

**The barriers that inhibit women from breaking the glass ceiling
in the South African public service**

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DECLARATION

This work has not been previously accepted in substance for any degree and is not being concurrently submitted in candidature for any degree.

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DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to my dearest sister Mala Singh who has played an immensely powerful role in my life and served as a source of inspiration to me and many other women to unleash our inner potential.

ABSTRACT

The end of the apartheid era in South Africa presented the new government with a myriad of challenges. This involved massive transformation, whilst ushering in a regulatory framework of enabling legislation to give effect to the country's fledgling Constitution. One of the transformational priorities was to address gender equality. Despite legislative imperatives having been instituted, gender equity targets are not being met, nor are affirmative action programmes being implemented to their fullest to facilitate and support gender equality. This research investigates the barriers that inhibit women from breaking the glass ceiling in the South African public service. The research paradigm was exploratory, using qualitative techniques and the results are largely descriptive. Secondary information was obtained from literature and information available. Multiple case studies were conducted using five subjects who were representative of the target population.

The overarching purpose of this study was to investigate and understand the barriers that inhibit women from breaking the glass ceiling in the South African public service. The concept of the glass ceiling is defined as the invisible barrier that blocks women from advancing to senior management positions. The study proposes and considers various issues that may have an impact on upward mobility for women. A review of literature reveals that barriers exist as a worldwide occurrence and these prevent women from upward mobility. Justification for this research is twofold: there has been no such study to date; and gender equality is not being achieved and affirmative action programmes have not been fully implemented. The findings of the study provide a deeper understanding of the barriers that prevent women from career progression in the South African public service. Recommendations are made to address this issue.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER 1	1
1.1 Introduction	1
1.2 Problem statement	2
1.3 Objectives and sub-objectives of study	3
1.4 Guiding propositions	3
1.5 Overview of methodology	4
1.6 Limitations, delimitations and assumptions	5
1.6.1 Limitations	5
1.7 Rationale for the study	6
1.8 Definition of terms	7
1.9 Chapter summary	8
CHAPTER 2	10
2.1 Introduction	10
2.2 South African legislation	10
2.2.1 Background to South Africa and its historical past	10
2.2.2 Transformation in South Africa	11
2.2.3 Legislative framework to promote gender equality	12
2.2.4 Other initiatives and commitments to address the transformation agenda	15
2.2.5 Employment profile	17
2.2.5.1 Adult and working population in South Africa	17
2.2.5.2 South African public service	18
2.2.5.3 Women at managerial levels in the public service from 1995 to 2001	20
2.2.5.5 Employment profile of women in the senior management service	20
2.3 Conclusion	22
CHAPTER 3	23
3.1 Introduction	23
3.2 Sex-Role Stereotypes and Perceptions	23
3.1 Organisational culture and work environment	27
3.3.1 Organisational culture	27
3.3.2 Mentoring	30
3.3.3 Support systems and role models	32
3.3.4 Training and development	32
3.4 Dedication to work and family life	33

3.4.1	Family-friendly policies.....	35
3.5	The Impact of personality and leadership on career progression for women.....	36
3.5.1	Theoretical perspectives of personality	36
3.5.2	Theoretical perspectives on leadership.....	40
3.6	Research findings	42
3.6.1	Research findings on management theory.....	42
3.6.2	Research findings on women in leadership.....	43
3.7	Conclusion.....	45
CHAPTER 4		46
METHODOLOGY		46
4.1	Introduction.....	46
4.2	Research design.....	46
4.2.1	Type of research study.....	46
4.2.2.1	Sources of secondary information	46
4.2.3	Case studies	46
4.2.4	Sampling-population, frame, method, size	47
4.3	Data collection	48
4.3.1	Data collection method.....	48
4.3.2	Interview preparation and instrument.....	48
4.3.3	Data analysis.....	49
4.4	Validity and reliability	49
4.5	Conclusion	50
CHAPTER 5		51
5.1	Introduction.....	51
5.2	Descriptive data about the sample.....	51
5.3	Research findings on propositions.....	52
5.3.1	Research Proposition 1: Stereotypes limit the career progression of women	52
5.3.2	Research Proposition 2:.....	55
5.3.2.1	Findings on mentoring, training and developmental opportunities	56
5.3.3	Research Proposition 3:.....	57
5.3.4	Research Proposition 4:	58
5.3.5	Research Proposition 5:.....	60
5.4	Conclusion.....	62

CHAPTER 6	63
CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS	63
6.1 Introduction	63
6.2 Research Proposition 1	63
6.2.3 Conclusions about the research problem	67
6.2.4 Implications for theory	67
6.3 Research Proposition 2	68
6.3.2 Conclusion of research proposition 2	69
6.3.3 Conclusions about the research problem	72
6.3.4 Implications for theory	72
6.3.5 Implications for policy and practice	72
6.3.6 Limitations	73
6.3.7 Implications for further research	73
6.4 Research Proposition 3	73
6.4.1 Summary of key findings	73
6.4.2 Conclusion of research proposition 3	74
6.4.3 Conclusion about the research problem	74
6.5.1 Summary of key findings	76
6.5.3 Conclusions about the research problem	79
6.5.4 Implications for theory	79
6.5.5 Implications for policy and practice	79
6.5.6 Limitations	79
6.5.7 Implications for further research	79
6.6 Research Proposition 5	80
6.6.1 Summary of key findings	80
6.6.2 Conclusion about the research proposition 5	80
6.6.3 Implications for theory	81
6.6.4 Implications for policy and practice	81
6.5.5 Implications for further research	82
6.7 Conclusion	82
7. List of references	83

Appendices

a	Letter of consent	108
b	Copy of questionnaire/interview guide	108
c	Locus of Control Questionnaire	108

LIST OF TABLES

Table 2.1	Census, 2001 Adult and Working Population in South Africa	18
Table 2.2	Total public service employees	19
Table 2.3	PERSAL: Representation of men and women at managerial level	20
Table 2.4	Employment profile of the senior management service	21

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION AND OVERVIEW OF THE STUDY

1.1 Introduction

This chapter provides insight into the topic under research in terms of the problem statement, the objectives of the study, its limitations and delimitations, the rationale for the study and the broad overview of the methodology.

The end of the apartheid era in South Africa presented the new government with a myriad of challenges. This involved massive transformation, whilst ushering in a regulatory framework of enabling legislation to give effect to the country's fledgling Constitution. One of the transformational priorities was to address gender inequality. Despite the political will adopted, and the legislative changes to give effect to this will, statistics show that twelve years down the line gender equality targets are still not being met. However, the public service, in comparison to the private sector, has taken a lead in addressing gender transformation.

The overarching purpose of this study is to investigate and understand the barriers that prevent women from breaking the glass ceiling in the South African public service. This study makes a proposition and considers various issues that may have an impact on upward mobility for women. A review of literature reveals that barriers do exist and that these prevent women from upward mobility. Studies show that this phenomenon is a worldwide occurrence. Justification for this specific research topic is twofold; there has been no such study conducted to date; and, gender equality is not being achieved and affirmative action programmes have not been fully implemented.

This study has focussed on women employed in the public service and has investigated issues that affect upward mobility. There needs to be rigorous attempts to fast track development programmes for women so that their representation at acceptable levels can be realised. Whilst gender transformation has been achieved in some areas, others are still lagging.

1.2 Problem statement

Since 1994 many steps have been taken to increase the level of female representation in South Africa. The Statistics South Africa Census of 2001 reveals that women represent 52.18% of the population, whilst the adult working population of women is 42.1% (Empowerdex, 2005: 6-10). The above finding is used as a benchmark to ascertain the status of women in senior management positions across the public sector with specific emphasis on the public service.

Research findings reveal that 44.2% of Cabinet positions are held by women (Ministers and Deputy Ministers), whilst 17.6% of top management positions are held by of women in State Owned Enterprises (Empowerdex, 2005: 6-7).

The public service set a minimum target of 30 % towards gender transformation for women at senior management level, which had to be met by end the of March 2005. This minimum target was exceeded, with a target of 31% being achieved by December 2005. Whilst these targets were set as a minimum, departments were expected to build their own targets in relation to demographic profiles of the national and respective regional economically active population (Cabinet Memorandum, 2003: 3). In this respect, a Cabinet Memorandum was sent to all public service departments that were required to define their affirmative action targets and present annual reports which would be subjected to Parliamentary oversight.

In order for South Africa to address the employment gender gap there needs to be a full representation of 52% of women in all working ranks (Mbeki, 2004: 4). This was supported by the Commission on Gender Equality (South Africa. Commission of Gender Equality, 2004: 1) which advocated a 50/50 campaign to have women at equal representation in all working ranks.

1.3 Objectives and sub-objectives of study

The overarching objective of the research is to identify impediments that inhibit upward mobility and career progression of women in the South African public service. The sub-objectives of the study are to:

- identify factors that inhibit career progression of women
- categorise factors that inhibit career progression in terms of importance
- to identify whether there are specific work environments in which career mobility is more limiting than others.

Welman and Kruger (2003) describe an "issue" as a characteristic or attribute of the study object.

Some of the issues that will be researched include:

- dedication to work and family life
- individual career aspirations
- stereotypes about women in the workplace
- training and development/mentoring opportunities for women
- opportunities for women wishing to combine work and parenthood
- existence of family-friendly policies/diversity programmes.

1.4 Guiding propositions

According to Welman and Kruger (2003), a proposition is a tentative or provisional statement of a research problem. This research study makes the proposition that there are several inhibiting factors that prevail within the South African public service, and that these factors inhibit women

from career progression. Based on the literature review, the study proposes that the following factors inhibit women from breaking the glass ceiling:

- Stereotypes limit the career progression of women
- There are insufficient opportunities for women in terms of exposure to networks, management roles, training and development and mentoring, which limits career progression
- Individual schema in relation to devotion to work and family life influence career progression
- Organisational culture, structural conditions and family-friendly policies influence career progression
- Personality traits influence career progression.

1.5 Overview of methodology

The research design is of an exploratory nature, using mainly qualitative techniques. The findings are largely descriptive. Five subjects were used as multiple case studies for an in-depth contextual analysis. The subjects were representative of women in the South African public service. The study made use of judgemental sampling and included two women in senior management positions who have broken the glass ceiling and three in middle management positions who have not.

A combination of non-empirical and empirical research was used. An interview guide, in line with the theory and issues related to the research was developed and used during the interviews. The data was analysed, decomposed, recomposed, summarised and reduced to a simple structure and trends and issues were noted. The data was analysed against concepts, issues and ideas found in the literature through the use of deductive methods. The similarities and differences in comparison with findings of previous research were analysed.

Since concerns are raised with the lack of rigour of case studies, the following were undertaken to ensure validity and reliability. To ensure content validity, a sound theoretical framework was developed and an interview guide aligned to the framework, was used. Criterion validity was considered in terms of relevance, freedom from bias, reliability and validity. Multiple sources of evidence were used to ensure convergence, and these sources included CV's, qualifications and other available information. An audit trail was kept to increase trustworthiness and observers were used during the interviews.

1.6 Limitations, delimitations and assumptions

This discussion focuses on the limitations, delimitations and assumptions made during the research study.

1.6.1 Limitations

The research is mostly qualitative and as such the following limitations were inherent to the study:

- Qualitative research lends itself to being subjective, since it has a non-systematic design. To this end there is not much that could be done. To minimise this subjectivity an interview guide was developed and used during the interview.
Interviewees were not readily available, especially during office times; plans and schedules were monitored and alternative dates/times secured as a back-up.
- The research undertook personal interviews which has several inherent disadvantages such as biases or a feminist approach adopted by the researcher. Male interviewers were included to interview subjects and, where required, to serve as observers.
- The case studies generated volumes of information.

1.6.2 Delimitations

The study was confined to the barriers that impede career mobility of women employed by the South African public service. The study was undertaken in Pretoria, where most national public service departments are located.

1.6.3 Assumptions

The following assumptions were made:

- The baseline statistics and information obtained on gender equity targets and the number of women in senior management posts are valid and reliable
- The subjects are familiar with the terminology
- The selected subjects are willing to participate in the study.

1.7 Rationale for the study

The rationale for the study stems from the various reports and statistics, produced by Department of Labour, the Commission for Gender Equality and the Department of Public Service and Administration, which indicate that despite legislative imperatives, set targets and monitoring oversight committees, the public service is unable to meet the targets set for gender representation.

Even though there have been several studies done, both internationally and in South Africa, on women breaking the glass ceiling, there is no documented research on barriers that inhibit women from breaking the glass ceiling in the South African public service.

The value and importance of this study is that specific work environments, in which career mobility is more limiting than others, are identified and categorised in terms of importance. In addition, this study proposes initiatives that could facilitate upward mobility for women.

1.8 Definition of terms

Affirmative action

Affirmative action is a policy or a programme that seeks to redress past discrimination. The goal is to fast track representative and equitable employment practices. Affirmative action seeks to create and build environments that enable those who have been historically disadvantaged to reach their full potential so that the public service may derive the maximum benefit of a talented and diverse workforce, enabling it to improve service delivery. Affirmative action is a process by which special rights are given to hiring or the advancement of ethnic minorities to compensate for discrimination against the minority group (South Africa. Department of Public Service and Administration, 1998: 1-7 and 55).

Cabinet

The executive arm of South African national government is made up of the Cabinet; and is represented by the President, Deputy President and various Ministers and Deputy Ministers (Cape Gateway, 2004).

Economically active population

The economically active population includes people between the ages of 15 and 65 years who are involved in the world of work and consists of those who are employed and those who are unemployed (South African Revenue Service, 2005a).

Gender equality

Gender equality means that the underlying causes of discrimination are removed in a manner that is systematic so that both men and women are given equal opportunities in every area of life.

Sometimes, it may be necessary to treat men and women differently in order to achieve sameness in results (South Africa. Commission on Gender Equality, 2005: 1).

The glass ceiling

According to Peters and Kabacoff (2003: 1), the term glass ceiling was introduced to describe the invisible barrier that blocks women from advancing to senior management positions in organisations.

Senior management service

According to the Senior Management Service Handbook (2003), the senior management service consists of employees of public service who are employed at level 13 and above (South Africa. Senior Management Service Handbook, 2003).

