ministry of Labour (Advocates for Human Rights 2009:1). Independent authorities are more likely to enforce laws against non-complying employers because they have no interest in such employers or their business operations. They are probably more objective in the execution of their function. This is more likely to make those who have suffered discrimination to use these structures as they are in a better position to serve the interests of employees.

This presents a strong case for establishing independent entities which will be effective if they are given more autonomy, and are not characterised by political influence, which may affect their objectivity. Also, these independent entities can function well if they are adequately funded and staffed with personnel who have the appropriate skills and capacity. Countries such as Poland, Hungary and Lithuania have established these mechanisms, which is an indication of their political will and commitment to addressing gender equality in a more substantive way (Advocates for Human Rights 2009:1).

2.9 Selected case studies

The case study analysis presents situations that have been used to measure gender equality as a determinant of socio-economic development. Included in this section are experiences from electoral processes, country analyses on the implementation of the MDGs, and models used to measure equality in workplaces in European countries.

Figure 2.1, referred to as The Gender Equality Machine, is used to illustrate equal opportunities programmes in some countries,
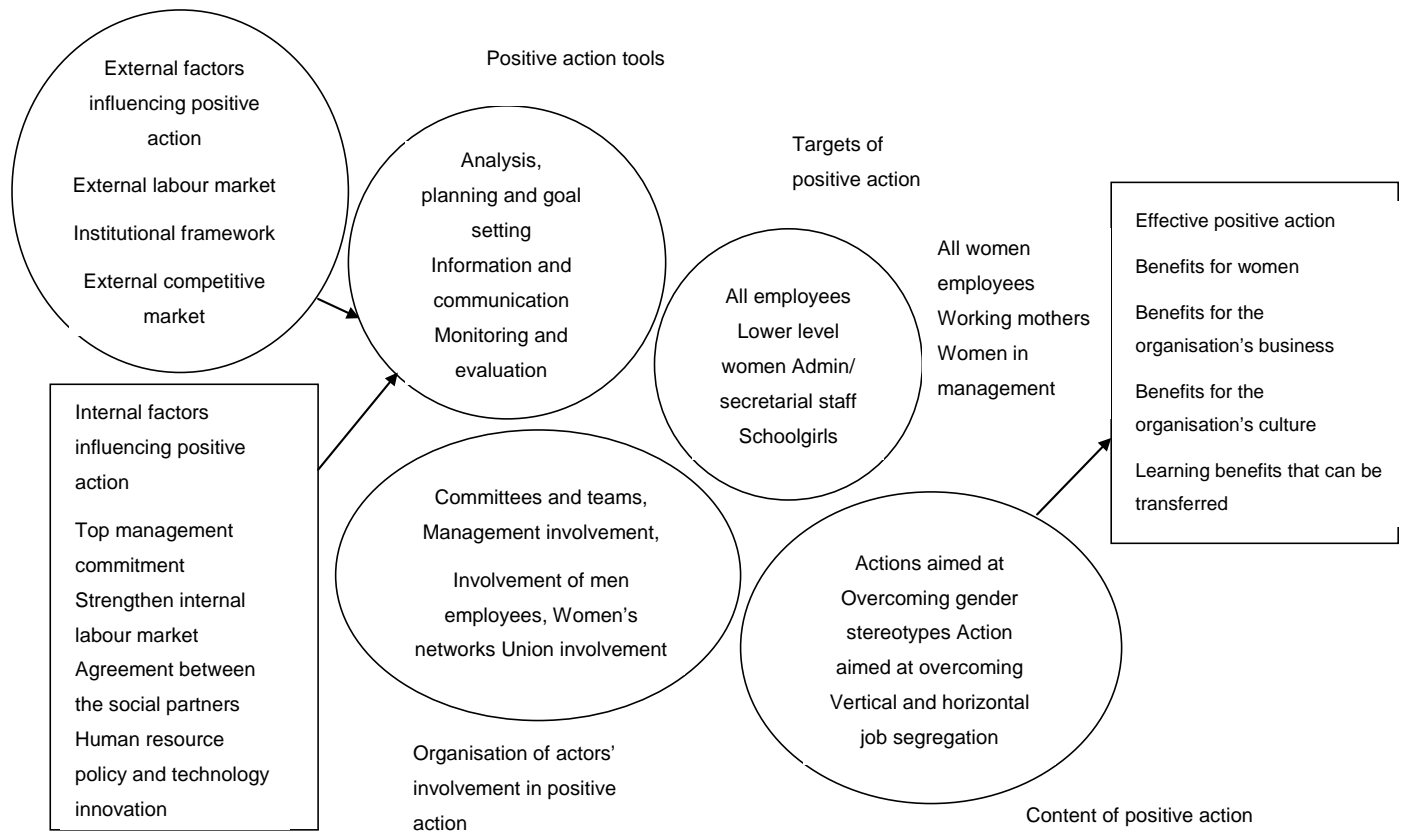
Figure 2.1: The gender equality machine

Source: Olgiati & Shapiro (2002:10)

The above model has been tested, validated and used to evaluate 19 organisations in 12 EU member states. The internal and external factors that influence action towards gender equality are represented as inputs. The actors, tools, targets and content of positive action are represented as a cog wheel, all of which translate into the final output, which is an organisation that has experienced the benefits of effective positive action (Olgiati & Shapiro 2002:10).

It can be concluded from the illustration that an organisation must have the necessary tools such as planning and goal setting, as well as monitoring and evaluation systems to implement a viable equality programme. The programme also has to be inclusive of key factors such as management and unions to ensure ownership, support and meaningful involvement of all the parties concerned. The beneficiaries of positive action must be clearly defined. These could be women and men across the cadres of the organisation as they are all affected in varying degrees by what Olgiati and Shapiro (2002:10) define as the content of positive action, which includes overcoming gender stereotypes, reconciling work and home/family as well as eliminating vertical and horizontal job segregation. The importance of internal and external factors, such as institutional and policy environment, and commitment of senior management, who are the custodians of financial and human resources for the implementation of programmes, as well as agreements of all the structures and formations within an organisation, cannot be overemphasised. All these are essential elements of an effective equality programme.

In recent years the discussion on gender has gained momentum, and has been used by voters to measure the implementation of gender equality policies by political parties because gender is not only a development issue, but is also an issue that many people in society identify with. More importantly, gender equality is a positive socio-economic indicator for development. In the elections debate that culminated in the 2009 South African elections, there were extensive discussions in the media on how the political parties would advance gender equality programmes. In these debates the Commission for Gender Equality of South Africa (Elections Debate, SABC, 5 April 2009) noted that South Africa is ranked seventh in the world in ensuring a fair representation of women in parliament and in cabinet. This is plausible, since South Africa is a developing country.

The political parties participating in the discussion, which included the African National Congress (ANC), Congress of the People (COPE), Inkatha Freedom Party (IFP) and the Democratic Alliance (DA), expressed feelings about the importance of the new South

African government embracing gender equality and highlighting gender in its manifesto. All four parties indicated that gender equality is enshrined in their party manifestos. Lyndall Shope-Mafole, COPE representative, said, 'Women's issues are peculiar, they are faced by women all over the world and they include joblessness, poverty, access to education' (Elections Debate, SABC 2, 5 April 2009), stressing that the way to address women's issues in South Africa will be to bring in new leadership that will address the issues. All the discussants noted the issues facing women in South Africa and all of them called for the new government to ensure that gender issues are addressed through various programmes, including affirmative action. There was also an observation of what was termed the 'feminisation of deputy ministers', in which concerns were raised about the appointment of women as deputy ministers whereas the substantive ministerial positions were left to the men.

This is another issue that the new South African government will have to address if gender equality is to be achieved within the auspices of the MDGs. The MDG reports of selected African countries show indicators of growth in the area of gender equality and women's empowerment. The MDG reports of Swaziland, Botswana and South Africa have been analysed to establish the situation on MDG 3 on gender equality and women's empowerment. In all three countries, there is a fair representation of boys and girls in primary and secondary schools. Where there are disparities, these are insignificant. Girls tend to participate as much as boys do at all levels. In Botswana there is no significant difference in female participation at primary, secondary school and university level (Government of Botswana 2004). The only differences that are noted in Botswana in particular are in the training fields and in disciplines where women tend to dominate the humanities, social sciences and nursing, compared with science and technology-based disciplines, which are dominated by men.

Although South Africa is a relatively new democracy, the country has made good progress in ensuring access to productive resources by women, compared with

Swaziland and Botswana. Women in South Africa are able to independently access loans and other financial support without spousal consent. In Swaziland and Botswana the situation is the opposite because, owing to patriarchy, which is heavily influenced by culture and tradition, women still need spousal consent to access similar productive resources. In South Africa, diversity in culture, race, tradition, colour and language possibly influences the way of life, including gender issues, as the society is not as homogenous as it is in Swaziland and Botswana.

According to the MDG reports, all the countries have made significant strides in women's participation in leadership and decision making, although political and economic power are still controlled largely by men. In keeping with the SADC 30% of women in decision making, all three countries have made efforts to ensure equal representation in parliament. Another area of leadership in which there has been progress is in the House of Chiefs in Botswana, where there were three women in 2002 compared with one in 1997. In Botswana in 2002, 33% of directors of public enterprises and 67% of deputy CEOs were women. In the same year, women headed over 50% of NGOs (Government of Botswana 2004). A similar trend has been seen in South Africa, where there was a 30% quota of women on party lists of the ANC, the ruling party, during the first democratic elections and there were 101 women out of 400 in the first post-apartheid National Assembly and the National Council of Provinces (NCOP), formerly the Senate. By 1997, 111 of the 400 members of the National Assembly were women, but the first NCOP had only eight women, which represents 15% (Government of South Africa 2005).

According to the government of South Africa (2005), in 2003, 32% of the National Assembly were women and this increased to 33% in late 2004. Of the permanent members of the NCOP, 34% were women by late 2004. Of the three countries, South Africa shows impressive female to male ratios in tertiary education, which explains the gender statistics in the share of women in the non-agriculture sector, which rose from

41% in 1996 to 43% in 2001. In 1996 the female to male ratio in tertiary education was 92:100 and rose to 115:100 in 2001, showing a significant increase, which can be attributed to affirmative action programmes that were introduced to empower women.

Even though global trends indicate improvements in gender equality and women empowerment, the targets in the MDGs do not allow for the measurement of women's empowerment in totality, but emphasise only the elimination of gender disparities in education. The measure of growth in the area of women's empowerment needs to be viewed from a broader perspective. The two main goals that relate to this discussion are MDG 2, on achieving universal primary education, and MDG 3, on promoting gender equality and empowerment of women. The MDGs are intertwined and mutually re-enforcing and are important ways of measuring progress in gender equality across all MDGs.

All three countries have made significant progress in meeting the MDG 3 target on eliminating gender disparities in primary and secondary education, and this has been prioritised by all the governments at all levels of education no later than 2015. The Swaziland report indicates that this goal and the target will potentially be met in the face of a policy and legislative environment which in 2003 was defined as being weak, but improving (Swaziland Government 2003). The situation has improved significantly. From 2010 the Swaziland government will introduce free primary education in the first and second grades and continue to introduce free education gradually over time.

Botswana has made substantial progress at policy and legislative level, which, however, needs to be aligned with systems for data collection, and gender disaggregated data in order to address systems gaps and ensure tracking of progress towards gender equality (Government of Botswana 2004).

The government of South Africa (2005) has indicated that the MDG targets have been met and that the legislative and policy environment facilitates for the attainment of MDG 3 by 2015. Countries must ensure progressive realisation of this goal because reversal in attainment would have effects on national development goals and invalidate the positive gains that have been met in past years.

2.10 Conclusion

This chapter highlighted some key definitions. It provided the views of other writers, and referred to illustrative case studies. A discussion on the progress on the attainment of the MDGs, with specific reference to MDG 3 on gender equality and empowerment of women, was highlighted. Gender-related labour conventions of the ILO have been highlighted and the implementation, enforcement and monitoring mechanisms for gender equality programmes.

Chapter 3 will provide a discussion on gender and the socio-economic context in Swaziland.

CHAPTER 3

Gender and the socio-cultural and economic context of Swaziland

3.1 Introduction

This chapter describes the socio-cultural and economic context of Swaziland. More specifically, it covers human rights and constitutional issues, the dual legal system and how it affects the advancement of gender equality. The chapter also makes reference to issues related to economic empowerment, employment as well as how education influences decision making especially among women. Some aspects of health and gender are also discussed in this chapter. This description is important in generally providing a context and its relation to gender which will be important in later chapters which are more specific to workplace gender issues.

3.2 Gender in Swaziland

Swaziland is a patriarchal society. The laws of the land have not been constructed in ways that promote the rights and interests of women, hence women's perpetually low status as minors. Swaziland has been slow to ratify international human rights instruments. While these instruments – such as the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), the SADC Declaration of Gender and Development, and the SADC Protocol on Violence Against Women – have been ratified, there have been no significant efforts to domesticate them, hence the continued absence of legislation and other measures that uphold and protect human rights, including the rights of women (United Nations 2000: 33).

According to the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA 2008:27), CEDAW promotes a model of 'substantive equality' that encompasses equality of opportunity and equality to access of opportunity. Therefore, the absence of such opportunities means there are

no well-structured programmes that address women's rights, and the nonexistence of a human rights commission that should serve as a monitoring mechanism to ensure respect for human rights contribute to the persistent gaps in gender equality in Swaziland.

This is an indication of the lack of prioritisation of gender issues on the national agenda and deficiency of political commitment. Women in Swaziland have been involved in formal and informal formations to address gender issues. These efforts have evolved from the Nairobi Forward Looking Strategies Conference in 1975 to more recent conferences such as the Beijing +5 Conferences in New York in 2000. Over the years, the concept of gender has been gaining momentum. This was demonstrated by the government of Swaziland establishing a gender unit in the Ministry of Home Affairs (United Nations 2000: 35). In 2009 this unit was transferred to the Deputy Prime Minister's Office (DPMO), with a view to ensuring that the national gender programme is managed and implemented at the highest level of government. Significant improvements and milestones have been recorded, including the ratification of the CEDAW in 2004, the SADC Declaration on Gender and Development, and the SADC Protocol on Violence against Women in 1997, and again in 1999 (United Nations 2000).

Another important milestone has been mainstreaming gender into key policy documents such as the PRSAP. The constitution contains equality and human rights clauses that should provide an environment conducive to the promotion of gender equality. It also has an affirmative measure on electoral processes in an effort to increase women's representation in politics. However, some of these documents still need to be translated into policy and practice in order to implement the constitution (PRSAP 2006).

While successes have been recorded in this area, there have been no significant resource allocations from the national budget structures to signify high-level commitment to moving the gender equality agenda and discourse forward. The non-

governmental and civil society sectors, through donor support, are implementing programmes that do not have significant impact on society because of resource limitations and the need to advocate for increased resource allocations for gender programmes in Swaziland (Swaziland Government 2007:13).

3.3 Human rights and the constitution

The ushering in of a constitution in 2006 was an opportunity to comprehensively address the gender gaps and limitations posed by the traditional and patriarchal society, through the Bill of Rights enshrined in the constitution (UNFPA 2008).

According to UNFPA (2008:57), the constitution has several equality clauses, which include equality before the law in all spheres of political, economic, social and cultural life: equality of men and women, including equality of opportunities in political, economic and social activities, as well as equitable representation of women in parliament and other elective public structures. The constitution also provides for a 30% representation of women in parliament. In the event that this quota is not met, there is provision for the appointment of four women from each of the four geographic regions to parliament. The other provisions related to elections are that at least five of the ten senators elected to the House of Assembly should be women: of the twenty appointees by the king to Senate, at least eight should be women; and at least five of the ten parliamentarians appointed by the king to the Assembly must be women. All these constitutional provisions were met in the 2008 elections, except for the delays in appointing the four women from the regions, which pointed to major flaws in the implementation of the constitution.

The enforcement and implementation of these clauses require a review of existing legislation and enactment of more forward-looking and progressive laws that are in conformity with the constitution. To ensure the independence and implementation of the constitution, an independent constitutional court is needed, as well as other structures

to preside over constitutional and human rights matters and provide close monitoring of the implementation of the constitution (Gender Links 2009).

3.4 The duality of the law

Swaziland is governed as a modern traditional monarchy with executive, legislative and judiciary powers vested in the king (United Nations 2000: 6). The king wields absolute power, though he rules through an elected parliament, part of which is appointed by him. Co-existing with the legislative, judicial and executive structures are the traditional structures of chiefs at community level and the Swaziland National Council (SNC), which is an advisory body to the king. The duality of modern and traditional systems creates contradictions and conflicts in the administration of justice. According to the UN (2000) these are reinforced by the ambiguities and complexities of unwritten Swazi law and custom, which often takes precedence over modern Roman-Dutch law especially on issues of a traditional nature. The effect of this duality adversely affects women in particular, because the authorities that preside over Swazi law and custom are men, and often women are on the receiving end when judgment is passed. In addition, because the majority of women are married in community of property, traditional customary law is used to preside over marital issues of this nature and hence is biased against women (United Nations 2000).

In spite of these accounts of the socio-political and economic context of gender in Swaziland, on the surface modern-day Swaziland is influenced by Western practice. However, the deep-seated complexities and intricacies of the culture, tradition and modernity present challenges in ensuring gender equality across various spheres of Swazi life. Chapter 5 will highlight the gender equality situation in workplaces with greater detail and precision.

3.5 Economic context

3.5.1 Rights of ownership of property

The Marriage Act of 1964 limits the enjoyment of human rights, especially by women married in community of property (UNFPA 2008). Within this act women are considered minors as they cannot enter into financial and other contracts without the consent of their spouses. Although the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR) upholds and guarantees economic, social and cultural rights and, similarly, the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights gives women civil and political rights and liberties, the domestication of these and other conventions still lags behind. Hence there is no legislative mechanism that guarantees these rights in Swaziland (UNFPA 2008:56).

In pursuit of the enjoyment of these rights, a female adult sued the government for prohibiting her from registering immovable property in her name. In her affidavit, she cited that the constitution had been violated and that she was being denied her constitutional right (Aphane 2009).

The outcome of the case, although not yet known at the time of concluding this study will determine the effectiveness of the legal system in presiding over constitutional cases without prejudice on the basis of gender and other factors.

3.6. Inheritance

Inheritance conflicts have been recorded on the death of a male spouse, leaving the widow economically disadvantaged and disinherited. According to Women in Law in Southern Africa (WLSA 2000: 52) this is more common in situations where there is no will. The Master of the High Court settles estates in Swaziland, and in the absence of a will, the estate is handled by the immediate family, often the in-laws. Family members often circumvent the law and take advantage of widows and children, and decisions are

taken in the woman's absence, thus working against the woman's interest. In traditional culture and customary law the family council often decides on the successor, and succession in customary law is patrilineal, governed by a man who is identified, even if he and the woman are distant relatives.

This is a common occurrence among the Swazi population and hence estates are normally left intestate. Similarly, women will sometimes be disinherited on allegations of witchcraft, which are often unfounded and these disqualify her from inheritance. The custom of paying dowry also perpetuates this situation as the in-laws always want to share in the inheritance if a dowry was paid to the family of the widow of the deceased.

3.7 The feminisation of poverty

According to the Swaziland Demographic Health Survey (SDHS 2007), 69% of Swaziland's population live below the poverty line, most of who are women. This is evidenced by the high number of female-headed households that are poor, relative to those headed by men (United Nations 2000). According to the SDHS (2007) 53% of women are unemployed, compared with 44% of men. Similarly, 50% of men are employed, compared with 40% of women. This indicates a gap in equality in employment. Also, while 40% of these women are employed, the majority have unskilled factory jobs with low wages, which indicates a situation of under-employment.

The gender differentials in poverty reflect the weak position of women owing to factors such as difficult access to productive resources. Poverty is strongly correlated with inadequate education, and households with better education are likely to have reduced levels of poverty compared with those with little or no education (UNDP 2008:31).

Despite this situation, the UNDP (2008:52) notes that a sign of modernisation in Swaziland is women's participation in the labour force and their access to paid

employment. Unemployment and under-employment pose major challenges and result in poverty (UNDP 2008:53). Between 2003 and 2007, Swaziland saw an upsurge of textile factories employing women in large numbers. These women are subject to harsh working conditions, which include short lunch breaks, long working hours, limited maternity leave, and low wages, all of which are in contravention of the country's labour laws. This results in perpetual poverty, especially among women.

Furthermore, a study by WLSA (2000) on women in pursuit of justice in Swaziland reveals that some men refused to let their wives search for formal wage employment and the women were therefore economically dependent on their husbands. Such dependence places considerable constraints on women's access to education, healthcare, justice delivery and other resources. WLSA et al (1998) note that the feminisation of poverty is compounded by the traditional land tenure system, which presents complexities for women seeking land for agricultural and other purposes. Hence they are dependent on the men. The WLSA study reveals that women can only toil on the farm and do not share in the financial proceeds from household farming activities. Women's work, especially in the informal sector, is often unquantified, yet women bear the brunt of the workload with limited resources to support their cause, further confining them to the continuous cycle of poverty.