1.9 Chapter summary

This chapter has outlined one of the key transformational priorities of the South African government, namely, gender equality and the legislative imperatives to meet gender equality. However, despite the legislative framework, gender targets are not being met. The research methodology was discussed and included the design, type of study, measures to increase reliability and validity, the limitations, delimitations and assumptions made. The study makes several propositions, which are based on the literature review.

The research design is exploratory using qualitative techniques. Five subjects are used for in-depth case studies.

Chapter 2 will provide an overview of South Africa and its legislative imperatives to achieve employment equity. The economically active population of South Africa is used as a basis to benchmark the profiles of women in management positions in the South African public service.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW OF THE SOUTH AFRICAN PUBLIC SERVICE

2.1 Introduction

This chapter introduces South Africa, its people and Government. It focuses on the legislative imperatives and the initiatives and commitments that the country has undertaken to address the transformation agenda. The employment profile of the adult and working population is used as a basis to benchmark the work profile of the South African public service. The profiles of women at both the middle and senior management positions are examined.

2.2 South African legislation

2.2.1 Background to South Africa and its historical past

South Africa consists of a population of approximately 44.8 million people (South Africa. The Government of South Africa, 2005:1). It is characterised by diverse groups of people in terms of race, religion and culture. The country is divided into nine provinces, each with its own provincial parliament and administration. The national government is charged with implementing legislation and providing public services which are rendered via the various public service departments (South Africa. The Government of South Africa, 2005: 1-2).

In its report, the Public Service Commission states that, historically, the South African public service was rooted in discriminatory and undemocratic social relations (South Africa. Public Service Commission, 2002: 6). Since the 1990s it has undergone profound changes in several arenas to address these undemocratic social relations. When women marched to the Union Buildings 40 years ago, they created a landmark in South African history, when the women vowed that they will resist and fight for liberation (Mandela, 1996: 1).

According to a report issued by Gallup International, South Africa has three times more optimists than pessimists and this figure has doubled since 2002. This poll was confirmed by Markinor who found that 65% of people stated that the country is heading in the right direction. One of the key challenges that South Africa faces is a shortage of leadership and management skills (Mbeki, 2006).

South Africa entered a second decade of democracy in 2004. This decade is heralded as the "Age of Hope" and President Mbeki has stated; "Our people expect that we should move faster to address the challenges of poverty, underdevelopment and marginalisation" (Mbeki, 2006:2). Jackson (2006: 6-10) believes that South Africa is a signal of hope and transformation and is capable of overcoming the challenges it faces. Arguably, this decade provides the platform to further address transformational priorities, including gender issues.

2.2.2 Transformation in South Africa

The White Paper on the Reconstruction and Development Programme, an early founding statement makes an insightful statement regarding the history of South Africa:

"Our history has been a bitter one dominated by colonialism, racism, apartheid, sexism and repressive labour practices. Women are still subject to innumerable forms of discrimination and bias" (South Africa. Department of Public Service and Administration 1994: 64).

According to the White Paper on Affirmative Action in the Public Service (1998), the Government inherited a public service influenced by discriminatory employment practices and policies. These historical imbalances, were targeted to groups based on race, gender and disability. As a result of the historical imbalances these target groups were poorly represented at decision making and other occupational categories (South Africa. Department of Public Service and Administration, 1998:3).

Women, and more specifically black women, were oppressed and exploited. They were at the bottom of the ladder of social subordination, and in terms of customary law, relegated to positions as perpetual minors and to secondary status (South Africa. Department of Public Service and Administration, 1998: 9-11). Mojela (2006: 8) stated that South Africa has an abysmal history, characterised by hostility and inadequate development programmes for women.

These discriminatory practices and policies have been limiting to the employment of women in the South African workforce, and ultimately their career progression.

2.2.3 Legislative framework to promote gender equality

The recognition of historical imbalances on the basis of race and gender is well documented in literature such as the The White Paper on Reconstruction and Development Programme, and the Employment Equity Act 55 of 1998. Since 1994, a legislative framework has been set in place to address the legislative framework includes amongst others; the Constitution, Act 108 of 1996, Employment Equity Act 55 of 1998, labour legislation such as , the Basic Conditions of Employment Act 75 of 1997. Broadly, these pieces of legislation institutionalise modern, democratic and equitable employment practices. This study explores the enabling mechanisms to address gender empowerment created by the legislative framework.

When the Government of National Unity came into power in 1994, they considered transformation of the public service a priority. The principle of gender equality is further enshrined in The Constitution, Act 108 of 1996, which declares that the Republic of South Africa is to be founded on four values, one of which is "non-racialism and non-sexism".

The Bill of Rights is central to the Constitution, and guarantees freedom from discrimination on the grounds of gender, seeking to grant women equality (South Africa, 1996: 108).

According to de Klerk (2006: 12-15), it is important to re-visit these rights often, as their relevance and implementation gets its thrust from this awareness.

In order to give effect to the gender principles enshrined in the Constitution, provisions were made for an overseeing structure, namely, the Commission for Gender Equality, whose main task is "to promote respect for gender equality and the protection, development and attainment of gender equality" (South Africa. The Constitution, Act 108 of 1996). The Office on the Status of Women (OSW) was established in 1997. At a provincial level, the OSW is tasked to ensure advancement of national policy on empowerment of women and gender equality and to advise and brief the President on gender issues. Locally, Gender Units have been established to ensure implementation of all action plans to facilitate the empowerment of women and the promotion of gender equality (Fester, 2004: 1-2).

To give effect to the disparities in employment within the national labour market, the key focus of the Employment Equity Act 55 of 1998 was, amongst others, to promote the constitutional rights of equality, eliminate unfair discrimination in employment, ensure the implementation of employment equity, and achieve a diverse workforce representative of the population (South Africa: The Employment Equity Act 55 of 1998). The Act states that departments are required to ensure the equitable representation of people who are suitably qualified from designated groups in all occupational levels in the workforce. To this end, public service departments are required to submit an Employment Equity Plan with numerical employment goals within each occupational category.

The White Paper on Affirmative Action in the Public Service bears testimony to the commitment that Government has towards transforming employment practices. The ultimate goal of

affirmative action is to expedite the attainment of a representative and equitable public service, and to build a conducive environment that supports and enables those groups who have been previously disadvantaged to achieve their full potential.

Central to the objectives of this policy is to enhance capacities, inculcate a culture that supports advancement and to speed up the attainment of numeric employment equity targets. In this way, the public service could be seen as deriving maximum benefit from the diverse skills and talents to improve service delivery (South Africa. Department of Public Service and Administration, 1998: 1). The White Paper on Affirmative Action can be seen as a tool for achieving gender equity.

In 1995, the White Paper on Transformation of the Public Service set targets which stated that within four years all departmental establishments must attempt the target to be 50 % black at management level, and 30% of new recruits to the middle management and senior management echelon's should be women and 2% to be representative of people with disabilities (South Africa. Department of Public Service and Administration, 1995). These goals, however, were seen as minimum national targets. These targets do not represent the ultimate goal for the public sector. The goals for the public sector are to achieve representivity at all levels of government service that is truly representative of the broader society (Thompson and Wollard, 2002: 1-4).

Through the above measures, a framework for human resource management and development has been provided to ensure that an equitable and representative workforce is achieved in the medium and long term. The White Paper on Human Resource Management advocates that the achievement of these goals requires measures such as education and on-going skills development for target groups to overcome their historic marginalisation (South Africa. Department of Public Service and Administration, 1998: 3-10). One of the key aspects of the

African Renaissance is to free women from the shackles of patriarchy to take their rightful place in society. This is a challenge facing 21st century leaders today. In this respect, although the battle for education is being won, South Africa is still faced with the aftermath of apartheid in as far as leadership and capacity is concerned. According to de Klerk (2006: 6-11) both business and civil society leaders can make a contribution to the success of South African provided they remained true to the vision of the Constitution.

A review of legislation shows that a solid and coherent foundation has been laid which paves the way for the future. However, transformation brings with it a myriad of challenges that consumes a significant amount of resources and energy. In order to uphold the values and principles enshrined in the Constitution and to implement the policies provided for in the legislative framework, much needs to be done (South Africa. Public Service Commission, 2002: 6-13; Fester, 2004: 1-3).

2.2.4 Other initiatives and commitments to address the transformation agenda

The Presidential Commission recommended that the State, as employer, should be seen as a catalyst of employment equity. The Commission for Employment Equity notes that most disparities in the South African workplace are as a result of past laws and that this has resulted in large-scale under-representation of groups such as women in top management positions (Thompson and Wollard, 2002: 1-3).

South Africa participated in the United Nations series of World Conferences on Women in Beijing during 1995. At this occasion, the Government committed itself to the Beijing Platform of Action to address gender equality issues (South African Technical Committee, 2000). In 1997, the

African National Congress stated that the foundation had been laid for South Africa to develop into a united, non-racial and non-sexist society (Mbeki, 2004: 2).

In 1995, women from around the world convened to discuss gender equality and empowerment of women. Representatives from all over the world agreed that women play a critical role in society. The representatives committed to uplift the rights and emancipation of women. Ten years later, when women met for the 49th session of the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women, it was realized that, although progress was made, addressing the plight of women will remain a priority and a challenge for the years to come. Zuma vocalized that transforming South Africa into a non-sexist society was a major goal for the next decade (South African Revenue Service, 2005a: 1-2).

The South African Employment Equity Project, commissioned by the Department of Labour, revealed that African women represent only 1% of all senior management positions (Commission on Gender Equality, 2005; 14). The South African Women in Corporate Leadership Census revealed that approximately two-thirds of companies in South Africa have no women in top positions (South African Women in Corporate Leadership Positions, 2004).

According to findings by the National Gender Conference (2005), the unemployment rate for women stood at 50% in comparison to men which stood at 34%. The Congress of Trade Unions said that women are still marginalized in the workplace. They reiterated that, for decade's, professions such as nursing and teaching were the only way African women could gain a professional career and generally leadership was male-dominated (South African Press Association, 2005a: 1-3).

In her inaugural speech as Deputy President, Mlambo-Ngucka challenged South Africa to ensure that 50% of women are represented at all levels of organisations (South African Press Association, 2005a: 1-3).

President Mbeki highlighted that addressing gender equality is a worldwide issue; however, the process is more complex in South Africa and requires strategies to address these issues on multiple fronts. South Africa has made appreciable progress. However, to achieve equity, there should be a full 52% of women at all levels (ANC Today, 2004: 4).

2.2.5 Employment profile

The employment profile of the adult working population in South Africa is used as a benchmark to measure representivity of national labour force, and the profile of women at middle and senior management positions in the South African public service.

2.2.5.1 Adult and working population in South Africa

In order to measure representativity in employment practices, it is useful to benchmark against national demographics. The statistics South Africa Census of 2001 provides the adult and working population in South Africa (Empowerdex, 2005: 1-5) which is used as the basis for the benchmark. The profile of the workforce and the economically active population is reflected in the table below.

**Table 2.1: Census, 2001 Adult and Working Population in South Africa
(Empowerdex, 2005).**

Adult and working population in South Africa		
	Adult population	Working population
Male	47.9%	58.7%
Female	52.1%	41.3%

An analysis of figures above reveal that there are:

- 4.2% more females within the adult population, and
- 17.4% less females within the working population

At the first national ANC conference, the Women's League made a proposal that 50 % to 52% of all positions must be women (Fester, 2004 and Mbeki, 2005). If South Africa is to achieve on this representation, the target would be to reduce male employment by an average of 10.8% and increase female employment by average of 10.8%.

2.2.5.2 South African public service

A profile of the national labour force reveals that the public service is the country's largest single employer (South Africa. Public Service Commission, 2002:5-6). The public service employs a total of 1 034 868 employees (South Africa. Department of Public Service and Administration, PERSAL, 2005). The public service with its various governmental institutions has led the way for appointing women into professional and managerial positions and can be seen as a catalyst for changing the workforce profile (Lues, 2005: 4). A breakdown in terms of gender and race over a period of four years is reflected in the table below:

Table 2.2. Total public service employees

Total public service by race and gender					
Gender	Race	Dec 02	Dec 03	Dec 04	Dec 05
Female	African	393,575	398,736	408,367	435,215
	Asian	16,527	17,025	17,276	16,695
	Coloured	50,170	50,600	50,794	54,643
	White	83,345	80,684	76,813	73,569
	Total	543,617	547,045	553,250	580, 122
Male	African	363,106	359,802	361,630	343,089
	Asian	21,447	21,339	21,365	14,392
	Coloured	41,345	41,394	42,202	44,194
	White	70,991	68,075	65,250	53,071
	Total	496,889	490, 610	490,447	454,746
TOTAL		1,040,506	1,037,655	1,043,697	1,034,868

Source: PERSAL, Department of Public Service and Administration, 2006.

An analysis of the above table reveals that there has been:

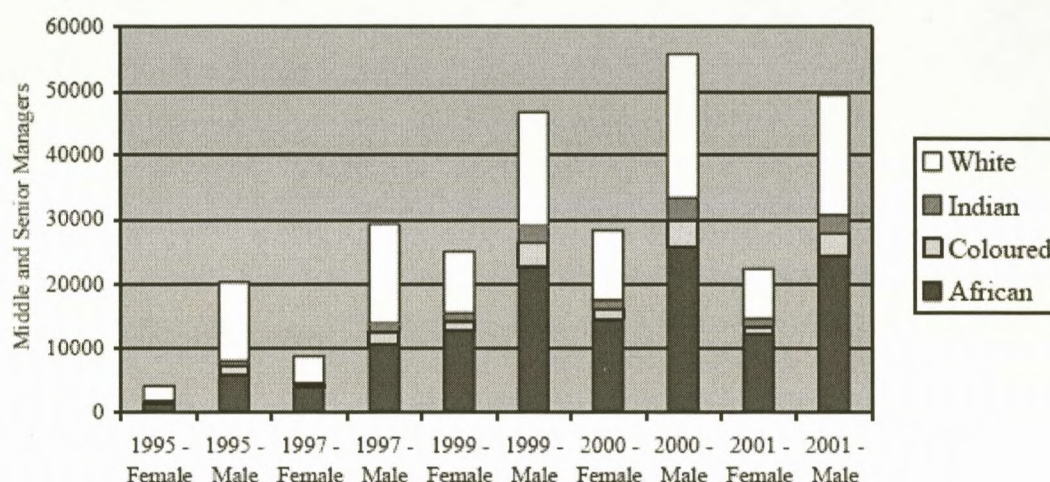
- an increase of 36,505 women employment in the public service from 2002 to 2005; this represents an increase of 6.7%.
- a decrease of 42,143 in the employment of men employed in the public service from 2002 to 2005; this represents a decrease of 8.4%.

These trends suggest that there has been a commitment towards closing the gender gap in employment practices within the public service.

2.2.5.3 Women at managerial levels in the public service from 1995 to 2001

Transformation of women at managerial levels in the public service from 1995 to 2001 provides some insight to the progress made for this period. The overall picture is represented in the table below (Thompson and Wollard, 2002; 16).

Table 2.3 Representation of men and women at managerial level



Source: Thompson and Wollard (2002:16)

This graph reveals there was under representation of women at managerial level from 1995 to 2001.

2.2.5.5 Employment profile of women in the senior management service

Statistics issued by the Department of Public Service and Administration reflect that women consist of 30% of the senior management service, whilst men make up 70% for year ending December 2005 (Department of Public Service and Administration, PERSAL, 2006). The table below provides a deeper insight into the progress made from 2002 to 2005.

Table 2.4: Employment profile of the senior management service

		Dec 02		Dec 03		Dec 04		Dec 05		%
		Number	%	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%	changes 98-05
Female	African	638	14%	839	14%	1,037	17%	1,202	19%	5%
	Asian	72	2%	106	2%	122	2%	144	2%	1%
	Coloured	78	2%	99	2%	117	2%	132	2%	0%
	White	313	7%	412	7%	417	7%	436	7%	0%
	Subtotal	1,101	24%	1,456	24%	1,693	27%	1,914	31%	7%
Male	African	1,635	35%	2,117	35%	2,216	36%	2386	37%	2%
	Asian	267	6%	326	5%	350	6%	364	6%	0%
	Coloured	249	5%	304	5%	340	5%	354	6%	0%
	White	1,380	30%	1,787	30%	1,620	26%	1417	22%	-8%
	Subtotal	3,531	76%	4,534	76%	4,526	73%	4,521	73%	-4%
Total		4,632		5,990		6,219		6,435		

Source: Department of Public Service and Administration, PERSAL, 2006.

The analysis reveals that there has been a 7% increase of women employed in the senior management level from 2002 to 2005, whilst there has been a decrease of 4% of men employed at senior management level. Whilst appreciable progress has being made in the public service, much work needs to be done to achieve equitable representation of women.

2.3 Conclusion

The political ethos of the South African Government is gender supportive; the foundation has been laid for a fair and democratic society. The public sector has made appreciable progress towards gender equity and the progress made to date calls for celebration. However, the literature review indicates that closing the gender gap is still a challenge for South Africa. If South Africa is to be truly representative at all levels of occupational categories, it will have to achieve a 52% representation. It is important to realize that legislation alone cannot address gender equality and unfair discrimination (Thompson and Wollard, 2002; 20). Gender transformation requires robust and rigorous attempts to address core issues that create conducive environments supportive of gender equality. In addition to the legislative imperatives, there has been great focus and commitment to address gender transformation in South Africa. The following chapter will provide a review of other research findings and explore some of the relevant theoretical perspectives in terms of the impact on career progression for women.

CHAPTER 3

PERSPECTIVES ON CAREER ADVANCEMENT FOR WOMEN

3.1 Introduction

This chapter will explore the wealth of literature on glass ceilings and career advancement for women and will discuss the relevant theoretical perspectives.

3.2 Sex-Role Stereotypes and Perceptions

Social scientists define stereotypes as sets of widely held beliefs about personal attributes of groups of people (Kreitner, Kinicki and Beulens, 2002: 160-161; Bergh and Theron, 2004: 118-119). In order to make sense of the social environment, perceivers have a tendency to group people into categories according to various criteria, and then to assign attributes to these categories of people. Stereotyping is considered a normal cognitive process that saves both the time and effort in understanding. Expectations of others are formed and their behaviour is interpreted in accordance with these stereotypes (Kreitner, Kinicki and Beulens, 2002). These attributes could emanate from direct experiences whilst at other times they may be based on culturally transmitted information where the perceiver has limited direct experience. However, these generalisations ignore the diversity of people and lead to inaccurate perceptions. Forming beliefs about groups of people can be viewed as a continuous process, with little or no monitoring of conscious awareness. Amongst the most common stereotypes are those based on sex, ethnic or occupational groups. People who hold sex stereotypes may view women as emotional, submissive and illogical, whilst men may be seen as aggressive, logical and dominant (Bergh and Theron, 2004: 118 and 192-193; State Service Commission, 2000: 18-20).)

Since women have entered organisations later than men, they can experience organisational cultures differently and, hence, hold different views to gender discrimination. Men tend to attribute women's lack of career advancement to women's personal characteristics, lack of skills and experience, and family responsibilities. Women, on the other hand, attribute their difficulties in career progression to systemic discrimination (State Service Commission, 2000: 14-16). These different viewpoints held by men and women have an influence on what the issues around gender discrimination are, and how they should be addressed. Several research studies conducted over the years provide some insight into stereotypes and their influence on the roles women occupy in the world of work.

There is a belief that different traits and abilities make men and women particularly well suited to different roles (Kreitner, Kinicki and Beulens, 2002: 162-164). More than a decade ago research findings by Sekaran and Leong (1992: 9) confirmed this belief. They stated that the absence of women in higher management positions is because women are not characterised in terms of power, status and leadership ability. Kay's research findings (1999: 1-7) revealed that gender stereotyping continues to affect perceptions of appropriate roles for men and women. Studies done by Peters and Kabacoff (2003: 1-3) support the findings of Sekaran and Leong (1992) and that of Kay (1999). They state that men are seen as more steady, able to work under pressure, more thoughtful to problem solving and able to learn from experience. Women were perceived as emotional, operating with high energy levels and enthusiasm, and emphasising meeting deadlines and monitor work. Studies done by Wynarczyk and Renner (2006: 2-13) found factors such as lack of confidence and self-esteem amongst women in the scientific labour market, and they proposed that these factors originated in perceptions formed at a young age of what constitutes male and female work. These discrepancies are typically a result of stereotypic

behaviour and perceptions, which appear to be pervasive over the years and have a profound effect on the roles women occupy and their future careers.

Eagly (as cited in Sekaran and Leong, 1992), stated that stereotypes are a reflection of the specialisation of males and females in the types of productive activity. Men are associated with economic, technical ability, whilst women are associated with domestic responsibility. Stereotypes could arise solely on these associations or division of labour. Stereotypes then rationalise this division of labour by attributing personality differences to the sexes. Professional organisations (Atwater, Brett Waldman, DiMare and Hayden, 2004: 1-4) reported that gender stereotypes affect perceptions of appropriate roles for men and women, and some prejudice exists in women taking up positions that demanded adversarial management styles and unbroken service. Women and men are known to organise their lives in accordance with their gendered roles, where the participation of women in key roles, opportunities and access to economic resources is not equitable. Women are well represented in roles synonymous with motherhood, nurturing and caring.

According to Duncan (2005: 2-3), a pervasive stereotype of women's capacity for leadership exists, and this stereotype is based on the premise that everyone is unconsciously biased. There is strong evidence that men are biased against promoting women inside companies and according to a Gallup survey (as cited in Atwater, Brett Waldman, DiMare and Hayden, 2004: 1-2), employees prefer male bosses. Furthermore, men were found to view management as a masculine activity and acted less favourably to female bosses than women did.

Stereotypic views of women often create conflicting expectations about how they should behave in the workplace (Morrison, Randal and White, 1987: 10-32). These conflicts range from portraying feminine to masculine traits. Women are often confronted with demanding expectations that apply to the dual roles they play as women in business and society at large.

In the public service, gender stereotyping has resulted in the majority of women being employed in areas such as education and health. In these roles women were known to perform lower levels of work, with few opportunities to rise to decision-making and management positions. As a result, the occupational profile was skewed on the basis of gender. Even though women were well qualified and experienced, the large number of males in management positions has resulted in a culture where male behaviour patterns are seen as the norm, and where women find difficulty in being accepted as equals (South Africa. White Paper on Affirmative Action, 1998: 10-11).

Stereotyping, as a cognitive process, may lead to prejudice, which, in turn, may lead to discrimination and to behaving differently towards groups of people (Bergh and Theron, 2004). Morrison, Randall and White (1987) support the above view and further state that perceptions may not be the ultimate reality, however they are often the basis on which people make decisions. To this end, perceptions are sometimes inaccurate, but often becomes the basis for evaluating the potential and ability of people. Several research studies show that there are few behavioural/personality differences between executive men and women (Atwater, Brett Waldman, DiMare and Hayden, 2004: 1; Sekaran and Long, 1992), yet women are perceived differently and in some cases expected to perform better than their male counterparts.

Even though there is appreciable progress of women into management positions as reflected by the statistics presented in the previous chapter, stereotypes still exist.

Research done by Lues, (2005) shows that gender discrimination was well experienced by subjects in the South African public service (Lues, 2005;9). Magau (2006: 41) concurs when she states that a culture of prioritising men for leadership positions still exists and until recruitment and selection processes are changed, women will still face the challenges to be empowered.

One of the key managerial challenges facing the world of work is to make decisions that are oblivious to race, gender and age. Whilst South Africa may have a powerful and one of the most progressive Constitutions in the world; the reality paints a different picture, that is, one of the intangibles women have to deal with, the stereotypes that they face. To overcome these challenges requires education about stereotyping and concerted efforts to change the mindset. It can be argued that sex-role stereotypes are one of the issues that prevent women from breaking the glass ceiling, and that sex-role stereotypes can be demotivating as women look up and see the transparent ceiling, yet cannot break through them. The rights and responsibilities of both men and women at all levels of society must be addressed in an attempt to transform gender relations (Fester, 2005: 1-4).

3.1 Organisational culture and work environment

The culture of an organisation is considered to have a meaningful impact on those who work within it. This section focuses on the significance of organisational culture, its influence on work environments, and its impact on career progression for women.

3.3.1 Organisational culture

Organisational culture is the set of shared beliefs, realities, symbols, rituals and values that underlie a company's identity. These shared beliefs, realities, symbols, rituals and values

influence how the organisation's employees react to its various environments, it defines the conduct in an organisation, what is valued and how authority is asserted.

Four key functions of culture can be isolated: it provides employees with an organisational identity, it facilitates collective commitment, it promotes social stability and it shapes people's behaviour (Kreitner, Kinicki and Beulens, 2002: 64; State Services Commission, 2000: 17-19). Values which underpin many organisations and define success often include power and status, and these, in turn, elicit corresponding behaviours such as working long hours, putting work above all else and competitiveness. These behaviours are often equated with masculinity and have come to dominate many organisations for both historical and socio-economic reasons. Burton (as cited in State Service Commission, 2000: 17) states that these behaviours create an environment where women are not as comfortable as men. These behaviours in turn, spill over into systematic discriminatory practices, where the values are characterised by stereotypical views of the roles, attributes and commitments of women. These organisational values and behaviours often shape the culture of an organisation which many women find inhospitable and consider as a major barrier to their career advancement (State Service Commission, 2000: 18).

When such organisational cultures abound in society, people are forced to put aside their own values and behaviours. The implication for women is that they may have to put their family life as secondary if they are to be seen as serious about their careers. When there is incongruence between the internal values and how people behave, conflict arises. When women are forced to deny important aspects of their lives problems can be experienced in building a secure and integrated self-identity. Some of the ways which women may cope is that they choose not to apply for senior management positions because of the expectations in these roles, whilst others

leave to start their own businesses (State Service Commission, 2005: 17-19). This choice can limit their options in terms career advancement to senior management positions.

Baloyi's assessment of the current corporate culture is that it is still unfriendly to women (as cited in MBA COZA, 2006). This assessment of culture is comparable to the research finding done by Morrison, Randal and White (1987). Women were often excluded from social events and camaraderie and this exclusion gives rise to unsupportive and hostile working environments. Whilst some progress may have taken place in this respect, much remains to be done.

If organisations do not value diversity or give recognition to the rights of women, fundamental challenges are posed in terms of the opportunities women are afforded. Research shows that positive work environments, where people feel valued and appreciated, foster commitment towards organisational goals. To this end, managing diversity is seen as a critical component of organisational success. Research confirms that women are often left out of organisational networks, which can be career limiting as it lessens their opportunities for dialogue and understanding across race and gender which are seen as key towards building mutual trust and understanding (Kreitner, Kinicki and Beulens, 2002).

Workplace structures and the opportunities available for women who want to combine work with parenthood affect what they can achieve. Allen's research findings (2005) reveal that women choose to work in more flexible environments and suggest that women will seek workplaces that are structured to allow them to create their own career paths.

Larger companies that have formal diversity programmes present fewer barriers for women to overcome. Drucker (as cited in Kreitner, Kinicki and Beulens, 2002: 322) proposed that future

organisations would be flatter and team based leaving fewer opportunities for management positions. In this respect, Bones (as cited in Perkins, 2005: 1-4) found that the flattening of organisational structures in recent years has meant that promotions are far and few between, creating even fewer opportunities for women to assume positions at higher levels.

According to Mojela (2006:6-9), the role of women in the world at large is distinguished not so much by peculiarities of circumstances or capability, but by opportunities. The lack of opportunities to get the type of work assignments that prepare women for senior management positions could inhibit their upward mobility. McKenna (as cited in State Service Commission, 2002:17-18) argues that organisational values and perceptions need to precede structural changes, because until both men and women value their professional and personal lives, structural changes will be superficial and this superficiality could further inhibit career progression.

3.3.2 Mentoring

Research studies indicate that factors such as mentoring, networking and training opportunities contribute towards the enhancement of career progression for both men and women. The word mentor derives from the Greek mythology, meaning it is process of forming and maintaining a developmental relationship between two people: a mentor and a protégée (Morrison, Randall and White, 1987: 16-20). Mentoring is considered an important part of individual and ultimately organisational development. Kram (as cited in Kreitner, Kinicki and Beulens, 2002: 77 -81) identified two general aspects of mentoring; career and psychological and these aspects were seen as important to career progression. Mentors are seen to build self-confidence and a professional identity in their protégées and are seen to provide access to high-profile developmental opportunities which cement mentoring relationships. Mentoring relationships were more likely to flourish when the mentor and protégée possessed similar attitudes, background,

gender, education and interests. Research findings indicate that mentoring relationships between men and women are more difficult to establish and less likely to attain the relationships required for effectiveness (State Service Commission, 2000: 13-14).