However, anecdotal evidence suggests that the reverse is true of independent women of higher economic and educational status who, in spite of the prohibitive Marriage Act, are able to manage and control their own resources. This is evidence of the different effects and outcomes of inequality across various economic strata of women in Swazi society, despite the socio-legal and economic environment to which the entire population is subjected.

3.8 Employment and decision making

Inequalities in the formal government structures that are the focus of this research cannot be overlooked. Formal sector inequalities have improved over the last decade (SDHS 2007). This is evidenced in tables 3.1 and 3.2, which depict a trend analysis in the public sector over the last few years. However, in a patriarchal society, some inequalities are still to be expected. Efforts geared at affirmative action and at creating an environment for equal participation of men and women have not been aggressive. However, there have been improvements in the public and NGO sectors, as well as in parliament. The judiciary is still dominated by men, however. Compared with the five male judges in the Supreme Court and judicial courts, there is only one Swazi female judge, the two others being expatriate. The public sector in 2009 had five female principal secretaries and directors, compared with 13 males in the same cadre of government. In the previous government (2003–2008) there were only four female cabinet ministers and 12 male ministers. This is a very slight improvement from the three previous cabinet terms with two, one and one female cabinet ministers respectively. The 2009 cabinet had 5 female ministers and 13 male. This is a skewed representation of gender in the cabinet.

Swaziland signed the SADC Gender Declaration of 2003, which requires SADC member states to attain a 30% representation of females in parliament. The signing of the declaration has resulted in marked improvements in female representation in parliament. A comparative analysis of gender representation in the Senate, House of Assembly and cabinet in the last decade indicates an average of 20 men in cabinet, 22 in Senate and 57 in the House of Assembly, compared with an average of 1.3, 4 and 2.3 women respectively (CANGO 2008: 10). This indicates a need for improvement and for appropriate structures to address the gap between men and women in decision making.

The results of the 2008 election show that there are 9 female members of parliament, 6 elected and 3 appointed into the House of Assembly. There are an additional 12 females in Senate, resulting in the total number of 21 females in Senate and the House of Assembly respectively. The number of women in cabinet is low, which could have implications for other executive-level positions, resulting in the continuous absence and invisibility of females in other decision-making structures. These inequalities are detrimental to Swaziland's socio-economic development, and have implications for its human development index (HDI) as gender equality is one of the key human development indicators.

Table 3.1: Positions in Parliament by gender

Although there have not been any recent studies on gender equality in decision making, table 3.1 compares the number of women and men in parliament and cabinet since independence

Period (years)	Positions in parliament by gender					
	Cabinet		Senate		House of Assembly	
	M	F	M	F	M	F
1967–1972	9	0	12	1	33	0
1972–1978	15	0	12	1	15	1
1978–1983	20	0	21	1	46	2
1983–1988	21	0	16	1	50	1
1988–1993	24	1	19	2	51	3
1993–1998	23	1	22	6	60	2
1998–2003	14	2	27	4	61	4
2003–2008	12	4	17	13	58	7
2008–2013	15	5	18	12	56	9

Sources: (Shabangu,1999:12)

Table 3.1 illustrates the gap in male and female representation in the decision-making areas of cabinet and parliament. Women make up 25% of the cabinet, 13% of the House of Assembly, and 40% in the House of Senate. This means 22% of female representation in parliament, which is below the SADC quota of 30%, as articulated in the SADC Gender Declaration. A mechanism to address this gap was to appoint four women from the regions. However, this was delayed by the Elections and Boundaries Commission, increasing the glaring gaps in gender inequality.

The 13% of female representation in the House of Assembly is cause for concern, considering that candidates are elected through an election poll, compared with Senate where candidates are appointed. This may be an indication of the absence of a robust voter education campaign that includes the importance of gender equality in the electoral process. Even though campaigns on 'Vote for a Woman' have been undertaken, the results have not translated into the desired equality in decision-making structures such as parliament.

Other cadres where women are grossly misrepresented are principal secretaries, deputy principal secretaries, directors and heads of government departments, as well as chief executive officers of parastatals, who represent 22%, 30%, 32% and 8% in these categories respectively (Gender Links 2009: 34).

The SDHS (2007:39) indicates a strong relationship between employment and education. Unemployment increases with low education levels for both men and women. This illustrates that the factors resulting in poverty are varied, but more common among women, who have limited access to other empowering resources.

Similarly, in industrialised countries, unemployment is higher among women than men, and women constitute three quarters of unpaid family workers (UNDP 1995:2). From this data it can be concluded that women suffer the double deprivation of lower overall achievement than men, while substantial progress in gender equality has been made in fewer cadres. As a result of this scenario we can draw the conclusion that human poverty is associated with gender inequality.

Women's decision making on family income varies from household to household. The SDHS (2007:249) indicates that women in households in the lowest wealth quintile report that their use of family income is decided by the husband, not through a joint decision. Women in the highest wealth quintile report the opposite: they are involved jointly in making decisions on the use of family income. This is because women in the higher wealth quintile are more likely to be able to negotiate with their spouses on the use of family and individual income because they are better empowered to make decisions than those who are in the lower quintile.

3.9 Gender and education

According to WLSA & SARDC (1998), education is the premier instrument for liberating human beings. The attainment of high education levels within the population is a positive economic and human development indicator. The literacy rate of Swaziland is of acceptable standards and stands at a rate of 91% among women in the ages 15–49 SDHS (2007). An analysis of enrolment levels between males and females shows that they are similar at primary entry level, but decrease in higher levels as a result of factors such as teenage pregnancy, which is a major impediment for girls of school-going age. WLSA & SARDC 1998:44) observe that addressing teenage pregnancy will require awareness-raising campaigns. In addition there is a need to empower young women to make informed decisions about their lives because the imbalance in power relations between male and female is disproportionately high.

Having made these observations, it is noted that with high literacy rates, especially among women in Swaziland, the barriers in education do not result from access to and absence of equal opportunities to education for males and females. The bottlenecks have been centred on culture and socialisation practices such as early marriage and the fact that in limited resource settings, parents opt to send a boy child to school rather than a girl child as the girl child will be sent off in marriage. In previous times, it was perceived that she would not make any significant financial contribution to her parental home when she was married therefore her education was not prioritised.

For the purposes of this study, education plays a significant role in the attainment of equal opportunities and in closing gaps in equality between men and women in the workplace. These will be explored in greater detail in chapter 5.

3.10 Health and gender

Swaziland is implementing the National Health Strategy (NHS). Under the auspices of the NHS, several other strategies and frameworks are being implemented to ensure the realisation of desired health outcomes. In August 2007, the Ministry of Health and Social Welfare (MOHSW) launched the National Health Policy, which included several other strategic frameworks, which are under way. These include the Health Sector Strategic Plan and the National Strategic Framework on HIV/AIDS (2009–2014). Despite the strategic direction that is provided through these key documents, Swaziland faces a disproportionate health and disease burden with HIV and AIDS being a major cause of ill health. This poses a threat and burden to the health system.

According to the Swaziland Demographic and Health Survey (SDHS 2007) Swaziland has a HIV prevalence rate of 26% among the adult population, which is high. The impact of HIV is felt largely among women and children after the death of a spouse. It

results in loss of income, assets and education as a result of inability to pay for much-needed household essentials.

According to the PRSAP (2006:87), 'the HIV and AIDS epidemic has rolled back many of the social development achievements attained by Swaziland in the past'. A significant burden of the HIV epidemic is on women, who not only are infected but are also caregivers of sick family members, with men contributing a minimal level of care. UNDP (2008:38) claims that there are similarities and differences in gender concerns.

In the ages 10–34, female youth are infected more than male youths. Females in the ages 15–19 and 20–24 are infected five and three times more than males in the same age range, respectively. The pattern is reversed for ages 35–60 and beyond, as men are more infected than women.

The differences in prevalence among the age groups is that the younger girls in the ages of 15–19 have sexual relations with older men in the 35–60 group who, according to the SDHS (2007:222), are more infected than women in similar age groups.

These inter-generation sexual relations are as a result of transactional sex because of greater poverty in females than in males. Also these relationships – though are not reported as coercion – are regarded as the result of unequal gender power relations which expose younger girls to HIV infections. UNDP (2002:17) notes that few women can negotiate safer sex for fear of abandonment or withdrawal of financial support, thereby placing their lives at risk of HIV infection.

Sexual and gender based violence (SGBV) is also on the increase. According to UNICEF (2007:17), in a national survey on violence against children and young women

in Swaziland, young girls were reported as having been enticed into sexual relations with older men in exchange for material gains. UNICEF (2007:18) estimates that '5% of females experienced forced intercourse and approximately 9% experienced coerced intercourse before their 18th birthday'. This, according to ECSA-HC (2009:5) requires responses in laws and policies, improved systems, including health and legal systems, service delivery, community mobilisation and individual behaviour change.

Key health indicators such as infant mortality rate (IMR), maternal mortality rate (MMR), and contraceptive prevalence rate indicate an increase in the burden of the HIV epidemic. According to SHDS (2007:108), MMR increased from 229 per 100 000 in 1995 to 589 per 100 000 in 2007 as a result of the HIV epidemic. The IMR stands at 85 deaths per 1 000 live births. These figures represent the higher rates of infant deaths as a result of HIV-related causes and weak health systems. *The Lancet* (2008) notes that, compared with most African countries, Southern African countries continue to experience increases in MMR and IMR, and that Swaziland will not attain the MDGs 4 and 5 by the 2015 because there is slow progress in these areas. This requires vigorous action-oriented programmes that will militate against these challenges.

While there is universal access to ante-natal care (ANC) in Swaziland, the concern is that the increased MMR could be an indication of weak emergency obstetric care in health facilities, especially primary-level facilities. Facilities lack adequate equipment for mother and newborn care, and adequately trained personnel to provide care in emergencies. Doctors (especially obstetricians and gynaecologists) are not adequately deployed in rural health facilities. The level of care at ANC level and at labour and delivery needs to be explored because anecdotal evidence suggests that the greatest challenge is at the labour and delivery stage, rather than the ANC level. This observation will need to be scientifically proved through further research.

Some health gaps have resulted from inadequate budget allocation to health, and also to women's sexual and reproductive health programmes. These gaps in the health system require gender-sensitive health planning to ensure that women's health issues are placed at the top of the development agenda.

According to the PRSAP (2006), the health budget has not kept pace with the demand for health services, with an allocation of only 10% of total national budget to health, which fell far short of the 15% that is stipulated in the Abuja Declaration, in which African governments agreed to dedicate at least 15% of the total budget to health. In 2009, this has increased to 17% and these are positive signs that robust health interventions are in place to address some of the health and gender issues.