Individuals with mentoring opportunities were more mobile, received more promotions, had greater career satisfaction and earned higher salaries than those who did not have mentors (Kreitner, Kinicki and Beulens, 2002: 78-79). Majola (2006: 6-9) sees mentoring as a means to prepare young women for the challenges of the 21st century and beyond.

Taking into account the positive psychological and career impact of mentoring relationships to individuals, opportunities can contribute to career progression. However, given the premise that ideal mentorship relationships flourish when the mentor and protégée are of a similar sex poses a challenge because of the limited number of women available at senior management positions to mentor other women.

Networking opportunities are considered pivotal to the success of any career and these involve mutually beneficial relationships. Networks can provide the information not found in formal scripts. These networks include getting along with others to get the job done, the ability to adapt, work with others at all levels, managing relationships, maintaining good relationships with stakeholders and networking (Morrison, Randall and White, 1997: 33). An important characteristic of networking is the "old boy" system, based on informal interactions such as persuasion and connections to people who already have influence (Sekaran and Leong, 1992: 44; Oakley, 2004:1). According to Marcus (as cited in Duncan 2005: 2-3), women often do not have the same social networking opportunities as their male counterparts such as on the golf course, or casual conversations in a club hence their exposure to key networks is limited. Marcus is of the opinion

that women need to constantly find opportunities to build up networks of people in their field of work to equip them with networking capacity.

3.3.3 Support systems and role models

Studies show that the higher women climb up the corporate ladder, the lonelier they become, as there are not enough women in those positions to support them or to serve as role models (Wulfhorst, 2005: 1). According to Morrison, Randall and White (1987), women are faced with tough decisions about the advice they solicit, from whom they get it and what to do with the advice. Stereotypes and relegating women to women's work further isolates them and could influence networking opportunities. Kanter (as cited in Sekaran and Leong, 1992) examined the position of women in large multi-national organisations, and drew the conclusion that the smaller the minority women find themselves to be in an organisation, the greater their chances of being isolated and being evaluated on the basis of sex role stereotypes. Research reinforced the suggestion that women at work felt isolated and lonely as they climbed to the top of the corporate ladder, with fewer fellow women to assist them in becoming accustomed to the "rarified air" (Sekaran and Leong, 1992: 17). This finding was confirmed by Wulfhorst (2002).

3.3.4 Training and development

Training and development opportunities are known to have their merits. On-the-job training is considered important to gain the range and depth of development opportunities. These opportunities can provide the experience to fill senior management positions (State Service Commission, 2000: 11-12). However, a report from the Public Sector Education Training Authority revealed that only 22% of training opportunities were afforded to women at senior management level. A lack of training opportunities could perpetuate the status quo as the pool of women who have gained the depth and range of experience required for senior management

positions (ANC Today, 2004: 3-5), is limited. An analysis of the workforce profile in the South African public service shows that more men than women occupy senior management positions. Some of the contributory factors could be attributed to the organisational culture, the lack of training and developmental opportunities, and lack of networking and mentoring opportunities afforded to women.

3.4 Dedication to work and family life

This part of the study examines the difficulties that both women and men have in combining work and family responsibilities. It focuses on the concept of schemas and the levels of pressures facing women, in particular. It seeks to provide some explanations for the different situations.

A schema is a generalised idea about an object, event or person, against which people categorise themselves. There are a number of different types of social schema. Self- schema is a cognitive framework about the way one thinks of oneself e.g. ambition, motivated, devotion to work life (Bergh and Theron, 2004).

According to Blair-Loy (2003), powerful schema defines the options available to high-achieving women. High-achieving women were found to have a strong commitment to their work life (Bergh and Theron, 2004: 115-118; Blair-Loy, 2003: 2-4).

Women encounter family obligations and these obligations make career control difficult (Morrison, Randal and White, 1987:23-28). Research done by Lues (2005) revealed that women in the public service did occupy many roles and these posed challenges to effective work-life balance. Some women reported to be first in line for redundancies, and pregnancy was considered "career suicide" (Kreitner, Kinicki and Beulens, 2002: 42-43). Personal drive, a willingness to succeed,

persistence and total commitment to career was seen as the top priority in the life of women who occupied executive positions (Morrison, Randal and White, 1987: 65).

Developmental psychologists see children as being impressionable and their experiences with primary care-givers, siblings, peers, schooling, ethnic, cultural and socio-economic factors, parental expectations, career and education, marriage and family life influence their career choices. Recent research suggests that children's concept of gender are also influenced by social class, ethnicity, religion, age and culture. All these factors are seen as influencing development and ultimately career choices (Equal Opportunities Commission, 2000: 1-5). According to Davidson (in Morrison, Randal and White, 1987), women are still likely to be managers in occupations that are traditionally female, mainly because of childhood and family experience.

The challenges to balance work and family life exist for both men and women. However, female executives have to operate with different pressures. These pressures are described at three levels; the job itself, the pioneer role of women in these jobs and family obligations. The first level of pressure is from the job itself, and exists for both men and women in management positions. It is well documented that executives work long hours with a wide range of responsibilities from day-to-day management to a strategic level. Many things need to be done at a management level and the need to do them well constitutes the first level of pressure. Achievement driven people are attracted to executive jobs. Typically, they expect a lot of themselves do a credible job and are close to perfectionist (Morrison, Randal and White, 1987). Research findings show that women with fewer home demands are more likely to become top managers or chief executive officers (State Services Commission, 2000: 23-24). These findings support the view that family obligations can be considered as limiting to career progression for women.

The second level of pressure is being a female executive. Having to be a role-model and sometimes a 'first' in the job can create stress. According to Kanter (as cited in Morrison, Randall and White, 1987), female executives are seen as public creatures and represent symbols of what women can achieve. In this respect, research studies reveal that women in executive positions fear failing as they believed it would affect both their own image and limit the opportunities of women who came after them (Morrison, Randall and White, 1987).

The third level of pressure refers to the demands outside work-life. Generally women are expected to take responsibility for maintaining a household, raising a family and nurturing a relationship. In addition, women are required to switch roles from being an executive at work to fulfilling a personal role at home.

To reduce the levels of pressure women often accommodate work and family life by working in part-time roles which are largely regarded as less important, offer lower salary packages and favourable working conditions. Working in part-time roles in turn, perpetuates the status quo of stereotypical views where women are perceived as not being able to fulfil the roles that men perform in the world of work. Some research studies show that women seldom attribute family issues as reasons for lack of advancement, whilst men attribute women's commitment to family as a reason for lack of career progression (State Service Commission, 2000).

3.4.1 Family-friendly policies

As encapsulated in the legislative review of this study, one of the transformational priorities in South Africa has been gender transformation and several policies and guidelines have been legislated to this end. The conditions of service for both men and women have been revised, and

women have additional provisions in the way of family-friendly policies. These can be considered career enhancing as they allow women to remain attached to the workforce.

However, women are often reluctant to access such policies, as they "perceive career penalties from using family-friendly policies" (State Service Commission, 2000: 23). According to Schwartz (as cited in State Service Commission, 2000: 23), family-friendly policies can be more rigorously enacted by a shift in individual attitudes and organisational culture where the traditional beliefs about the nature of work persists. These traditional beliefs include notions such as long hours equating to productivity, the perception that 'real work' can only be done by full-time employment, and that serious employees are available all the time, any time. These traditional beliefs can create discord for organisations who advocate family-friendly policies.

3.5 The Impact of personality and leadership on career progression for women

3.5.1 Theoretical perspectives of personality

At this juncture, the theoretical perspectives that make up individual differences are explored. The theoretical perspectives include the dimensions of personality traits, and self-concept which encompasses self-esteem, self-efficacy and self-monitoring. These personality traits are unique to an individual and are expressed as attitudes, ability and emotions (Kreitner, Kinicki and Beulens, 2002: 118-119). These unique dimensions of individuals and forms of self-expression are explored in relation to their influence on career advancement. Previous research findings will be used to map the profile of women who have broken the glass ceiling.

Personality is considered an integrated whole, where the physical, mental, psychological and social characteristics interact to make for coherent functioning and are considered important in

work behaviour. Mink (1994) asserts that human personality is the sum total of a person's experience whilst coping with the challenges of a full life.

Personality theorists propose that a person's behaviour in a situation is a function of the individual's unique ability, personality traits, expectations that a given behaviour will lead to certain outcomes, values, attitudes and the opportunities and threats in a given situation (Mink, 1994:123-125). Hence, if women are provided with opportunities in their work environments they could regard the opportunity as important and worth striving for.

The self is referred to as the core of a person's existence. Self-concept is described as a person's perception of the self as a social, physical, moral and spiritual being. Self-concept is influenced by a person's knowledge, opinions and beliefs (cognitions) and is formed by the progressive subjective experience during which personality is developed (Kreitner, Kinicki and Beulens, 2002: 119-123; Bergh and Theron, 2004: 80,349). Self-esteem is the overall evaluation one has of oneself and may denote self-identity. Erikson (as cited in Kreitner, Kinicki and Beulens, 2002: 120) proposed that most people develop their self-identity through various stages and during these stages certain identity crises are overcome, whilst, in other people, certain identity development tasks may be insufficiently developed and can manifest problems later in life. People with a high self-esteem have a positive evaluation of themselves and vice versa. Self-esteem is shaped by circumstances and how people are treated in social interactions. Hence, self-esteem in women can be nurtured and channelled towards breaking the glass ceiling.

Maslow (as cited in Bergh and Theron, 2004: 153) asserts that human behaviour is directed by both psychological and physiological needs, as represented in a five level hierarchy. The primary needs being physiological, whilst the secondary needs entail the need for self-actualisation and

self-esteem which overlaps with the need for achievement. The latter is responsible for an individual's constant striving behaviour. Self-actualisation entails becoming what one's potential allows one to become.

Maslow and Rogers (as cited in Bergh and Theron, 2004: 359-363) proposed that motivation stems from people striving towards self-actualisation and describe self-actualisers as "developing and maintaining the self towards greater self-dependence, autonomy, efficiency, creativity and using potential towards goal realisation" (Bergh and Theron, 2004: 359). Jung (as cited in Watts, 1993) used the term "individuation" to describe mature people who have attained their potential and attained self-realisation. He proposed that these people develop degrees of introversion and extroversion. Jung was the first theorist to define the introversion/extroversion typology and is one of the main factors in the trait factor models of personality. The introversion/extroversion factor reflects where individuals focus their attention. According to Vinnicombe (1999) research studies using the Meyers-Briggs Type Indicator, found that men were predominantly traditionalists, a combination of sensing and judgemental. Women were found to be more intuitive, their thinking was as visionaries and were catalysts. The strength in being visionary is there is strategic focus, while that of catalyst is fostering productivity through motivation (Vinnicombe, 1999: 2-4). The introversion/extroversion factor of women could contribute to or inhibit their career progression.

Brockner (as cited in Bergh and Theron, 2004: 358-359) confirms that people's level of self-esteem influences how they act, feel and think about themselves and their jobs. Findings reflect that employees with low self-esteem are more adversely affected by stressful work and organisational issues.

Rotter (as cited by Kreitner, Kinicki and Beulens, 2002:131), a personality researcher, reaffirmed the influence of self-esteem by identifying a dimension of personality he called 'locus of control'. He proposed that people, with an internal locus of control, attribute outcomes to their own actions, whilst people with an external locus of control attribute outcomes to circumstances beyond their control. Research studies show that there are significant behavioural differences between people with an internal locus of control than people with an external locus of control (Kreitner, Kinicki and Beulens, 2002:130-131). Those who agree with the positive statements and disagree with negative statements are said to have a high self-esteem as they see themselves as worthwhile and capable. Davidson (as cited in Kreitner, Kinicki and Beulens 1997: 102) reinforces the importance of a high self-esteem, confidence in abilities, guts and perseverance in career progression. The locus of control that women have can be seen as contributing to or inhibiting their career progression.

Self-efficacy is the belief that a person has about their ability to accomplish specific tasks successfully. Self-efficacy is realised through experience by acquiring cognitive, social, linguistic and physical skills. Researchers have documented that there is a correlation between self-efficacy and job performance. Those with a high self-efficacy were found to have higher job performance in comparison to those with a low self efficacy expectation (Kreitner, Kinicki and Beulens, 2002: 123-124).

Self-monitoring is the observation of one's own self-expressive behaviour in a situation and the ability to adapt to the demands of the specific situations. Field research reveals that there is a close link between high monitoring and career success, high self-monitors were more successful in career progression than their counterparts (Kreitner, Kinicki and Beulens, 2002: 126).

An attitude is defined as a learned predisposition that influences one to respond to objects, persons or a situation favourably or unfavourably. Attitudes are then translated into behaviour by behavioural intentions and are believed to be relatively stable over time (Kreitner, Kinicki and Beulens, 2002: 133). Even though attitudes are difficult to change, they can be influenced indirectly by education and training experiences, which could lead to changes in underlying beliefs. Ability is a stable characteristic responsible for an individual's maximum physical or mental performance (Kreitner, Kinicki and Beulens, 2002: 20-124). It is argued that the abilities and attitudes of male managers are different to those of female managers. Sadly, this premise may have been used historically to keep women out of managerial positions (Morrison, Randal and White, 1987). However, if women have strong personal beliefs about their ability to break the glass ceiling it could lead to a positive attitude which could influence their career progression. According to Heilman's findings (as cited in State Service Commission, 2000: 20), there are few behavioural or personality differences amongst executive women or men in terms of leadership and management styles, attitudes, abilities and commitment.

Brewster et al. (2003: 43) state that emotional intelligence is the ability to understand moods and emotions in oneself and to extend that to others. Emotional intelligence consists of capabilities and includes self-awareness, self-management, social awareness and social skill. These capabilities together with good communication skills, contribute to effective leadership, and are readily found in women who have made advancement in their careers.