According to the Swaziland Government Poverty Reduction Strategy and Action Plan (PRSAP 2006:82), there is a strong urban bias in the distribution of health services and facilities, resulting in rural areas being underserved. A gender analysis of access to maternal and child health services shows that ANC is accessed by all types of women, with greater numbers of educated and wealthier women accessing services than women with less power and education from the lower wealth quintiles (SDHS 2007:115). Although few studies have been conducted on male involvement in healthcare in Swaziland, anecdotal evidence suggests that few men access health services and even fewer accompany their spouses to health facilities in order to access services.

Exercising decision making among women is also common in the area of accessing health care. Owing to the increasing high cost of healthcare services and transport, most women cannot independently make decisions about healthcare because of income implications. This is particularly so because most women in the lower wealth quintile are dependent on their spouses and partners for economic support to purchase healthcare services. The SDHS (2007:249) indicates that women's ability to make

decisions about their own health rises with education and income levels, as well as area of residence. SDHS (2007:249) highlights that women in cash employment are better able to make independent decisions on their own health. Table 3.2 presents an illustration of these findings on health-related decision making.

Table 3. 2: Women's participation in health related decision making by background characteristics

Women's participation in decision making by background characteristics		
Percentage of currently married women aged 15–49 who usually make health care decisions either by themselves or jointly with their husbands by background characteristics, Swaziland 2006–07		
Background characteristics	Own healthcare	Number of women
Age 15–19 20–24 25–29 30–34 35–39 40–44 45–49	60.7 67.8 66.7 65.0 69.9 68.5 74.6	88 343 388 379 334 291 238
Residence Urban Rural	74.9 65.6	542 1 520
Background characteristics	Own health care	Number of women
Education No education Lower primary Higher primary Secondary Highschool Tertiary	66.6 59.9 70.1 72.0 65.0 73.1	385 253 467 478 338 142
Wealth quintile Lowest Second Middle Fourth Highest	60.1 65.7 67.3 68.3 75.3	353 369 379 424 537

Source: Excerpts (Swaziland Demographic and Health Survey 2007:249)

The SDHS (2007:221) shows disparities in HIV prevalence between male and female. HIV is higher among women than men (22% and 15% respectively). Multiple concurrent sexual partnerships of men, and low self-esteem and gender and unequal power relations between men and women are contributory factors. Women's economic dependence, coupled with lack of self-esteem, often causes women to succumb to sexual pressures from men, even without protection. Women's multiple roles in the household, which include providing care for sick relatives, expose them to significant risk. Poor health status will naturally displace women from participation in various levels of society, including decision making. On the contrary, while men are infected as well, their income levels and other socio-demographic characteristics often place them at an advantage in comparison with their female counterparts hence health and HIV are gender issues that are critically analysed within this study.

3.11 Conclusion

The chapter has attempted to discuss gender in Swaziland and highlighted important human rights considerations as they relate to the constitution. The discussion of the duality of the law has brought to the fore the overall challenges of duality as well as how the dual-legal system has a negative impact and effect on women. The economic and legal issues raised depict the situation of women. The systemic and legal barriers that prohibit women's access to economic resources, as well as lack of access to a fair justice delivery system that is responsive to the needs of women, have also been explored. The section on the feminisation of poverty brought out the correlation between poverty and gender. Employment and decision making, which is the crux of the study, indicate the levels at which men and women exercise decisions, as well as the achievements that have been made by Swaziland in this area in past years. In this chapter education and health have been discussed as positive economic human development indicators. The next chapter covers methodology. It highlights how data was collected and analysed and also offers a description of the respondents.

CHAPTER 4

Study design and research methodology

4.1 Introduction

The previous chapters provided a contextual background to the issues of gender equality from a theoretical perspective and the specific context of the socio-economic situation of Swaziland in relation to gender. This chapter describes the methodology employed in conducting the study. It outlines the research methods and sampling, provides a brief description of the respondents, and describes the data collection tools and the way in which data was collected and analysed.

4.2 Aims and objectives

Primary objective

The primary objective of this study is to investigate the extent of gender inequalities in the public sector in Swaziland and to provide possible solutions that address the identified gaps and challenges.

Secondary objectives

- To highlight the subject of gender equality from a theoretical perspective
- To provide an analysis of the socio-cultural and economic context of Swaziland
- To undertake research on gender equality in the public sector, and to analyse the findings
- To draw conclusions and make recommendations for action and implementation by the public sector

4.3 Methodology

4.3.1 Qualitative and quantitative methods

The study utilised a mixed method approach, which employs aspects of qualitative and quantitative procedures. This method involves collecting and analysing qualitative and quantitative data in a single entry (Creswell 2003:15). Mouton (1996:39) argues that the use of multiple methods and techniques is one of the best ways to improve the quality of research. Another benefit that Mouton (1996:39) notes is that when a researcher uses probability sampling in conjunction with in-depth interviewing or basic descriptive statistics in analyzing qualitative data the quality of research is improved. Mouton (1996:39) notes that for many researchers this way of doing social research is desirable.

Qualitative research, according to Alan and Bell (2007:28), emphasises words rather than quantification in the collection and analysis of data. By contrast, quantitative research emphasises quantification which means quantitative research places emphasis on numerical results. This study therefore used a combination of qualitative and quantitative methods, including descriptive and comparative methods. A comparative method is one that entails a comparison of two or more cases to illuminate existing theory, or to generate theoretical insights as a result of the contrasting findings uncovered through the comparison (Alan & Bell 2007:726). A descriptive method gives more detail and meaning to the phenomena. It specifies the frequency with which it occurs and categorises the information (Strugwig & Stead 2001:8 Charles 1995:23). The benefit of descriptive research is that the researcher can gather information on individuals' opinions and attitudes through a questionnaire. This was widely used in the study with in-depth interviews that contributed significantly to the qualitative component.

4.4 Rationale for selecting the public sector

Swaziland has limited studies on the participation of women in decision making in the public sector. Although data is available in certain departments and in government documents, there are no known studies on gender equality in the workplace. Nor are there gender-related policies that support the participation of women in strategic positions. The public sector was selected for the study because more documented gender-disaggregated data are available in the public sector than in civil society and private sectors. Even though there is a draft gender policy, it does not refer specifically to gender equality and equal opportunities in the workplace. This is an opportunity to inform the equality discussion with the data from the study.

4.5 Ethics

Ethical considerations are important for undertaking research. Ethics committees are established in countries and institutions to ensure that the risks faced by human participants in research are minimal (Babbie & Mouton 2001:528). However, because of the nature of the study, which explores systemic and policy issues on gender, there was no requirement to seek approval from the Research and Ethics Committee – which safeguards privacy and confidentiality, especially where the nature of the study has a bearing on the rights of persons. In this case, however, permission to interview informants was sought from the relevant government departments through the principal secretaries, heads of departments and individual respondents.

4.6 Sampling

This study utilised purposive and convenience sampling. The researcher sampled people that are easily available and accessible. Babbie and Mouton (2001:166) note that purposive sampling has an advantage in that it is selected because of the knowledge of the population by the researcher. Babbie and Mouton (2001) note that the

advantage of this type of sampling is that it satisfies the needs of the researcher, but the disadvantage is that it may not represent any meaningful population.

Convenience sampling was found to be relevant for this study. This is a group of participants that is available and there is likely to be a high response rate, but this sampling method is not necessarily representative. In this study, convenience sampling was undertaken, because the researcher was acquainted with the participants, and was able to identify those who were available, and who would return the questionnaire.

The institutions from which data were collected were the Civil Service Commission (CSC), the Office of the Secretary to Cabinet and the Ministry of Public Service. The Public Policy Coordination Unit was sampled because it is the policy hub of government. This is where the required data would be more easily obtainable as the population in these ministries and departments were known to the researcher. This data therefore provided the key background data for the discussion section.

Line ministries were identified. These are Ministries of Agriculture, Health, Public Works and Transport, Deputy Prime Minister's Office, Finance, Economic Planning and Development, Public Service, Education and Sports and Youth and Culture. The Ministry of Agriculture was selected because some sections and departments in this ministry are extremely technical and there is a high level of mechanisation. Other sections and departments are more domestically oriented with the 'softer' disciplines, such as the Department of Home Economics.

The Ministry of Health represents some differences in the various cadres. It is to be expected that there are more women, especially in the cadre of nurses and midwives, although there are male-nurse midwives. The other cadres, such as administration, are dominated by males. The Ministry of Public Works and Transport represents a gender

imbalance at the outset, because the nature of the work is technical and characterised by the engineering and construction cadres – a cadre that is still dominated by males in Swaziland.

4.7 Description of respondents

A set of three questionnaires was designed, reviewed and agreed to with the supervisor and administered. Key informant interviews were used to converse with important informants in the public service. These were the secretary to the cabinet, the executive secretary in the CSC, and the principal secretary in the Ministry of Public Service. The position of the secretary to cabinet, as outlined in the Constitution of Swaziland, Section 70–76, and as established by government gazette is:

> The Secretary to Cabinet is the chief adviser to the prime minister on management systems, structures and organisation of government ministries. He/she reviews and monitors overall performance of each ministry in implementing government policies and programmes, including the discharge of duties by the principal secretaries. He/she is the head of the Civil Service and has the sole responsibility to advise the prime minister on administration matters in the Swaziland Government. The Secretary to Cabinet has the important function of ensuring that the public service enacts relevant policies that guide government operations, and provides a link between the Cabinet and the Prime Minister (Swaziland Government 2006:48).

This respondent was therefore identified as a key informant for this study, because it was anticipated that the respondent would provide information on the overarching policy issues that relate to equality in the public service. The executive secretary of the CSC serves as the chief executive officer, and works with commissioners, who are non-

executive. The CSC is the recruitment agency of government and has the mandate to recruit, appoint, and undertake promotions, transfers and secondments in the civil service. It is also involved in the termination of appointments, disciplinary hearings and other related matters. Its functions are guided by the constitution and the Civil Service Act of 1973, which is currently being reviewed (Swaziland Government 2006:50).

The principal secretary in the Ministry of Public Service was interviewed as a significant informant. The Ministry of Public Service designs policies and conditions of service for the public service. This ministry sets the regulatory environment that governs the public sector, which is approved and endorsed by cabinet and parliament.

The director of the Public Policy Coordination Unit (PPCU) was selected because it was anticipated that the respondent would provide valuable data on the design and development of policy in the public service. This was important because the study focuses on policy and systemic issues that address gender equality in the workplace.

This questionnaire was used to interview staff at various levels of government, because it was expected that they would provide information on their understanding and observations of gender equality in the various positions to inform the study from different perspectives.

A questionnaire was administered to human resource personnel officers and staff who manage administration. It was foreseen that they would be in a position to provide gender-disaggregated data for the various ministries. Data that were solicited from this category of respondents provided gender-disaggregated data, training opportunities, promotion processes and opportunities for decision making (or the lack of it) for men and women in the organisation. This category of respondents provided information on career development paths (based on what are known as the schemes of service), and

other socio-cultural and behavioural issues that may positively or adversely affect equality in the workplace, as well as monitoring and evaluation of equality.

Another section of the second questionnaire was administered to general staff to provide information on how they had reached their current positions. This questionnaire served as a confirmatory research tool to verify the existence or non-existence of policies that guide equality in the various ministries and departments, by answering the questions on whether there are efforts at strategic management level to put in place policies that facilitate equality, if they are not already in place.

A third questionnaire was administered to women in executive positions. The data obtained from this category would presumably provide information on the level of competitiveness in recruitments and placements in senior positions; on progression into those senior positions; and on issues of parity and equality in terms of incentives and rewards for men and women in similar positions. In this questionnaire, information was obtained on whether academic qualifications could foster progression and equality. Perceptions and attitudes towards female leadership were recorded.

4.8 Data collection

Following the identification of key informants, the questionnaires were distributed to allow for advance reading by the respondents. Three data collectors were then deployed to conduct face-to-face interviews. Some respondents completed the questionnaires at the time of the interview. However, the data collectors went through the questionnaire to ensure greater in-depth responses and clarifications. All the interviews were conducted in English. Siswati, the local language, was used to complement and clarify certain issues and aspects of the questionnaire. Recorders were used where the respondents had agreed to be recorded. Secondary sources of data were utilised through a literature review.

4.9 Data analysis

A data entry clerk was engaged to capture the data. Data entry and analyses were done using the SPSS version 16.0 statistical software package. Tables were produced in SPSS and copied to Excel to create graphs and modify layout on the tables. The tables and graphs were then analysed according to questions that were based on the broad themes.

4.10 Limitations and subjectivity

Mouton (1996:141) argues that 'the fact the human beings are the "objects" of enquiry in social research creates problems that are not encountered in the physical sciences. Human beings react to the fact that they are being studied and investigated.' This consciousness by the respondents often influences them to react in a certain manner. This reaction, according to Mouton (1996:141), manifests in several forms, for example resistance to being interviewed or to completing questionnaires, supplying inaccurate information as a result of apathy or wilfulness, modifying behaviour or information to create a better impression, and deliberately misinforming the researcher. In relation to these reactions, one of the key limitations of the study was the inability to get respondents to agree to being recorded, especially the general staff, who were mostly junior staff, although consent had been received from themselves and their superiors. Data relied heavily on good note taking, and would have benefitted from transcription after the recording, allowing the researcher to go back to the recorded data and make references from direct quotations where necessary. Although the combination of data collection techniques was used, recording note taking and others, the advantage of using open-ended interviewing cannot be overemphasised. Nachmias and Nachmias (1996:254) note that open-ended interviewing would eliminate these limitations because the respondents can express their thoughts freely; they encourage rapport and allow the respondents to clear up misunderstandings; and they allow the interviewer to probe, while note taking can be intimidating to respondents who may then not be forthcoming in their responses. However, Nachmias and Nachmias (1996:255) suggest that open-

ended interviewing can be a disadvantage to the interviewer as it is difficult to analyse. It is therefore important to strike a balance between using methods that will reduce error as a result of reactivity and those that may not, in order to have a high degree of reliability (Mouton 1996: 147). Some respondents were not cooperative with information, especially the general staff who were willing to participate in the study, but felt that the issue on government policy on gender equality was not within their mandate and could not commit to a response anyway. They did recognise, however, that there are adverse implications if gender inequality is not addressed in the workplace. Even though the limitations are important, the researcher found the responses valid as they measured the hypothesis the researcher was trying to test as the groups that were investigated came to similar conclusions, observations and recommendations.

4.11   Conclusion

This chapter explained the methodology followed in carrying out the study. Quantitative and qualitative approaches were presented, because the study combined these approaches in questionnaires with closed- and open-ended questions. The results of the study are presented and discussed in chapter 5.

CHAPTER 5

Data, analysis, and discussions

5.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the data and analysis of findings that emerged from the interviews. The data were collected from interviews conducted with key informants in the government departments. The findings are presented in two sections, based on the questionnaires completed by women in senior positions and in the general staff. A third questionnaire, targeted at human resource officers, was administered, but the response rate from that questionnaire was very low. The data could not be presented and analysed, as it was not fully representative and would not give a full picture of the situation that was being assessed. The themes considered are presented below under the two sections.

The data, analysis and discussion from each of the two questionnaires on women executives and general staff respectively are presented below.

Table 5.1 shows the females that were interviewed in the senior women executive category, according to the number of years' experience, job title and departments in which they work.

Table 5.1. Profile of respondents: senior women executives

Name of organisation	Job title	Name of department	Number of years in government service
Ministry of Public Service	Director: Human Resources Development (HRD)	Human Resources Development	17 years
Deputy Prime Minister's Office	Director: Gender	Gender and Family Issues	15 years
Ministry of Economic Planning and Development	Director: Population Unit	Population	25 years
Ministry of Health	Director: Health Services	Health Services Directorate	20 years
Ministry of Health	Hospital Administrator	Administration	10 years
Ministry of Health	Hospital Manager	Administration	15 years
Ministry of Education	Senior Inspector: English	Inspectorate	20 years
Ministry of Education	Senior Inspector: Special Education	Inspectorate	17 years
Prime Minister's Office	Director: Public Policy Coordination Unit	Policy and Planning	15 years
Deputy Prime Minister's Office	Director: National Children's Coordination Unit (NCCU)	NCCU	30 years
Deputy Prime Minister's Office	Senior Gender Analyst	Gender and Family Issues	12 years

5.2 Women executives' questionnaire

There were 11 respondents to this questionnaire

5.2.1. Growth in the organisation

In this category one hundred percent (100%) of women interviewed reported that they had grown in their careers. They indicated that they had progressed through the ranks, based on recommendations and promotions by their supervisors. They pointed out that they had not been discriminated against. One of the respondents said:

> I have progressed well and I am not complaining at all. I was promoted even when I was not expecting it. I moved from being in the Public Service Management Department as principal management analyst to being the director of human resources planning and development.

This respondent had recently been promoted into this position. None of the respondents felt that they had been discriminated against.

5.2.2 Competiveness between males and females in recruitments and placements

Promoting competitiveness

45.5%

54.5%   Yes
                No

Figure 5.1: Promotion of competitiveness in recruitments and placements by gender

Source: author's own compilation

Six of the respondents (54.5%), indicated that their organisations promote competitiveness, and five respondents (45.5%), said that their organisations do not promote competiveness. Those who felt that competiveness was promoted stated that they had not observed any favouritism, and that a transparent process of recruitment and placement is followed. This was confirmed by the CSC, the recruitment agency of government. Those who observed an absence of competitiveness said that the principle of competiveness exists, but is not practised. Others felt that there was no conscious effort to promote competiveness. In some instances the government process could be biased at ministry and departmental level. One female respondent commented that in some instances promotions were not based on qualifications, but on seniority as the key consideration. Performance and qualifications play a secondary role. This was based on the fact that young professionals who had recently joined the civil service did not easily qualify for promotion, because, even though they were high performers, they had not

acquired experience over several years. A similar incidence occurred in the respondents' organisation. This respondent would have preferred to see a situation where promotion is based on qualifications, as opposed to seniority, but the policy of government emphasises seniority (Swaziland Government 1973).

Although tables 5.1 and 5.2 (highlighted in a later section in the chapter) indicate the number of years the respondents had served in their organisations, the tables are statistically insignificant in determining whether young professionals had grown or remained in the same position over time because they had not acquired experience. Other studies may be important to explore in greater detail the relationship between the numbers of years spent in the organisation and seniority.

According to the Public Service Act of 1973, 'a recommendation for promotion shall state whether the officer recommended is the senior eligible officer, and if that officer is not senior, detailed reasons shall be given in support of the supersession of all officers senior to the officer recommended' (Government of Swaziland 1973:15). This means that young professionals who have newly acquired skills and qualifications may not be considered for immediate promotion in departments (if there are others who are much more senior), despite qualifications and sometimes performance, unless there is a strong motivation. Because organisations move towards performance-based recruitments and placements, a combination of experience, qualifications and performance criteria for eligibility for promotion is more desirable.

5.2.3 Affirmative action policies in place

The findings show that government has no affirmative action policies for recruitment and placement. According to the CSC, these policies are unwritten, but implied, and the commission indicated that it was open to adopting and implementing these policies. In some instances where women are overly represented in its appointments, such as in

the accounting cadres, the CSC would consider recruiting men to try to ensure that gender representation is at par. Respondents acknowledged that although there were no written policies, because government had made an effort to appoint women into positions previously occupied by men, this was a positive sign. Some respondents said that although there is a draft gender policy, it refers only to equality in the area of economic empowerment. Other respondents commented that the equality clauses in the constitution should be translated into policy that operationalises the constitution in an effort to address workplace gender discrepancies. The Constitution in Section 86(1) indicates that 30% of members of parliament should be female, but this is applicable only to the legislature, as there is no reference to a similar quota in the executive and the judiciary. The 30% was in conformity with the SADC Declaration on Gender and Development, which SADC members signed in 1997. However, recently the SADC Protocol on Gender and Development, signed by SADC member states in 2008, raised this quota to 50%. In terms of literacy, Swaziland has high literacy rates: 89% among males and 91% among females (SDHS 2007). These literacy rates would not have a negative effect on the quotas as there are no major differences between male and female literacy.

The Swaziland parliament that is now in power (2008–2013) has not met the 30% quota, although the king is willing to appoint women MPs in a deliberate effort to meet this quota through the practice of affirmative action. The inability to meet the quota was exacerbated because in the constitution, the provision that was intended to ensure that this allocation is reached was not followed in the elections in 2008. This provision referred to the election of women representatives from the four regions of Swaziland, but was deferred by the Elections and Boundaries Commission to the next elections in 2013. This makes the representation of women in decision-making positions skewed. These observations were made in chapter 3 and have been repeated here to emphasise that the issue of inequalities still exists despite set quotas.

In a workshop conducted by the Media Institute of Southern Africa Swaziland Chapter (MISA) in September 2009, the theme was 'Beyond Signing and Ratification: the Representation of Women in Parliament'. A participant said: 'If we did not have patriarchy, we would not need affirmative action (Aphane, personal communication, 2009). This indicates that patriarchy is the main reason for the need to address discriminatory practice against women in Swaziland.