3.5.2 Theoretical perspectives on leadership

Different theoretical perspectives provide a deeper understanding of leadership. The trait approach proposes that leaders have inborn characteristics that allow them to influence others. These traits include intellectual capacity, personality traits and physical traits. The behavioural

approach opines that successful leadership hinges on the ability to adopt the right behaviour and as such, leadership behaviour can be learned (Bergh and Theron, 2004: 204-205). The situational approach suggests that effective leadership depends on the nature of the situation and that leadership style of the individual. Fiedler's contingency model suggests that successful leaders are able to influence group performance and this is determined by a leader's trait and the nuances of a particular situation. The Vroom-Jago model leaders adopt a few basic strategies in decision making, ranging from an autocratic style to consultative style. The Path-Goal model attempts to predict leadership effectiveness in different situations and it suggests subordinates will react favourably to leaders who help them progress towards clear goals and rewards. To this end, leaders can adopt either a directive, supportive, participative or achievement orientated approach (Kreitner, Kinicki and Beulens, 2002: 46 ; Bergh and Theron, 2004).

If leadership is about influencing a team towards goal achievement, then effective leadership is to do with the ability to execute roles in line with organisational strategy and goals. Setting the pace to achieve organisational goals requires insight, vision and strategic thinking (Bergh and Theron, 2004: 212-214). Bennis (as cited in Brewster et al, 2004), an authority on leadership, stated that leadership is a process, not a position; it involves a leader, followers and a situation. According to Price (2006: 62), Gallup researchers have mapped out the qualities that successful leaders should possess. These qualities include visioning, maximising values, challenging experience, mentoring, making sense of an experience and knowing yourself. Recent thoughts on leadership are that leadership cannot be taught. Rather, it is an experience, it's learned through facilitation, simulation, mentoring, one-on-one coaching, and is considered a process of self-discovery (Bisoux, 2004:1-2). To this end, unleashing women's potential and productive capacity is one of the most dynamic ways societies can grow. Leadership is not just about wielding power: it is a

process of working with, and through others, towards the attainment of individual and organisational goals (Kreitner, Kinicki and Beulens, 2002: 450; Bergh and Theron, 2004).

3.6 Research findings

3.6.1 Research findings on management theory

Management theory is dominated by patterns that are associated with the male career model. These associations to the male career model influence the selection of tools such as competency models in the recruitment practices and as such leaves the male-dominated assumptions largely unchallenged. These factors could be contributory in inhibiting women from upward mobility (ANC Today, 2004: 4). Male traits (e.g. achievement orientation) tend to be more deeply valued in management and leadership than the traits of women (e.g. nurturing and affiliation).

Atwater, Vrett, Waldman, DiMare and Hayden (2004; 1-3) stated that most managerial roles are stereotyped and associated with masculinity. According to Heilman (as cited in State Service Commission, 2000: 19-20), male managers are characterised more favourably than female managers, due to jobs being sex-typed. When jobs are characterised by gender attributes, expectations of success and failure are built on job role alignment and good fit required to do the job successfully. A meta-analysis of seventy-five studies revealed that men were rated as being more effective than women when the roles were defined in masculine terms and vice versa (Kreitner, Kinicki and Beulens, 2002: 160-161). These expectations offer explanations of the less positive assessment of women in some positions and these are supported by several research studies which found that 'good managers' are described mainly in masculine terms, making good management a "manly business" (State Service Commission, 2000; 21). An African businesswoman, Banjoko (as cited in Mantu, 2005: 1-2), claimed that women are cautious about taking risks and taking up positions that deal with profit and loss. If women are to break social and cultural stereotypes, they would create more opportunities for progression.

Women in executive ranks operate in male-dominated environments – often hostile and tailor made for men. Women thus have to contend with demanding expectations that relate to the dual roles they play as executive women in business and in society as a whole (Morrison, Randal and White, 1987). The demands and culture of working long hours increases these challenges that women have to contend with (Vinnicombe, 1999: 1-2).

3.6.2 Research findings on women in leadership

According to Morrison, Randal and White (1987), research studies show that career advancement is up to an individual; to gain the breadth and depth of experience, to get exposure to the right people, to mainstream positions and to get credit for accomplishments. Furthermore research findings show that women in executive positions always excelled in assignments through technical and professional competence, they demonstrated strong leadership qualities, were articulate, flexible, decisive, confident and demanding. Strategic power and an unwavering belief in oneself is required to create leadership and personal capacity in women. In this respect, Majola (2006: 7-10) invited women to stop waiting for opportunities, but to take a proactive approach in creating their own opportunities.

Research studies undertaken by Peters and Kabacoff (2003: 1-4) revealed that there were fewer differences in leadership style between men and women at senior management positions in comparison to men and women at lower level positions. They attributed fewer differences in leadership style at senior management level to the consistency of roles and behaviour required to be successful in senior management positions and to the selection process of these individuals who were more like each other, irrespective of gender. Unlike women in lower and middle management positions, women in executive positions were seen to be as strategic, with 'big picture' thinking and as willing as men to take risks. The conclusions drawn from this study is that

there are few differences between men and women in senior management positions and that strategic thinking and risk taking could well be a key attribute required as leaders for women to break the glass ceiling.

Havenga (2006) stated there are not enough women in leadership positions. He claims that the lack of women in leadership positions needs serious redressing as it limits the unique contribution and the unique slant that women could contribute to South Africa. In addition, women could contribute to the numbers that make up the skills pool. According to Fiona (as cited by Havenga, 2006: 5), leadership has little to do with position, title, status or power, rather it is a choice to make a difference, it is about unlocking the potential in others. A transformative leader is one who has passion, integrity and a commitment to people, one who has the ability to win the hearts and minds of those who follow them. Majola (2006: 7-9) stated that women have been successful in leadership and proven that the boardroom is no longer the exclusive domain of men.

Professor Gill Marcus (as cited in Duncan, 2005; 1-3) offers some thought on the barriers to women's advancement. Women are often put into support roles and not well represented in key functional areas that affect the bottom line. This under representation in key functional areas limits their exposure and opportunity to prove themselves, and keeps them beneath the glass ceiling. Job rotation to various areas of the organisation often provides people with a broad view of the organisation and this exposure and the experience gained is considered beneficial towards career progression. The implication is that women must be included in all levels of the organisation to gain the breadth and depth of work experience (Mojola, 2006: 8). It can be argued that providing women with opportunities and exposure to leadership experiences will contribute significantly to their ability to gain from the process of self-discovery.

According to a recent United Nations report (as cited by Mojela, 2006), women make up half of the world's population and perform nearly two-thirds of its work hours. This reality is indicative of the pivotal role and the contribution women play in society. In past centuries, there have been women rulers. It is believed that Egyptian queens governed from around 2500BC (Mojela, 2006: 8) and is indicative of the powerful positions that women once held and their ability as leaders. Leadership is what women do every day in their lives and are considered to have been leaders in society for time immemorial. It is essential that women are provided with opportunities of power and decision making so that they are better equipped to break the glass ceilings.

3.7 Conclusion

This chapter has outlined key issues, which arise from the literature study with regard to the barriers that inhibit women from breaking the glass ceiling/career progression. It has also discussed key theoretical perspectives on personality, self-concept, attitudes, ability, emotional intelligence and their impact on career progression. It offers insight into some of the factors that can be used to overcome challenges towards upward mobility. These include help from above, identifying successful mentors, the ability to be tough and demanding, good leadership, ability to manage people, and a track record of achievements. Organisational culture and the gap between the stated and espoused values is seen to have a profound influence on career progression for women. The next chapter outlines the methodology used to conduct the empirical research on the barriers that inhibit women from career progression in the South African public service.

CHAPTER 4

METHODOLOGY

4.1 Introduction

This chapter provides an insight to the research design, the data collection method and the validity and reliability of the research study.

4.2 Research design

4.2.1 Type of research study

The type of study undertaken was exploratory in nature and achieved by using qualitative techniques. The findings are largely descriptive. The qualitative research included a non-numerical method of collecting and interpreting information, results of which are mostly descriptive. The study endeavours to find answers to the questions 'what', 'when', 'where' and 'how' issues inhibit women from breaking the glass ceiling.

4.2.2.1 Sources of secondary information

Information was obtained from daily newspapers, periodicals, news, public service publications and academic journals and books. Other secondary information was obtained from several sources, for example, the Department of Labour, the Department of Public Service and Administration, Statistics South Africa and the Commission for Gender Equality.

4.2.3 Case studies

Case studies were used as the preferred strategy, the focus being on contemporary phenomena within some real-life context. Five subjects were used as multiple case studies for an in-depth contextual analysis. The subjects were representative of the phenomena under study.

4.2.4 Sampling-population, frame, method, size

The population included employees in the South African public service, whilst the target population were representative women in senior and middle management posts from two public service departments. The study made use of judgmental sampling as it is suited to case studies (Welman and Kruger, 2003).

The sample size consisted of five subjects for in-depth case studies. The subjects were chosen as they provided the researcher select characteristic such as age, race, experience and educational qualifications. They were also willing to participate in the study, were working in Pretoria and were representative of both management levels under study.

The departments were coded as Department X and Y. Department X was a large public service organisation with its head office in Pretoria. The department has regional representation in each province and provides essential public services to all South Africans. Department Y is based in Pretoria and it provides support, guidance and monitoring to public service departments throughout South Africa.

All participants worked in Pretoria. Criterion based or purposive sampling was used to identify subjects. In selecting the subjects, the researcher identified women from different race groups, age groups, who held different educational qualification and work experience in order to get a balanced view of the research under study. The data of the participants was coded to maintain anonymity.

4.3 Data collection

Section 4.3 discusses data collection.

4.3.1 Data collection method

The exploratory nature of the research called for an emergent research design where data-collecting procedures were adapted to ensure that the information obtained during the research process was captured accurately.

The study used a combination of non-empirical and empirical research. The empirical (field) data was obtained by using primary data in the form of case studies and communication with subjects, whilst the non-empirical study included an analysis of published literature.

4.3.2 Interview preparation and instrument

Careful planning was done for the interviews. An interview guide was developed based on the literature review to ensure that the same questions were used during the different interviews and to provide guidelines. Information was collected by means of detailed notes from the interviews, CV's, educational qualifications, and tape recordings of the interviews. In view of the theory and issues related to the research, the interview guide covered questions relating to stereotypes and perceptions about women in the workplace, personality traits (including self-concept, self-esteem, self-efficacy and locus of control), training and development opportunities, organisational culture, dedication to work and family life, individual career aspirations and the existence of conducive work environments.

▫ 4.3.3 Data analysis

The data from the interviews was collected according to the structure and questions prepared in the interview guide. The data was analysed, it was deconstructed, reconstructed, summarised and reduced to a simple structure, from which trends and issues were noted. The data analysis was done electronically, in a cut and paste manner to pattern match. Definite ideas and issues were assigned to categories. Where the results have been assigned to particular categories, the responses were re-read with respect to one idea. When patterns emerged, interpretations and inferences were made. The data was analysed against the backdrop of the concepts, issues and ideas found in the literature review by using deductive methods. Explanations were built around the findings. The similarity and differences in comparison with findings of previous researchers was analysed.

4.4 Validity and reliability

The scientific requirement of the research requires the design to be reliable and valid. Validity is the extent to which a test measures what it actually claims to measure (Welman and Kruger, 2003). Reliability is achieved when the data collection procedures can be repeated with the same results. There are several concerns with the lack of rigour of case studies (Yin, 1997: 33). The following measures were undertaken to increase reliability and validity of the current study.

To ensure content validity, a sound theoretical framework was developed and an interview guide was used to ensure alignment with the framework. The validity of the interview guide was tested and checked by experts in the academic and management fields. The questionnaire was further refined using the feedback from the experts and reviewed with the theoretical framework. Care was taken to ensure that criteria used to ensure validity are in themselves valid. Criterion validity was considered in terms of relevance, freedom from bias, reliability and validity (Cooper and Schindler, 2001).

If the same procedures were conducted with the same case study by another investigator then she/he should arrive at the same findings and conclusions. The goal was to minimise errors and biases in the study (Yin, 1997). In terms of the above, all procedures were documented and filed, a case study protocol/interview guideline was developed, the steps were made as operational as possible, and the research was conducted as "if someone were watching over your shoulder" (Yin, 1997: 37). Audits of the result were done by a second person and observers invited to do random spot checks.

During the data collection phase, multiple sources of evidence were used, encouraging convergence (Yin, 1997). The sources included CV's, qualifications and other available information.

An audit trail was used to increase trustworthiness. Copies of notes were made available to check and confirm findings. In addition, observers who signed a declaration of confidentiality of information were used during the interviews.

The Minister of Public Service and Administration and the Director General were approached for permission and authority to interact with stakeholders in the public service for statistics and information, and to secure participation of employees as interviewees.

4.5 Conclusion

This chapter explained the methodology of the current study including the research design, sampling method, data collection method and analysis of the data. In addition the chapter takes into account the validity and reliability associated with case study research and explains how these are ensured. The next chapter focuses on the results of the field research.

CHAPTER 5

PRESENTATION OF FINDINGS

5.1 Introduction

This chapter provides a profile of subjects used for the case study and detail of how the data was analysed. The descriptive data about the sample is provided and the findings on each of the propositions are presented.

The analysis involved organising the data, generating them into categories, themes and patterns, deconstructing and reconstructing and testing emergent propositions against the findings. Data coding began in the interview process where notes were collated and recordings of the interviews captured. Observers who served as capturers of information were present during the interviews. A senior manager from the public service provided assistance to conduct interviews with two of the subjects to minimise bias.

5.2 Descriptive data about the sample

This section provides a description of the sample used in the research.

Subject A from Department X, is a 58 year old African female. She is divorced and has two children. She started her career as a litigation secretary and typist. She then pursued a career in nursing and later took up a position in lecturing. Currently she is a senior manager in the public service, with 20 years service. She has acquired various educational and professional qualifications the highest being a Doctorate in Philosophy.

Subject B from Department Y is an African female, 38 years of age, married with two children. Her career began as a social worker where she progressed to chief social worker. She then

moved into human resource planning and development. The highest qualification she holds is a Masters Diploma in Human Resource Management. Presently, she is a middle manager.

Subject C is a senior manager from Department Y is a Coloured female, who is married and has two children. She started her career in administration and moved into banking. She later joined the public service and currently holds a senior management position. Her highest qualification is an honours degree.

Subject D is a White, married female from Department X. She has two children. She started her career in the public service and holds a National Diploma in Business Administration.

Subject E, an Indian female at middle management level is from Department Y, started her career in the public service. She is married and has one child. Her highest qualification is an honours degree in Psychology.

5.3 Research findings on propositions

The interviews for the case studies were conducted using an interview guide and the questions were grouped according to the propositions made. The information gained was largely descriptive in nature. The findings of the explorative study are presented in Sections 5.3.1 and 5.3.2.

5.3.1 Research Proposition 1: Stereotypes limit the career progression of women

The first proposition that the study made was that stereotypes (perception and cognitions) limit career progression. In order to test this proposition, Section 1 of the in-depth case study

interview explored the views, experiences and the effect of stereotypes on career progression for women in the South African public service.

All subjects, perceived men and women as possessing different personality traits and abilities, and these perceptions informed their opinions that men and women were better suited to different roles. Men were perceived as being action orientated, objective, rational, decisive, task orientated, arrogant, strategic, unable to multi-skill, unemotional in the workplace, and as good leaders. It was suggested that men were better suited to jobs in the technical, physical and management fields and were seen as good pilots, engineers, and roles associated with the military. Women, on the other hand, were described as good at problem solving, conflict management, good strategists, emotional, emotionally intelligent, intuitive, caring and career orientated. They were seen as risk takers, able to work under stress, good listeners, perfectionists, strong, and competitive against other women.

Subject D was of the opinion that men and women were not born with many differences, but perceptions are formed of males and females. Women were seen as better suited to roles in the teaching, human resources, management, employee assistance services, psychology, cooking, nursing, and where people and nurturing skills were needed. Subject E's experience in the public service was that female managers are often inconsistent in their management styles.

Subjects A, B and E held the belief that job competency and skill was more relevant in determining suitability for job roles than gender. They observed that female leaders/managers who have broken the glass ceiling and performed well in their jobs were perceived as competent managers. These competent managers can be seen as contributory to breaking stereotypes and perceptions that people have of women.

The type of behaviour expected from men and women at a senior management level differed. Men were expected to be strategic, visionary, focussed and progressive. They were described as being more relaxed, not emotional, are authoritative, accommodating of women in certain situations, good leaders, loud, uncomfortable with women as leaders, able to partner with other men and tending to give up more easily than women.

The behaviour expected from senior management women was knowledge of subject matter, to listen, be less vocal than men, consistent, objective, and to maintain qualities associated with femininity and be well mannered. Being loud and smoking was not seen as acceptable by women. Women were seen to afford men more respect compared to their female counterparts. Behaviours that were expected of both men and women were professionalism, integrity and respect. All subjects shared the view that perception does influence the evaluation of the potential and ability of people.

Subject A was of the opinion that women managers were treated differently by men and even by their female counterparts. An example being, that women are often more challenged than men when chairing meetings. Subject B believed that there was no difference in terms of salary structures and performance ratings for men and women. Subject C found that people were treated differently because of who they are rather than being male or female. Subject D stated that a mindset existed on the capabilities of women. Subject E's observation was that women treated men differently. They were expected to perform all the roles typically associated with men such as setting IT equipment for presentations, jobs associated with technical skill and carrying the luggage.

The opinion was that women in Department Y expected men to pamper them. She stated that women often held stereotypes and perceptions of other women and these stereotypes were also influenced by cultural norms.

All subjects reported that stereotypes did influence the career progression of women either positively or negatively. Subject C and D found that by demonstrating job competence and good performance, others perceived them in a positive way which in turn enhanced their career progression.

5.3.2 Research Proposition 2: There are insufficient opportunities for women in terms of exposure to networks, management roles, training and development and mentoring, which limits career progression

This section of the research was done to ascertain if women were afforded equal opportunities in relation to their male counterparts in terms of exposure to networks, management roles, training and development and mentoring.

Subject A reported that men and women are not afforded equal opportunities and that women were discriminated against in decision-making and management positions. Subjects C, D and E were of the opinion that men were previously given more power in decision making and afforded more opportunities in the public service, however, this is changing and women are increasingly being afforded more opportunities to management/leadership and decision making positions. They attributed women being afforded more opportunities to the transformation process of gender equality and the equity targets set by Government.

The subjects found that the women who are proving themselves in senior positions are earning a good reputation, which, in turn, influences the perceptions of people about the competence of women. While much emphasis is placed on meeting equity targets, subjects expressed the opinion that competence was important towards career advancement for women.

Subject B reported that gender stereotypes do affect career progression as was observed in recruitment drives. Women did not see themselves capable of performing tasks associated with the male role, like engineering.

All subjects reported that in more recent years the public service departments have been committed to addressing the transformation agenda. Women are afforded equal opportunities to social networks, training and development, mentoring and career vacancies. They reported that there are adequate provisions provided in the conditions of service for public servants. These provisions serve well for women who want to combine work and motherhood.

5.3.2.1 Findings on mentoring, training and developmental opportunities

Four of the subjects had mentors throughout their careers and some had more than one mentor. Subject E did not have a mentor and believed that she did not need one. Three of the subjects had female mentors and there were both similarities and differences between their personalities, educational qualifications and interests. All of the subjects saw their mentors as positive, objective and inspiring and having contributed positively to their success. The benefits derived from the mentor relationships were tested along the dimensions of self identity and professional identity. There was consensus amongst the subjects that their self identity was enhanced by mentoring, whilst on a professional level mentoring assisted them to do their jobs with greater competence and enhanced overall development. All subjects were provided with key networks by the mentor and this facilitated their career progression.

Subjects from Department X reported that women in senior management positions were not lonely because a women's networking group provided the support required to be successful at their jobs. Subject C, a senior manager from Department Y found herself in a supportive environment, whilst subject E found that women were unsupportive of one another. All subjects were offered adequate opportunities which included on-the job training, formal courses and leadership/management courses.

▫ **5.3.3 Research Proposition 3: Individual schema, in relation to devotion to work and family life, influence career progression.**

The subjects stated that they had to play multiple roles as mothers and as workers. The women in senior management positions stated that the position demanded long working hours which posed a challenge in terms of balancing responsibilities between home and family life. Subject C found that she had to find alternatives to be able to manage family life while fulfilling work commitments. As a senior manager, she supported and respected women who had to take maternity leave and saw no reason why they should be discriminated against for career progression.

Generally, the women did receive help from their immediate and extended families. Some of the women stated that they had to work harder than their male counterparts to prove themselves. Even though there were demands to senior management positions, these women were not prevented from applying for higher positions as they found ways to cope with the demands of management positions.

All subjects reported that early childhood experiences did have an influence on their career choices. Subject A started her career in nursing, Subject B showed an inclination towards people and started working as a social worker. Subject C wanted to enter the world of work as soon as she left school and she did not want to be a housewife. She reported that both her parents had an influence on the decisions she made in life.

Subject D played with boys as a child and spent a lot of time outdoors. She chose a career that required physical stamina. Subject E chose a career in the same field as her father.

5.3.4 Research Proposition 4: Organisational culture, structural conditions and family-friendly policies influence career progression

Subjects reported that their departments had a defined set of values and beliefs. As public servants the values and beliefs were underpinned by values enshrined in the Constitution, the Code of Conduct for Public Servants and what was expected of public servants. The subjects reported that even though the culture existed, subscribing to values and culture was a challenge for many officials in the public service.

Subjects A and B identified strongly with their organisational symbols and stated that the symbols spurred them to be resilient and strong in difficult times. Subjects A and B shared the view that the values and symbols provided employees with an organisational identity. They worked as teams and with unity towards common goals. Subject D, from the same department, found that, in more recent times, there was a breakdown of professionalism, teamwork and support, which erodes the culture. Furthermore, the organisational identity was negatively influenced by the perception that the public had of the institution. Two subjects from Department X reported that the stated organisational values had a positive, reinforcing effect on their own values and were

expected to behave in an appropriate manner at all times. Values that were commonly found to underpin the success of subjects at both levels included professionalism, integrity, respect, impartiality, dedication, perseverance, and the ability to keep a balance between work and home life.

Subject E, from Department Y, experienced the culture as 'being good on paper', but that is where it ended. She reported that little was done to live the values and embed the stated culture in all aspects of the organisation. People did not have the basics like respect and trust for one another. The lack of trust and respect was observed across the department and women were seen as being unsupportive of one another. Due to the divide between the stated and lived values, the organisational culture was non-existent and this was evident in a lack of teamwork and poor co-operation. Subject C shared the same view but to a more limited degree.

Subjects from both departments were of the opinion that commitment and dedication to work was equated to long working hours. Subjects from Department X found that long working hours posed challenges to find a balance between home and work life. Subject C from Department Y was of the opinion that working long hours were equally demanding for both men and women. Subjects from Department X found that provisions were made for flexible work times with the proviso that employees fulfilled the required hours for the day. Subject C shared the opinion that, as a senior manager, she would not encourage flexible hours as public servants are accountable for service delivery. If, however, people needed time to attend to family matters, the provisions of policies should apply to men and women equally. However, women in both senior management and middle management positions stated that the culture of working long hours did not have a negative impact on their family lives as they found alternatives.

All subjects were found to be included equally in social events as men as of recent times, whilst the picture may have been different previously. Some women were provided opportunities to be coached in golf. The choice not to attend social events was at the discretion of the individual and at times was attributed to other home life responsibilities.

Subject E was of the opinion that diversity was not well managed and it appeared that whilst there was respect for gender, racial issues were prevalent in Department Y. Others found that training opportunities were offered to equip employees to manage diverse groups of people. Subjects from both levels of management were assigned to challenging work projects. These challenging work assignments provided them the opportunity to become visible and to establish key networks, which, in turn, made a significant contribution to their career progression.

With the exception of Subject E, subjects expressed that they felt appreciated and recognised for the work they did. Subject E found that the culture of the organisation had hampered her progress which distressed her. Four subjects rated their work environment as good, whilst the other subject rated it as fair.

5.3.5 Research Proposition 5: Personality traits influence career progression

The proposition made is that personality traits have an influence on career progression for women. The two instruments used were a 10 point questionnaire to assess the locus of control of subjects (Annexure C) and results of the Meyer-Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI). The scores of the locus of control questionnaire showed that Subject A had a balanced internal/external locus of control, whilst subjects B, C, D and E had an internal locus of control.

The Meyer Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI) was administered to most of the subjects during their careers within the previous two years. One of the subjects had not undertaken such an assessment previously and was administered by her department after the interview. The MBTI provided a detailed report on the subjects. A synopsis of the report and relevant information was extracted for the research study. All of the subjects focussed their attention on the external world of people and things.

A synopsis of Subject A's report revealed that she is intuitive, thinking, creative, resourceful, perceptive, intellectually quick, analytical, energetic, good at a broad range of things and gets excited about ideas and projects. She is generally outspoken and assertive, a person orientated and takes risks. Some of the preferences of Subject A is that she looks at information from a global viewpoint, focus on possibilities for the future, enjoys change, challenge and variety. She is able to convey her ideas to others and enlist the support she needed to fulfil her visions.

A synopsis of subject B revealed that she is friendly, talkative, people orientated, expressive, speaks with conviction, is decisive, enthusiastic, energetic and conscientious.

Subject C and E's report showed that they are outspoken, determined, creative, resourceful, intellectually quick, consciousness, people orientated, resourceful, stood up for what they believe in, likes to be in charge, analytical, practical, determined, take-charge of people, creative, resourceful and intellectually quick. . The driving force behind these Subjects is duty, service and belonging. They are good at a broad range of things, gets excited about ideas and projects, are outspoken, assertive, people orientated and are stimulating company. They have the ability to apply concepts and logic to situations.

The information that Subject D's report revealed is that she is practical, traditional, organised, athletic, has no interest in theory, has a clear vision of the way things should be, is loyal, hard-working, likes to be in charge, takes responsibilities seriously, is organised and brings things to a logical order.

5.4 Conclusion

This chapter provided an insight into the subjects used in the case study, and detailed how the data was analysed from the in-depth interviews. The research findings on each of the propositions were presented. The following chapter provides a summary of the key findings and conclusions reached for each of the propositions.

CHAPTER 6

CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

6.1 Introduction

This chapter provides a summary of the research findings, conclusions about the research questions and the research problem. It outlines the implications for theory, policy and practice, the limitations and implications for further research. It makes recommendations for each of the propositions.

These research findings and conclusions are explained against the backdrop of prior research discussed in Chapters 2 and 3. Previous research was conducted in different countries, and across different cultures and work environments and the findings appear to be universal. This provides a backdrop for discussion in this research study.

6.2 Research Proposition 1

The first proposition discussed is that stereotypes influence career progression for women.

6.2.1 Summary of key findings

The key findings of the research in relation to this proposition are:

- Men and women were perceived as having different personality traits that made them better suited to specific job roles. Men are seen as better suited for roles in the technical, physical and management fields, whilst women are considered as better suited to roles in teaching, human resources, employee assistance programmes and roles where nurturing skills were required.
- Women who performed well in senior positions contributed to the breaking of stereotypes.

- Different types of behaviour are expected of men and women at a senior management level. Both men and women were expected to be professional and to show integrity and respect.
- Perception influences the evaluation of the potential and ability of people.
- Men and women are treated differently, and women treated their female colleagues differently.
- Stereotypes influence career progression, either positively or negatively.

6.2.2 Conclusions about research proposition 1

The research findings reveal that employees in the South African public service have a tendency to group people into categories according to criteria. They grouped people according to gender and assigned different abilities, attributes, personalities and expected different types of behaviour from men and women. They saw women as being better suited to different roles. Gender stereotypes were seen as perpetuating the perceptions that people hold. Other factors like social status, cultural factors and early childhood experiences also influenced perceptions and these factors in turn were used to judge people's ability. These perceptions suggest that men and women are seen as possessing different traits and abilities. The findings of this research confirm previous research findings (Sekaran and Leong, 1992; Peters and Kabacoff, 2003), where men and women were seen as more suitable to different roles. The conclusion drawn is that stereotypes rationalise the division of labour by attributing differences to the genders and is prevalent in the public service

In order to make sense of the social world, perceiver's expectations of others could arise from direct experience or culturally transmitted information. The current research findings revealed that perceptions and stereotypes were influenced by early childhood experiences and upbringing,

the socialisation processes, and the work experience of the subjects. It is concluded that whilst the subjects used stereotypic beliefs from culturally transmitted information to group people, these ignored the diversity of people as individuals and led to inaccurate perceptions that embed sex stereotypical behaviour. Stereotypic beliefs influenced the careers initially chosen by women, which may ultimately limit their opportunities to advance to senior management positions within the different fields in the public service.