5.2.4 Remuneration, training opportunities and maternity and social security benefits

Eleven (100%) of the respondents indicated that government policy ensures equal pay for males and females for the same kind of work. There were no indications that males or females were remunerated on different scales for the same work done. The same was true of training opportunities. Three respondents, representing 18% of the sample, indicated that family roles and other domestic responsibilities, in some instances, have hindered women from taking up training, even when the opportunities were made available by the government. The government of Swaziland awards training scholarships to staff, especially senior officials. The females who had not taken up training opportunities said the training was offered abroad and women found it difficult to leave their families. This is a manifestation of the multiple roles of women, including those of breadwinner and caretaker in the household. These employees opt for distance learning such as provided by the University of South Africa (UNISA). However, government scholarships do not cover distance training programmes and this was seen as another barrier to women, as they could not afford the fees. The respondents pointed this out as another access barrier that affects women more than men.

An example was found in the Ministry of Public Works and Transport of a training programme, funded by the African Development Bank (ADB), that was intended to train engineers. (It ended in 2004.) There were few females in the intake stage as few of them applied. This programme was offered in the US and the UK over a four-year period. The chief roads engineer, who managed the programme, reported that of the

small number of women who enrolled for this degree programme, even fewer remained in government, because of better employment conditions elsewhere and because of domestic responsibilities. According to the chief roads engineer, government has put in place a retention allowance to retain professionals, but it is minimal and does not serve the intended purpose.

This situation was confirmed by the evaluation report on the ADB-supported engineering training programme (2004), which indicated that more males than females participated in it. This was attributed to various reasons, for example that some women were reluctant to participate in the programme because of their domestic responsibilities.

While maternity benefits accrued only to females, none of the respondents indicated paternity leave benefits for males. No other benefits were related to maternity and childbirth, such as baby-care facilities in the workplace and a one-hour breastfeeding entitlement that the non-governmental sector offers to female employees.

5.2.5 The contribution of qualifications to growth in the organisation

Figure 5.2 below shows the contribution of educational qualifications to career growth.

Contribution of Education qualifications to career growth
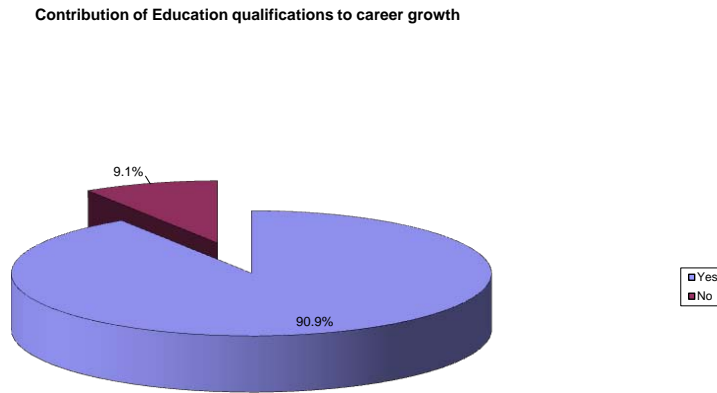
**Figure 5.2.** The contribution of educational qualifications to career growth

The majority of the respondents (90.9%) stated that qualifications played a major role in their career growth. One respondent said: 'From one level to the other, you need qualifications. 'Respondents pointed out that government has a system called 'schemes of service'. Schemes of service assist in the establishment of the professional management services cadre in the civil service. It provides for recruitment, career progression and retention of adequately qualified and motivated staff (Government of Swaziland 2003). Career pathing and progression are linked to qualifications. The value of qualifications in career growth was observed by respondents as a key factor. Only 1 respondent (9.1%) indicated that earning higher qualifications had not made a meaningful contribution to her growth, because her position remained the same and she

was not upgraded in line with the newly acquired skills.Confirming the value of qualifications in career progression one female respondent said:

> Qualifications have contributed a lot. I came to work for government with a basic degree and through government, as I was working, I got a scholarship to pursue my master's degree. Education improves productivity at work. Networking has also helped. It makes you grow as you work.

5.2.6 Perceptions and attitudes to female leadership

Figure 5.3 below shows perceptions and attitudes to female leadership.
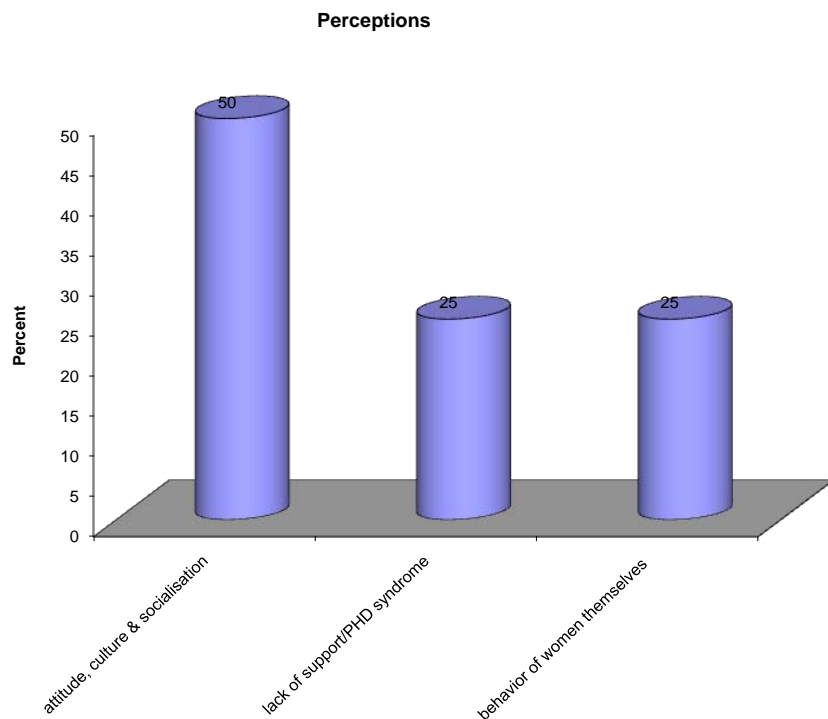
The majority of the respondents stated that in most of their organisations, there are those who have not adequately embraced female leadership. There is a general mindset among men that women cannot be good leaders. This mindset and perception of female leadership is as a result of socialisation and culture, as indicated by 50% of the respondents. The perceived inability of females to lead was based only on culture and socialisation. The multiple roles of women were not regarded as a contributory factor of this view of female leadership. In modern Swaziland women in professional careers are no longer burdened by household chores because they have domestic support. These additional responsibilities would not hinder their performance and leadership.

One female respondent indicated that:

> Males collude against females and want to take over particular posts to be filled by men only. In government they give females weaker ministries. For instance, the Ministry of Home Affairs has never been headed by a female.

She said that women should learn to compete with men and behave like men in dealing with situations. Often women are not aggressive and they miss opportunities because of their timid and docile nature. Low self-esteem and the personal perception of women, such as seeing themselves as unfit to lead, account for 25% of the responses.

The respondents indicated that the patriarchal nature of Swazi society has made women regard themselves as inferior to men, therefore being subject to male leadership, even if they are leaders themselves. In this category of responses, some respondents commented that women are emotional, are not objective when handling issues, and lack professionalism. Others pointed out that because women have not had the opportunities to be in leadership, some of them seek chances to suppress others,

including males. They are therefore not well accepted because of their attitude and behaviour as leaders. Twenty-five per cent of the respondents indicated that some women are hostile to other women and are not supportive. This was referred to as the 'pull her down' (PHD) syndrome, in which some women do not support women in leadership.

Women sometimes display low self-esteem, even those that are in leadership, and can be sidelined by men. There is also a general idea of leadership as a male domain. This is reinforced by the prevailing legal systems, including Swazi law and custom, which perpetuate the minority status of women. The traditional structures hardly recognise that women can hold positions such as being a chief, a headman, or a member of the Traditional Inner Council (Government of Swaziland 2009).

At higher levels of government, the observations of the secretary to cabinet and executive secretary of the CSC on attitudes and perceptions to female leadership were different. They reported that female leadership has been adequately accepted. However, it was generally observed that in most workplaces, there were instances where conflict and discontent were observed between women leaders and their female subordinates or other females in the organisation regardless of their position.

5.3 General staff questionnaire

In the category of general staff, twelve questionnaires were analysed. This category, as indicated in table 5.2 below, highlights staff in these cadres: junior, middle management, and senior, male and female. Among males at senior levels, the researcher tried to compare the responses with those of the senior women executives to determine similarities from a general point of view, and to see whether differences were based on systemic and structural issues or were gender-related discrepancies.

5.3.1 Duration of service in the organisation

The respondents interviewed in both categories (women executives and general staff), had been in the public service from 2 to 33 years. During this period of service, the majority had been in the public service, having served in various ministries and other capacities. Table 5.2 shows the data of respondents in the general staff category.

Table 5.2: Profile of respondents: general staff

Name of organisation	Job title	Department	Number of years in government service	Gender
Ministry of Economic Planning and Development	Director: Statistics	Statistics	23 years	Male
Deputy Prime Minister's Office	Project manager	Gender and Family Issues	7 years	Male
Ministry of Sports, Youth and Culture	Director: Youth Affairs	Youth Affairs	2 years	Male
Ministry of Health	Regional health administrator	Regional Health Administration	16 years	Male
Ministry of Public Works and Transport	Roads engineer	Roads	18 years	Male
Ministry of Public Works and Transport	Chief roads engineer	Roads	26 years	Male
Ministry of Agriculture	Senior agricultural officer	Extension	21 years	Male

| Ministry of Agriculture	Nutrition officer	Home Economics	7 years	Female
Ministry of Public Service	Assistant human resources officer	Human Resources	18 years	Female
Ministry of Public Works and Transport	Highway technician	Roads	10 years	Female
Civil Service Commission	Executive secretary		8 years	Male
Prime Minister's Office	Secretary to cabinet	Cabinet Office	33 years	Male
Ministry of Finance	Senior finance officer	Planning and Budget	20 years	Female

5.3.2 Duration of service in the position and growth within the ranks

Most respondents indicated that they had served in the government sector in different positions for periods ranging from 2 to 33 years, as evidenced in tables 5.1 and 5.2 . Respondents indicated that they had moved through the ranks by means of promotion. The promotion process is undertaken by an internal promotions board that is established in each ministry. The ministries make a recommendation to the CSC, which makes the ultimate decision, based on seniority. Other factors that were said to qualify a person for promotion were performance and qualifications, although these were not the primary factors. This was confirmed by 16% of the respondents who pointed out that there was a priority register, listing the candidates who are due for promotion. The head of department discusses the vacancy with the CSC, and the appropriate candidate is appointed. However, a different picture was observed in the technician cadre, where the women who were interviewed indicated that there was no career pathing in that cadre. This makes professional growth and motivation a challenge. The only growth

experience was in terms of financial rewards, but the respondents did not find that adequate, as they thought career pathing was an equally important incentive.

5.3.3 Contribution of newly acquired skills to growth in the organisation

**Newly acquired qualifications according to gender**
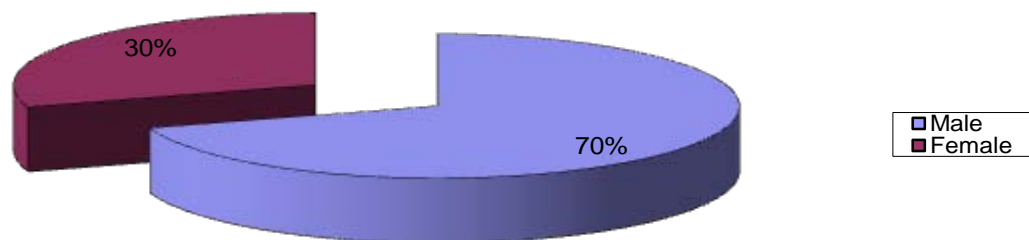
Figure 5.4: Newly acquired skills according to gender

Respondents commented that new qualifications contributed to growth in the public service. Similar findings came to light in the interviews with senior female executives who shared these experiences. However, in ministries such as public works and transport, where the positions are of a technical nature, this was not the case, especially as progression relied heavily on the availability of a vacant position. This data was disaggregated by gender and it was found that, in all, 70% of male respondents indicated that newly acquired skills and qualifications had contributed to their growth in the organisation. Thirty per cent of females indicated that qualifications had played a role on their growth in the organisation. Compared with figure 5.2, the overall proportion of women to men was less than 30%, indicating that qualifications and newly acquired skills had played a significant role. In the sample of women, 90.9% indicated that educational qualifications had played a key role in their growth, compared with the 9.1% who did not attribute their growth to newly acquired skills and qualifications.

5.3.4 The recruitment and promotions process

All the respondents indicated that if there is a vacancy, the ministry or department concerned notifies the CSC, a vacancy announcement is made, and recruitment is undertaken by the CSC. The department head in question is invited to be on the recruitment panel, especially for the technical and more specialised positions. The appointment is then made by the CSC after consulting that ministry or department. The CSC and the Office of the Secretary to Cabinet confirmed that this process is followed and this is in accordance with the Public Service Act of 1973, which is currently under review. This data reflects a full understanding of the recruitment and promotion process in the government as evidenced by the 100% responses indicating the process.

5.3.5 Existence of a succession plan in the organisation

Existence of succession plan
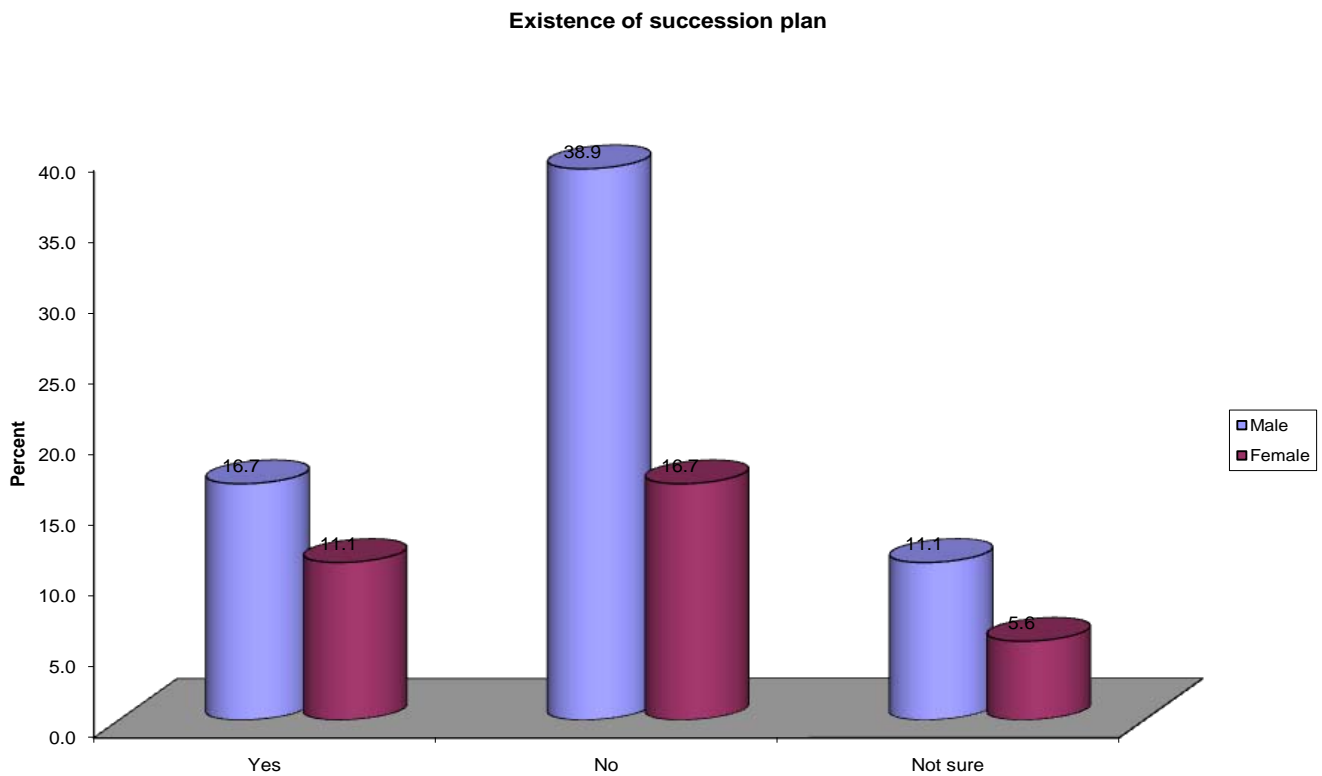
Figure 5.5: Existence of a succession plan

According to Armstrong (1998:580) 'Succession planning aims at ensuring that, as far as possible, suitable managers are available to fill vacancies created by promotion, retirement, death, resignation or transfer.' It makes certain that a cadre of managers is available to fill new appointments that are established in the future. This enquiry was relevant to this study as it tried to explore the systems in place in government that ensure a fair mechanism for identifying a critical mass of future leaders. Since the enquiry is about gender equality, it is an important element of the study to establish whether inequalities are adequately addressed through such mechanisms as succession plans. Armstrong (1998) stresses that succession planning is a management practice that is used to build and nurture skills for business continuity, and to ensure that the establishment continues to operate. It serves to prepare potential staff within an organisation to take over critical positions when they become vacant. It helps to identify and ensure career progression.

Respondents indicated that there is no well-structured succession plan in the civil service. In some instances, the exiting staff recommend the promotion of the next senior staff member to take up the vacant position. In some instances, to ensure skills transfer, there is a deliberate effort for the next qualifying person to understudy the incumbent who is leaving office. Respondents noted that although some government ministries and departments make an effort to put into place programmes for understudying in order to plan for succession, these seldom yield the desired results, because somebody else may be brought in to occupy a vacant position. Strong sentiments were expressed that a succession plan must be put in place so that the process is clear and systematic, and is not based merely on the discretion of the appointing authority.

The respondents said that only in the Ministries of Public Service and Finance is the succession plan being practised, but that it was not written down as policy or guidelines. The results in figure 5.5 show that the majority of respondents (38.9% males) and (16.7% females) said that there was no succession plan in place. (16.7%) males and

(11.1%) females said that there was a succession plan and the other category of respondents indicated that they were not sure whether there was a succession plan or not. Of the respondents who were unsure, (11.1%) were males and (5.6%) were females. From the varied results, the researcher's impression is that respondents were aware of the process of succession that is followed in their individual organisations, but it was difficult to determine whether succession is based on policy, practice or a combination of these.

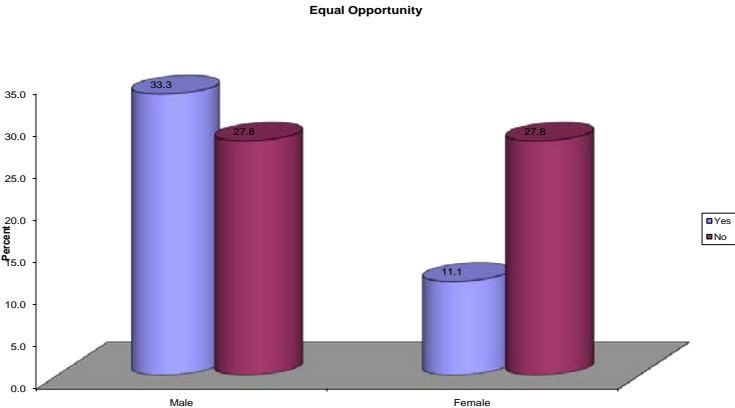## 5.3.6 Equal opportunity policies

Equal Opportunity

Figure 5.6: Equal opportunity policies

Thirty-three per cent of male respondents felt that there were equal opportunities for males and females, compared with 11.1% of females. A percentage of 27.8% of male and female respondents reported that there were no equal opportunities policies. Those who indicated that equal opportunities policies existed said this was because it was enforced by the leadership in each ministry or department and not necessarily because it was emphasised within the civil service as a whole.

Some respondents said that the constitution provides an overarching framework for equal opportunities as there are equality clauses, but these are limited. As figure 5.5 on succession policies shows, the responses on equal opportunities reflected a gap between policy and practice, an issue that is discussed in detail in the following section.

5.3.7 The gap between policy and practice

It was found that there were no written policies on equal opportunities, affirmative action, succession and sectoral gender policies with a focus on the workplace. However, most respondents pointed out that even though there was no written policy, there was an attempt by government to follow good management practice in implementing succession, as evidenced by the responses and data reflected in figures 5.5 and 5.6. The absence of written policies in some of these areas makes the systems porous and open to abuse and manipulation, because implementation is based on the good will of a few individuals. It is therefore difficult to ensure that they are enforced, as gaps in policy are created.

5.4 Conclusion

In this chapter, the qualitative and quantitative results of the study were presented and discussed. In some instances qualitative results were discussed separately. In chapter 6 conclusions will be drawn and recommendations made.