An analysis of the biographical data revealed 75% percent of women did enter the workforce as nurses or in administrative roles. Women did not see themselves as suited for the roles typically viewed for males. These research findings confirm the findings by Kreitner, Kinicki and Beulens (2002) and that of the White Paper on Affirmative Action (1998) that stereotypes influence the occupational roles of women.

Section 3.2 discussed previous research findings which revealed that women attributed their difficulties in career progression to systemic discrimination (State Service Commission, 2000). Lues (2005) found that gender discrimination was experienced by employees in the public service. Findings of this research revealed that women in the public service did, in fact experience discrimination due to stereotypes and perceptions. However, as stereotypes and perceptions resulted in discrimination, it could work equally well in the favour of women. Women at senior management positions have the opportunity to change these perceptions people hold of them by demonstrating job competence.

The conclusion drawn is that stereotypes do lead to discrimination, however, this is changing and key factors to these changes are the legislative imperatives to address the gender transformation agenda and women who are proving themselves and thereby changing previously entrenched

perceptions. Research showed that when women are perceived differently, they tend to work extra hard to compete with their male counterparts. These research findings reveal that women are determined and are prepared to work hard.

According to Morrison, Randal and White (1987), stereotypic behaviour creates different expectations about the type of behaviour expected from men and women. The findings of this research study confirm that of Morrison, Randal and White (1987) that different types of behaviour are expected of men and women at a senior management level in the public service. Both men and women were expected to display behaviours such as professionalism, respect and integrity. Women were expected to maintain qualities perceived to be feminine, irrespective of the position occupied within the public service.

Section 3.4 refers to findings by developmental psychologists (Bergh and Theron, 2004). The developmental psychologists see children as impressionable and suggest that socialisation processes with early childhood and family experiences, influence their career choices (Morrison, Randal and White, 1987). This study found that there is a strong correlation between early childhood and family experiences in career choices women initially make. These perceptions of the roles women occupy influence their initial career choices and can inhibit or limit their opportunity for progression to the range of management positions available.

This discussion confirms the proposition that stereotypes do influence career progression for women, sometimes positively and commonly negatively.

6.2.3 Conclusions about the research problem

In the context of the literature review and this research the following general conclusions are summarised:

- Perceptions lead to stereotypic behaviour in the South African public service and affords both positive and negative elements towards career progression for women
- Perceptions and stereotypes are influenced by culture, early childhood experiences and upbringing and work experiences
- Women, who prove themselves in senior management positions, are seen as instrumental in challenging stereotypes
- Job competence, or incompetence, influences perception held of people in the public service
- Women are still expected to display qualities associated with femininity
- Women display stereotypic behaviour towards other women and are not always supportive of them.

6.2.4 Implications for theory

As discussed in Section 3.2, stereotypic behaviour is a process of grouping people according to criteria and assigning attributes to them based on these criteria. This research finding illustrates that gender stereotyping has a pervasive influence on career progression and the opportunities that women can pursue. The research finding supports the theoretical models discussed in Chapter 3. It was observed that there is a strong correlation between early childhood experiences and career choices, which, in turn, influences the range of opportunities available to women and management positions. Theory suggests that the cognitive process of stereotyping is often inaccurate and pervasive (Kreitner, Kinicki and Beulens, 2002). In terms of being pervasive, the study reveals that gender stereotypes still exist and the inaccuracy of grouping people into categories perpetuates gender stereotypes..

6.2.5 Implications for policy and practice

Legislative measures to focus on gender equity have been addressed, however, the legislative measures are not practised to the fullest as perceptions and stereotypes continue to influence career progression. Measures need to be taken to implement policy so that policy becomes a reality. In striving to meet their equity targets, public service departments need to take action towards breaking stereotypes and to implement early educational and awareness programmes on stereotypic behaviour.

6.2.6 Limitations

The limitation of these findings are that men were not included in the study. In addition the views of some of the subjects could be as a result of their direct experiences, and so care should be taken if attempting to generalise the findings beyond the sample.

6.2.7 Implications for further research

The following topics for further research are provided:

- The influence of early socialisation and childhood experiences on stereotypes
- The influence of culture on stereotypes
- The preference of male or female managers.

6.3 Research Proposition 2

Conclusions about the proposition are that there are insufficient opportunities for women in terms of exposure to networks, management roles, training and development and mentoring, which limits career progression. These issues are discussed in the sub-sections that follow.

6.3.1 Summary of key findings

A summary of the key findings on opportunities for women who want to combine work and family life is listed below:

- Not all public service departments afford men and women equal opportunities to management and decision-making and management positions
- Women, in the public service are being given more access to management/leadership positions,
- Public service departments appear committed to address the transformation agenda
- Women who are given opportunities and prove themselves in management positions are key to changing the perceptions people have of women's ability
- Women are afforded equal access to social network, training and development, mentoring and career vacancies
- In addition to meeting equity targets in the public service, emphasis is placed on getting the right person for the right job.

6.3.2 Conclusion of research proposition 2

Section 3.3.3 explains that mentoring, opportunities to training and exposure to networks, contributes, towards career progression for both men and women. According to Kram (as cited in Kreitner, Kinicki and Beulens, 2002), two functions were derived from mentoring, a career function and a psychological function. The findings from this research revealed that mentoring did have both a psychological and career benefit as described by Kram. Mentorship is seen to facilitate self and professional identity and is evident in that women found great benefit from the relationships. The women in senior management positions, who had mentors, believe that one of the factors that facilitated their career progression could be attributed to the mentor relationship. In comparison, one subject who was still at a middle management position, did not have a mentor

as she was of the opinion that she did not need one. One factor that could have inhibited her progression could be that she did not derive the career and psychological benefits of proper mentoring.

Section 3.3.3 makes reference to previous research findings which claim that the mentorship relationship is likely to flourish when mentors are of a similar sex, attributes, backgrounds, education and interests (State Service Commission, 2000). The research findings of this study differ from the those of previous findings, as males also served as mentors. Whilst the backgrounds of mentors were similar, there were also differences.

Section 3.3.3 highlights that there are a limited number of women at senior management positions to serve as mentors. These research findings differ as the subjects did find mentors, many of whom were women and who did not necessarily have to be at a senior management level.

According to Morrison, Randal and White (1987) networking opportunities are pivotal to career success as they provide information not found in formal scripts. These research findings confirm the above view as the women interviewed attributed their success to the benefit they gained from the networks they formed. Marcus stated that (as cited in Duncan, 2006) women do not have the same networking opportunities as their male counterparts. However, this statement differed, as women in public service did have equal networking opportunities.

Training and development was seen as beneficial to gain the range and depth of developmental opportunities and these provided the opportunities to senior management positions (State Service Commission, 2002). All subjects who participated in this study reported that they were provided

adequate training opportunities and these included on-the-job training, leadership training and formal courses.

The conclusion extracted from this study is that women in the public service were afforded sufficient opportunities of mentoring, training and networking, which, amongst other factors, assisted them to break these glass ceilings and be more successful in their careers.

All subjects agreed that the public service has policies that are friendly to both men and women. These policies included different categories of leave that ranged from maternity leave, sick leave, exam leave, leave without pay and family responsibility leave. However, these leave benefits were taken in a controlled environment as people had to be accountable for their time.

The women in senior management positions did not find the need to take more leave than their male counterparts as their children were grown. However, the overall comments were that people take leave as required. Subject B, who was a middle manager, found difficulty in taking leave as she felt too committed to her work.

Most of the women took the leave as was required, and found that the provisions made by the public service were adequate and assisted them in their career progression. These provisions again support the argument that work environments and policy provisions are supportive of women.

Women in public service departments were offered adequate opportunities to combine work and motherhood. These opportunities are complemented by the support they receive from their immediate and extended families.

6.3.3 Conclusions about the research problem

This study disputes the proposition that women are not afforded sufficient training, development and mentoring opportunities, which might limit exposure to career progression. In relation to the research problem, a statement is made that there should be a representation of 52% women at all levels of the organisation. The findings reveal that women have equal opportunities and in this respect the system in the public service is not the problem. It, therefore, becomes necessary to focus on other issues, such as breaking stereotypes to facilitate their mobility.

6.3.4 Implications for theory

According to theory, there is a psychological and career benefit of mentoring. The benefit of mentoring is supported by these findings showing that mentoring relationships can be used to develop both men and women so that their job performance and development is enhanced.

6.3.5 Implications for policy and practice

The policies adopted and implemented by the public service make adequate provisions for different public servants and are generally taken by its employees. The transformation agenda is being addressed in policy and policy does not have to be revised to cater specifically for women.

6.3.6 Limitations

The limitations of the study are that the qualitative study captured the emotions and thoughts of the individuals based on their direct experiences. The extent to which these women met challenges in getting into training and development programmes was not explored. Even though they had mentors, the mentor relationships were formed by the individuals themselves.

6.3.7 Implications for further research

Topics for further researched include:

- The influence of gender on mentorship relationships;
- An in-depth study on the psychological and career benefits of mentoring;
- The impact of training and development opportunities for women in the public service; and
- Key strategies that the public service can adopt to promote career progression of women at middle management levels.

6.4 Research Proposition 3

Conclusions about individual schema in relation to devotion to work and family life influences career progression are presented in this section.

6.4.1 Summary of key findings

A summary of the key findings in relation to devotion to work and family life are:

- Women have multiple roles to play
- Senior management positions demand long working hours and women experienced these long hours as a challenge to balance work and family life

- Alternative arrangements and additional support from family and friends had to be sourced to meet the demands of long working hours
- Maternity leave was not seen as a reason to discriminate against women in terms of career progression
- The demands of senior management positions did not prevent the women from aspiring to higher positions.

6.4.2 Conclusion of research proposition 3

According to Bergh and Theron (2004), self schema is a cognitive process about the way people think about themselves e.g. ambition and devotion to work, and these define the options available to high-achieving women. Senior management positions in the public service demand long working hours, of women and men equally. This study confirms the findings by several others as discussed in Section 3.4 and specifically by Lues (2005), that women do face challenges to maintain effective work-life balance. However, these findings differ from those of Morrison, Randall and White (1987) who state that taking maternity leave is 'career suicide' for women in the public service. This research supports previous findings, where the demands of senior management positions could be career limiting and force women to consider alternatives to working in the public service. The study found that women are not prevented from applying for more senior positions due to the demands of family life. One of the reasons could be attributed to the role men play in supporting their wives and to the support they receive from friends and relatives.

6.4.3 Conclusion about the research problem

Women are given opportunities to progress in their careers but their options could be influenced by their schema and the support systems they have.

6.4.4 Implications for theory

Given that social schemas are a cognitive process, early socialisation and training can be used to influence schema, to integrate and maintain a successful work-life balance with a focus on career progression.

6.4.5 Implications for policy and practice

Public service policies cater adequately for women.

6.4.6 Limitations

The limitations of the study are that it did not interview spouses to ascertain the pressures they experience in comparison to women. It made the assumption that women still play the traditional role in the home.

6.4.7 Implications for further research

Some topics for further research include:

- Early socialisation and its effect on schemas
- Schemas formation and their influence on career progression
- The pressures of work-life are equally applicable to both men and women.

6.5 Research Proposition 4

Conclusions about the propositions that organisational culture, structural conditions and family-friendly policies influence career progression.

6.5.1 Summary of key findings

The key findings for the above proposition were:

- Public service departments have defined their values and beliefs which stated their culture
- Subscribing to the culture of the organisation was a challenge
- Where the culture and values and beliefs were owned and lived by people, it gave them an organisational identity
- The culture and values of some public service departments are being eroded
- Due to the culture not being lived, there was a lack of teamwork
- Work environments that demanded longer hours were equally demanding for both men and women
- The public service provided well for its employees in terms of the different categories of leave
- Living the organisational values had a reinforcing effect on the personal values of some women
- Work environments were uncomfortable when they were confounded by racial issues
- Women were afforded opportunities for challenging work environments which facilitated their career progression
- 80% of the women rated their work environment as good, whilst 20% rated their work environment as fair.

6.5.2 Conclusion about research proposition 4

Public service departments attempted to define their culture in their vision, mission statements, values and symbols. As highlighted in Sections 2.1 to 2.3, defining values is in keeping with the Constitutional principles.

Section 3.3 identifies four key functions of organisational culture; it fosters organisational identity, collective commitment, promotes social stability and shapes people's behaviour (Kreitner, Kinicki and Beulens, 2002).

The study found that challenges exist in embedding an organisational culture in public service departments. In this respect, the organisational culture does not fully provide an organisational identity, fully foster collective commitment, promote social stability or shape people's behaviour as discussed in Section 3.3.

The study also found that personal values guide and shape the behaviour of the women in the workplace, rather than the organisational culture shaping their behaviour. It can be assumed that the identity that diverse groups bring to the organisation shape organisational identity, and that there are some values such as respect and professionalism that are common to many individuals.

According to Burton (as cited in State Service Commission, 2000), values which underpin success illicit behaviours such as working long hours and these behaviours are traditionally equated with masculinity. These values and behaviours shape the organisational culture, which women find inhospitable, creating barriers to career advancement. The research findings reveal that people, who work long hours, are perceived as dedicated and committed. The women in senior management positions shared that working longer and often out of normal office hours was a job requirement at a senior management position. These women did work longer hours, but were allowed the flexibility to attend to family responsibilities in lieu of the long hours worked. The women in middle management positions did not see the necessity to work long or out of office hours and did not work them.

The conclusions drawn are that the senior management positions do demand longer hours of work. Women in these senior positions did not find the extended hours having a detrimental effect to their family life, nor did the hours inhibit their career progression, as they found means to balance work and family life. The ability to balance work and family life suggests that women who are determined find ways to break the glass ceilings in the public service.

The women in middle management positions did not have the desire to start the own business, nor were they prevented from applying for senior management positions. Based on the fore-mentioned, the options women had towards career advancement in senior management positions were not limited.

Unlike Baloyi's assessment (MBACOZA, 2006) and that of Morrison, Randal and White (1997) of the corporate culture, the public service culture is accommodating and friendly towards both men and women within its policy provisions. Women and men were supported and granted time off as required and is catered for adequately in service conditions for public servants. Women in senior management positions do not want to create any more flexibility or preferential treatment as public servants are accountable for service delivery.

The study revealed that good performance is a key factor to the way people are afforded respect and consideration. Women did not have to put their family life on the back burner, instead they found ways to work within the job requirements and were still seen as being serious about their jobs.