CHAPTER 6

Conclusions and recommendations

6.1 Introduction

The study has examined in some detail the subject of gender equality from a theoretical point of view through a review of the literature. The study has also outlined the situation of gender equality in the public sector of Swaziland and has identified the gaps, challenges and strengths in policy and practice.

The socio-economic and cultural environment has been explored to give the general context of gender. Later it was examined specifically to establish what prevails in the workplace. In the final analysis the researcher provides conclusions and recommendations for implementation by various players from each of the broad chapters. The researcher has therefore achieved the intended objectives that were defined at the commencement of the study.

6.2 Conclusions from the literature review

Countries and organisations have used a variety of models to analyse gender equality in situations that fluctuate from context to context. There is consensus among international organisations that gender equality is a human right (UNFPA 2009: 56) and that empowering women is an indispensable tool for advancing development. There is growing support for gender equality across all spheres, as espoused in the MDGs, and especially MDG 3 on women empowerment, which targets equality in education, in health and in other areas.

Although there has been significant advancement in attaining equality globally, progress is slow in Africa. In some parts, there are manifestations of gross inequalities. Women in

the Western world are more highly educated than women in Africa. Whereas the basis for discrimination in the West is colour, but in Africa it is creed and related factors. This is seen in the Fortune 500 companies in the US, where women of colour were discriminated against, despite being qualified for positions (Levin & Mattis 2006: 63). But in Africa, women are discriminated against for reasons related to culture and the strong beliefs in patriarchy (WLSA 1998: 29). The importance of quantification of women's work is considered valuable. Therefore, international organisations such as the International Labour Organisation have embarked on efforts to support UN member states to improve data collection, and monitoring and evaluation systems for gender equality. However, some of the measurements used exclude important elements of women's work, making women's work invisible (ILO 2009:8).

National reporting on international gender equality commitments and declarations is weak. UN member states do not report as expected, and there are no specific reports related to equal opportunities in the workplace. These national reports focus on CEDAW and MDG reporting, among others. In similar vein, the implementation, enforcement and monitoring of gender commitments were found to be lacking because meaningful national indicators that have not been developed for monitoring (ILO 2009). However, some countries reported that they had implemented gender-sensitive programmes in the workplace, such as affirmative action policies, equal access to training and promotion, leave, allowances and the principle of equal pay for work of equal value.

6.3. Conclusions from the socio-economic situation of Swaziland

It can be concluded that in Swaziland women are discriminated against (WLSA 1998:29) because of the strong patriarchy that characterises Swazi society. This places women in an inferior position to men. Women with higher education, living in urban contexts and from higher wealth quintiles, have better access to services than those with a lower level of education, living in rural contexts and in lower quintiles (SDHS 2007: 30). It can therefore be concluded that women of higher economic status who are

in a position to decide on use of resources have better access to services as they can readily make decisions without seeking spousal consent on those matters.

Although national gender programmes exist, progress in attaining gender equality in many areas in Swaziland, including decision making, continues to be slow. It can therefore be concluded that the absence of an overarching gender policy and of a substantive budgetary allocation to the gender coordination unit in order to implement national gender equality programmes results in the low level of attainment of full equality. Currently the national gender programme is funded from external donor sources, which creates challenges for sustainability in the future (Swaziland Government 2010/11 Budget Speech). The failure by government to implement constitutional clauses on gender equality is a concern. Furthermore, the absence of human rights machinery that ensures and enforces equality has affected progress in this area. The conclusion that can be drawn from this is that the absence of legislation and policies that operationalise the constitution may result in further delays in the realisation of mechanisms that ensure equality in the workplace and in other social spheres.

The socio-legal system, including the duality of the law (United Nations 2000:5), has not been successful in addressing inequalities because of traditional and Western laws that may be in conflict. The traditionalist approach does not promote the ideals of gender equality, whereas Western laws promote and uphold human rights, including gender equality. National decision-making bodies such as parliament are not adequately empowered to enact legislation that enforces gender equality. In parliament itself the quota of 30% set by SADC has not been met. In addition, a SADC decision in 2007 raised the quota to 50%, which will be difficult to attain since minimum standards have not been met previously. Also the delays in the enactment of the Domestic Violence and Sexual Offences legislation are indications that the protection of women's rights as it relates to gender-based violence has not been prioritised.

6.4 Conclusions from the empirical study

The conclusion in this section (6.4) will be presented according to the broad areas and themes described in the data and discussion section.

6.4.1 Career growth for women

One hundred per cent of the women interviewed had grown in their careers in their previous and current jobs after several years of service in government. There were no perceptions of career stagnation and discrimination. This could have been because most of these women hold senior executive positions in government. It can therefore be concluded that education and experience make positive contributions to career growth for both men and women. This was confirmed by 90.9% of female respondents, who regarded educational qualifications and skills as having contributed significantly to their career growth.

6.4.2 Perceptions and attitudes towards female leadership

The respondents interviewed observed that the reasons for negative perceptions and attitudes towards female leadership involved culture and the way people have been socialised, that is, the concept that women have no role in leadership, but only in the domestic spheres. Other reasons that were cited as contributing to the negative perception of female leadership were the PHD syndrome – behaviour that portrays lack of support for females generally – and the perceived negative behaviour and lack of professionalism demonstrated by females themselves. In this case it can be concluded that perceptions towards female leadership are attitudinal, as shown by the 50% of respondents opposed to lack of support, PHD syndromes and behavioural attributes such as lack of professionalism by the women in leadership themselves, which were 25% and 25% respectively. The biases are related to the strong culture and socialisation around patriarchy and gender inequalities that are prevalent in Swazi society.

6.4.3 Promoting competitiveness

There were no major differences between the respondents who observed the promotion of competitiveness and those who perceived a lack of it, since the percentages were 54.5% and 45.5% respectively. This would mean that the awareness of the concept of 'promoting competitiveness' was nonexistent, and that there was an ambiguity in its definition during the study. It can be concluded that the lack of emphasis on performance indicators and the general absence of a performance appraisal system in government leads to the absence of competitiveness, and may demotivate young professionals, who may then not aspire to being competitive in the workplace because there are no rewards for high performance. This is evident from the finding that promotions are determined largely by the number of years of experience, as opposed to qualifications and performance.

6.4.4 Policy environment

It can be concluded that the policy environment is generally lacking. Good practices in affirmative action and succession are demonstrated, but these are not based on written policy. It can be concluded that this gap between policy and practice can be subject to manipulation and abuse of systems, because without policy, good management practice will not be followed consistently. The draft gender policy that has taken government a long time to finalise lacks forward-looking strategies that address gender inequalities in institutions such as the workplace. The absence of this overarching guidance in the form of a policy is creating challenges for the enactment of sectoral policies such as equal opportunities and succession.

6.4.5 Recruitment and promotions

There is very good understanding among respondents on the recruitment and promotions processes in government. However, under-emphasis on performance and

qualification-based promotion remains a concern in modern management practice. It can be concluded that this lack of systematic performance-management processes demotivates high-performing individuals (who may not necessarily be senior) from seeking promotion, but they do need to be rewarded for good performance. It can be concluded that government lacks a mechanism to harmonise experience, qualification and performance that can serve as a comprehensive and all-encompassing benchmark for recruitment and promotion in government. Although this enquiry did not require the researcher to assess the capacity of the CSC, it can be concluded that this institution, which is the recruitment agency of government, is technically weak in recruiting for highly technical positions. The CSC needs to develop internal technical competencies in order to make sound decisions in appointments.

6.4.6 Access to opportunities for training, equal pay and social security benefits

Government provides equal pay for equal work, regardless of gender. Government offers three months' maternity leave for women to allow for the care of the infant. However, there is no paternity leave for male parents in this situation. The absence of paternity leave in the public service could perpetuate the notion that childcare roles are solely for females. Because their spouses have no entitlement to paternity leave, the mothers may not benefit from the direct support of their husbands, which could assist them to manage the balance in their work-life. In other words, this absence of the paternity leave benefit ascribes caring roles exclusively to women.

Government makes equal training opportunities available to male and female employees, but using these opportunities is challenging for females. From the study findings it was noted that sometimes females do not readily take up training opportunities, but may defer them owing to domestic and family responsibilities. This then raises the issue of access, as other options – such as distance learning – which are preferred by women in such circumstances – are not funded by government, hence creating a barrier to accessing further training opportunities if the candidates cannot

afford to pay for them. It can therefore be concluded that while government offers training opportunities, these are not readily accessible or utilised, for reasons that include prevailing family and domestic priorities. The multiple roles of women can be included as an inhibiting factor for the enjoyment of a healthy balance in the work-life of women.

6.5 Recommendations

From the conclusions set out in the previous section, the recommendations are that:

- Government should enforce a career pathing system to ensure that all civil servants grow within the ranks. Career pathing is implemented and enforced for professional cadres through the schemes of service, but this is not necessarily the case with technician cadres. It is therefore recommended that government develop a career path for the technician cadres.

- Government, under the leadership of the Ministry of Public Service, must conduct orientation programmes on gender in the workplace in order to promote the culture of tolerance and acceptability of female leadership and support.

- Government needs to promote competitiveness by putting in place a performance management system (PMS), with clear performance targets and indicators, with a corresponding reward structure to motivate civil servants.

- Government needs to review its policy environment on gender equality in the workplace. Specifically, government must do the following:

  a) Review the draft national gender policy to incorporate explicit equality clauses that are related to the attainment of equality in the workplace

  b) Develop an over-arching succession policy and plans, and equal opportunities policies through the CSC and Ministry of Public Service for implementation by the ministries and departments

  c) Put in place a quota system for women in leadership to enforce affirmative action in the workplace

- The CSC is the recruitment agency of government. The government must empower the ministries and departments through the government gazette so that the ministries are able independently to recruit for technical positions without too much interference from the CSC. This should ensure quality recruitments because the CSC may lack the technical skills to do so.

- Government should finance distance training programmes for those civil servants who choose this option because some government personnel, including women, may have difficulty in accessing mainstream government programmes, which are fully funded. This would then decrease the equality gap in skills and qualifications between those who can access mainstream government training programmes and those who cannot.

- Government needs to develop and implement leadership-training programmes for women in leadership, to strengthen leadership capacity especially during the first appointment to a leadership position.

- In order to monitor and ensure that government is complying to gender equality standards in recruitment, government should put in place a monitoring and reporting system with indicators that will be tracked and regular reporting on the achievement of these indicators must ensured

  .

6.6 Conclusion

Conclusions were drawn in light of the findings of the study, and recommendations were made for interventions by government to improve the situation of gender equality. The researcher therefore hopes that the recommendations of this study will be implemented by the relevant players in government, especially the CSC, Ministry of Public Service and Gender Coordination Unit, to attain equality for males and females in the workplace.

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