Women in the public service are afforded opportunities for challenging work assignments and these work assignments provide them with the visibility and exposure to networks which

contributes significantly to career progression. Four of the women rated their work environment as good and one person rated it as average. This disputes Baloyi's finding (as cited in MBACOZA, 2006) that the corporate environment, was unfriendly to women. However these research findings suggest that some public service departments are doing more to create environment conducive to the needs women than others.

6.5.3 Conclusions about the research problem

Considering the influence of organisational cultures and the problems associated with implementation, it is likely to influence career progression or stagnation.

6.5.4 Implications for theory

Theory defines four benefits of organisational culture (Kreiter, Kinicki and Beulens, 2002). This study disputes one of the benefits that organisational culture shapes people's behaviour. These research findings suggest that individual behaviour influences organisational culture.

6.5.5 Implications for policy and practice

Public service departments should take measures to ensure that the provisions of policies are - implemented so that the policy objectives are achieved.

6.5.6 Limitations

The limitations of the study are that the culture was assessed solely on the case study. No observational study was undertaken to assess the organisational culture of Departments X and Y.

6.5.7 Implications for further research

Recommendations for further research topics include:

- The influence of personal values and self-identity on organisational cultures
- The demands of senior management positions in the public service
- Organisational culture and its influence on career progression.

6.6 Research Proposition 5

The final proposition under this research study is that personality traits influence career progression.

6.6.1 Summary of key findings

A summary of the key findings from the two instruments, the locus of control questionnaire and the MBTI, revealed the following:

- 80 % of the subjects had an internal locus of control, whilst 20 % had a balanced internal and external loci of control.
- All subjects focussed their attention on the outer world of people and things.
- The traits amongst the subjects were intuition, thinking, perceptive, creative, intellectually quick, outspoken, assertive, analytical, energetic, risk takers, decisive, enthusiastic, energetic, conscientious, assertive people orientated.

6.6.2 Conclusion about the research proposition 5

Section 3.5 discusses the theoretical perspectives that make up individual differences, it refers to the dimensions of personality traits and self-concept which are unique to individuals and expressed as attitudes, abilities and emotions.

Erikson (as cited in Kreitner, Kinicki and Beulens 2002; Bergh and Theron, 2004), proposed that people with a high self-esteem had a positive evaluation of themselves. This research study

confirms the above findings, as all women saw themselves as good performers, good mothers and associated themselves with positive statements.

Julian Rotter (as cited in Kreitner, Kinicki and Beulens, 2002) reaffirmed the influence of self-esteem by the dimension of locus of control. Four of the subjects had an internal locus of control, whilst one had a balanced internal/external loci of control. It is concluded that these women had high self-esteem.

The MBTI results of the women in senior management positions were similar. This similarity suggests that their personality types could have assisted them in their career progression. However, the women in middle management positions also displayed desirable qualities associated with career success. The conclusion is that personality and behaviour are contributory to career success, but other factors also influence career progression. The information gained during the study is limited to make a conclusion on the influence of personality on career progression.

6.6.3 Implications for theory

The theoretical frameworks and models used to describe personalities, abilities and attitudes are supported in this research finding.

6.6.4 Implications for policy and practice

No implications are considered for policy and practice for this proposition.

6.5.5 Implications for further research

Areas for further research would be:

- Preferred styles and gender of leadership in the South African public service
- Identification of qualities that make successful leaders - qualities required to succeed in the public service
- The differences between male and female leaders.

6.7 Conclusion

This chapter provided a summary of the research findings, conclusions about the research questions and the research problem. It outlined the implications for theory, policy and practice, limitations and implications for further research.

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Consent Form

30 Korhaan Street
Waterkloof Villas No.43
Sterrewag
Pretoria
0001

Dear

The purpose of this letter is to obtain your consent to participate in a research study.

Title of study: The barriers that inhibit women from breaking the glass ceiling in the South African public service

I am currently undertaking a research project that aims to identify impediments that inhibit upward mobility and career progression amongst women in the South African Public Service

Would you agree to be interviewed for the study? The interviews will take approximately one hour and would run for 6 to 8 weeks. Participation is entirely voluntary and you are free to withdraw from the study at any time. The information you give will only be used for research purposes, and your identity will be kept totally confidential. Should you wish to discuss this further please feel free to contact me (0823708247) or my supervisor (Dr Roger Mason, 031 308 5385).

Your assistance will be much appreciated and I wish to thank you in advance.

Yours faithfully

.....
Ms N. Ramlall

Please complete the following as confirmation of your willingness to participate in this research project:

I,, have adequately discussed the study with the researcher, understand that I may withdraw from it at any time without giving reasons, and voluntarily agree to participate by being interviewed.

.....
Signature

.....
Date

INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR RESEARCH PURPOSES

TOPIC

The barriers that prevent women from breaking the glass ceiling in the South African public service

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TABLE OF CONTENT

GUIDELINES FOR INTERVIEW	94
SECTION 1	96
SECTION 2	97
SECTION 3	99
SECTION 3	101
SECTION 4	103
SECTION 5	104
SECTION 6	105
SECTION 7	106

1. GUIDELINES FOR INTERVIEW

1.1 Introductory meeting

The purpose of the introductory meeting is to:

- Explain the purpose of the study, obtain consent, address terms of confidentiality, explain the format of the interviews, and other logistical arrangements.
- Explain that the interviews will last for approximately 1 hour over a period of 6 to 8 weeks.
- Ensure that the venue is comfortable to the interviewee and the setting is without distraction.

1.2 Appointments

- Schedule appointments at least 1 week before interview and attend to logistics.
- Confirm appointment a day before
- Secure and confirm logistics

1.3 Terms of confidentiality

Please be advised that the information will be kept strictly confidential and used for its intended purposes, as outlined in the introductory briefing. You are welcome to terminate your participation at any time during the study. The results of the study will be published and made available for public consumption. It will not contain the names of participants. The researcher will be the custodian of the answers to the questions and these will be analyzed against the backdrop of the theoretical frameworks and previous research studies.

In the event that an audit trail is required, the information will be made available for auditing purposes. The portfolio of evidence will be retained for a period of 3 years, thereafter it will be destroyed. Consent will be obtained to record the interview. A scribe will be used to capture

information, and he will be briefed and required to sign a confidentiality clause with the researcher before commencement. If direct quotations are considered useful to the study, permission will be obtained to quote same.

1.4 Format of the interview

The type of research is largely qualitative and will be exploratory in nature. The findings will be descriptive. The assistant will capture the interview as we speak and thereafter I will send you a copy for verification. There are sections to the interviews and we will go through them sequentially. Section A consists of personal and biographical data, Sections B to E focuses on themes around the topic under research. A glossary of terms used during the interviews will be provided to ensure a common understanding. Any question not understood will be repeated or rephrased to ensure a common understanding.

Session 1

Date of interview

Subject A

Category:

SECTION 1

Biographical data

	Personal details	
1	Gender	
2	Age	
3	Race	
4.	Marital status	
5	Place of birth	
6	Qualifications: a. Educational	
	b. Professional	
	Work experience	
7	Current Department	
8	Position	
9	Number of years in position	
10	At a SMS level	
11	At a MMS level	
12	Total number of years in the public sector	
13	Previous Department/Organisation	
14	Position	
15	Number of years in position	

SECTION 2

1. What are your views on gender stereotyping?
2. Do you think it has an influence on career progression?
3. Please provide reasons for the answer in the question above
4. In your opinion are men and women better suited to different roles?
5. What are some of the job roles that you associate men with?
6. Can you name a few job roles that women are better suited to?
7. How do you view men in terms of:
 - a. qualities
 - b. abilities and
 - c. traits?
8. How do view women in terms of:
 - a. qualities
 - b. abilities and
 - c. traits?
9. What type of behaviour would you expect from women at a senior management level, within a boardroom or office environment?
10. What type of behaviour would you expect from men at a senior management level within a boardroom or office environment?
11. Based on your experience in the public service are men and women provided with equal opportunities to decision-making and management positions?
12. Are the men and women treated differently in the workplace?
13. Can you give examples of this?
14. Do you think that men and women are perceived differently in the workplace?

15. In your opinion does perception have an influence on evaluating the potential and ability of people?
16. Please provide detail in response to the answer in question 15?
17. Do you believe that stereotypes have an influence on career progression for women generally?
18. Can you relate this to your personal experience?
19. How have you/how can you overcome this?
20. If you believe that gender stereotypes exist, what do you think can be done to overcome this?

SECTION 3

1. Organisational culture is described as the set of shared beliefs, realities, symbols, rituals and values that underlie an organisation identity. Can we take some time to discuss the culture of your organisation?
2. How do you experience the:
 - a. Values
 - b. Symbols
 - c. Beliefs
 - d. Shared beliefs and
 - e. Realities against those stated by your organisation?
3. To what extent does your organisation's culture provide you with an organisational identity?
4. Can you describe how your organisational culture facilitates collective commitment amongst the employees?
5. In what way does it promote social stability and shape people's behaviour?
6. What values do you think underpin and define success in your organisation?
7. In terms of the values that you have described, do you believe that these values are discriminatory to women in terms of career advancement?
8. How do these values shape or influence the culture of your organisation?
9. Please describe the effect that the organisational values have on your own values?
10. What impact does it have on your behaviour?
11. How does this impact your family life?
12. What has been the effect on your career progression?
13. Are you included in social events to the same extent as your male counterparts?
14. Can you please provide some detail?

15. On a scale of 1 to 5 how would you rate your work environment for women in particular

Poor	Fair	Satisfactory	Good	Excellent
1	2	3	4	5

16. Please provide some detail for your rating?

17. Do you feel valued and appreciated for the work you do?

18. How is diversity managed in your organisation?

19. Does your organisation have flexible working hours?

20. Can you describe some of the work assignments that you are/were provided with?

21. Do you believe this gives you sufficient exposure to network?

22. Does it allow you visibility and exposure?

23. What effect has this had on your career progression?

SECTION 3

1. Mentorship is described as a process of forming and maintaining a developmental relationship between two people, a mentor and a protégée. Have you had someone to mentor you through your career?

Yes	
No	

2. Can you describe the:

- a. Background
- b. gender
- c. attitudes
- d. education and
- e. interests of your mentor?

3. Are there similarities between you and your mentor in terms of the above?

Yes	
No	

4. Please describe the benefits that you derived from this mentorship relationship?

- a. Self-identity
- b. Professional identity

5. If you have not had a mentor, do you know colleagues who have had one? Are you aware if the relationship has made difference to progression for their careers?
6. Have you been provided with opportunities to connect with key networks?
7. How have these networks benefited you?

8. What representation of men and women are there at a senior management level within your immediate work environment?
9. Are you lonely/feel isolated being at a senior management level?
10. Are you able to solicit information from relevant people as required?
11. What training and development opportunities have you been afforded throughout your career in term of:
 - a. On-the-job training
 - b. Formal courses
 - c. Leadership
 - d. Coaching
12. How has this benefited your career progression?

SECTION 4

1. Has your organisation been engaged in restructuring over the recent years? (Tick the appropriate column)

Yes	
No	

2. What impact has this had on your career progression?
3. How has restructuring or the flattening of structures affected other women in your organisation?
4. Does your organisation have family friendly policies?
5. To what extent are these implemented?
6. On a personal level do you make use of the provisions of the policies?
7. Do you use this willingly?
8. Can you describe your response to the previous question?
9. Has the use of these policies enhanced or inhibited your career progression?

SECTION 5

1. How do you view yourself in terms of your ability of accomplish difficult tasks?
2. How would you rate your job performance?
3. How and what extent are you able to adapt your self expressive behaviour to the demands of a specific situation?
4. What have you done to ensure that you mould/shape your career progression? In other words how proactive have you been in influencing your career pathing?
5. How would you describe yourself in terms of taking risks?
6. What risks have you taken to enhance your career progression?
7. When you think of a manager/leader/boss, what personality characteristics come to mind
8. On a scale of 1 to 5 how would you rate the effectiveness of men in senior management positions, 1 being the least effective and five being the most.

1	2	3	4	5

9. On a scale of 1 to 5 how would you rate the effectiveness of women in senior management positions. With 1 being the least effective and five being the most.

1	2	3	4	5

SECTION 6

1. What are the roles that you are expected to play in both your work and family life?
2. How do the roles you play impact on your work and family life?
3. What influence has your early childhood and socialization processes had on the choice of your career?
4. Do you think that work and family life pressures are different for men and women?
5. Can you describe these pressures?
6. Has the need to balance work and family life forced you to take a part-time position?
7. Have you ever considered other options to help you cope with the demands of work and family life?
8. Do you have support and help from family?

SECTION 7

1. From the information shared thus far, it appears that you have spent xxxxx in the public service. Are there any factors in particular that have facilitated your career progression?
2. Can you think of factors that inhibited your career progression?
3. How would you rank the abovementioned in terms of importance
4. Where do you see yourself 5 years from now in terms of you career?
5. Are there any others points that you would like to share on your career?

Locus of Control

Dear participant

Please circle one letter for each pair of items, in accordance with your beliefs

1.
 - a. Many of the unhappy things in people's lives are partly due to bad luck
 - b. People's mistakes result from the early mistakes they make.
2.
 - a. Unfortunately, an individual's worth often passes unrecognized no matter how hard he or she tries
 - b. In the long run, people get the respect they deserve
3.
 - a. Without the right breaks one cannot be an effective leader
 - b. Capable leaders who fail to be leaders have not taken advantage of their opportunities
4.
 - a. I have often found that what is going to happen will happen
 - b. Trusting to fate has never turned out as well for me as making a decision to take a definite course of action
5.
 - a. Most people don not realize the extent to which their lives are controlled by accidental happenings
 - b. There is really no such things as luck
6.
 - a. In the long run the bad things that happen to us are balanced by good ones
 - b. Most misfortunes are the result of lack of ability, ignorance, laziness, or all three
7.
 - a. Many times I feel that I have little influence over the things that happen to me
 - b. It is impossible for me to believe that chance or luck plays an important role in my life

Determining scores

The following scoring was used to determine scores

a = 0 b = 1

Scores of 1 to 3 - external locus of control

Scores of 4 - balanced internal and external locus of control

Scores of 5 to 7 - internal locus of control

Direct extract from Kreitner, Kinicki and Beulens, 2002: 131}

- a Letter of consent
- b Copy of questionnaire/interview guide
- c Locus of Control Questionnaire