

# **Gordon Institute of Business Science**

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## **Career advancement enablers for women in senior management**

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## **ABSTRACT**

Women are playing in a world where the rules of the game were not designed with them in mind. As a result, women continue to remain underrepresented at senior and top management levels. Progress has been made to elevate women, however to contribute to the change in pace that is required it is important for women, through the process of introspection, to decipher what is required to help them to succeed in this corporate environment. It is no longer enough for governments and businesses to restore gender parity at senior leadership levels, it is imperative for aspiring women to take the necessary action to equip themselves for leadership by taking ownership of their career development.

The purpose of this research was to uncover the key drivers that enable women to attain senior management positions through self-initiated action.

A qualitative, exploratory research design was used where in-depth semi-structured interviews were conducted with seventeen women in senior management. An inductive analysis approach was followed to uncover emerging themes from the data.

The findings revealed that successful women have a clear vision of what they want to achieve in their career, have clarity around their own preferences and motivators, and are inclined to make intentional career decisions that enable them to drive their career in the desired direction. The findings further revealed that the upward mobility of women relies on soft skills such as increased visibility through networking, relationship management and the ability to navigate the organisational political landscape.

## **KEYWORDS**

*Gender, Career Anchors, Career Drivers, Career Success.*

## DECLARATION

I declare that this research project is my own work. It is submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Business Administration at the Gordon Institute of Business Science, University of Pretoria. It has not been submitted before for any degree or examination in any other University. I further declare that I have obtained the necessary authorisation and consent to carry out this research.

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## **1. CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION TO RESEARCH PROBLEM**

### **1.1. BACKGROUND TO THE RESEARCH PROBLEM**

Although there has been development in uplifting an increased number of women into management positions, the progress is slow, and at the current pace it will take more than 100 years for equality to be achieved (International Labour Organization (ILO), 2015; Timothy, 2015).

### **1.2. RESEARCH MOTIVATION**

#### **1.2.1. *Academic Motivation***

Although more women have access to management positions, their presence at senior levels remains a rarity (Eagly & Karau, 2002). Even though women have made progress over the preceding two decades with more women in senior positions than before, real progress has been sluggish with only slight increases in representation at these levels (Burke & Vinnicombe, 2005). A study conducted in South Africa pertaining to societal power shifts suggests that while progress has been made, gender gaps still exist at the decision-making levels (management levels) (Booyesen, 2007).

A study conducted by Clarke (2011) suggests that attempts to address the imbalance have brought limited results, with men still dominating senior positions in organisations, despite the focused attention on gender equity issues over the past 30 years. Ely, Ibarra and Kolb (2011) argue that although women have been entering the workforce at the same rate as men, they still remain underrepresented at senior levels (Ely, Ibarra, & Kolb, 2011). Morahan, Rosen, Richman and Gleason (2011) label this as the failure of the leadership pipeline model, a tool used for internal leadership development planning. The pipeline model suggests that a steady stream of skilled and talented women at entry level will result in a relational number of women ready for promotion to senior management positions in the long run (Morahan, Rosen, Richman, & Gleason, 2011). The authors further hypothesise that the failure can be attributed to obsolete policies, the absence of family-friendly policies, very few women mentors in senior positions and the inequality that still exists when it comes to family responsibilities (Morahan et al., 2011).

Although gender equality has been high on the agenda of many organisations over the past few years and governments have made progress in the advancement of women to promote competitiveness in the economy, gender equality will not be achieved if women only participate; women leaders need to be developed (Šidlauskienė & Butašova, 2011). Baker (2014) offers that despite popular belief, the underrepresentation of women at senior levels of the organisation is not necessarily as a result of discrimination, but rather

a consequence of invisible barriers and cultural beliefs that favour men in leadership positions. Instead of comparing the similarities between men and women's leadership styles, one should leverage the differences between the genders. Baker (2014) further postulates that it is imperative that women cultivate their own leadership style without comparing themselves to that of men in order to progress as leaders. The author argues that women need to take personal inventories of their skill sets to familiarise themselves with their strengths and weaknesses (Baker, 2014).

### **1.2.2. Business Motivation**

#### *1.2.2.1. Employment Equity in South Africa*

The Commission for Employment Equity (CEE) is a legislative body established to advise the Minister of Labour on the state of the implementation of employment equity through the submission of an annual report (Department of Labour, 2015).

The 15<sup>th</sup> Commission for Employment Equity 2014-2015 annual report references the utilisation of the Quarterly Labour Force Survey (QLFS) published by Statistics South Africa on the Economically Active Population (EAP) to assess the state of transformation at higher leadership levels of all designated employers in South Africa. Prior to 2013, large organisations with 150 or more employees reported annually and small organisations with more than 50 and fewer than 150 employees reported every two years. Since August 2014, all designated employers (irrespective of size) are required to submit a report annually (Department of Labour, 2015). The QLFS is designed to assist employers in assessing the degree of underrepresentation of designated groups, one of which is women (Department of Labour, 2015). The report addressed, among others, concerns regarding continued low representation of women at middle to senior management levels, divergent from the gender demographics of the country (Department of Labour, 2015), referred to as the "Missing Women Phenomenon". The overrepresentation of men at senior and top management levels seem to be entrenched and requires action to ensure that the status quo does not remain (Department of Labour, 2014, 2015). With more than fifty percent of the population being female, it is in the interest of the country's global competitiveness to ensure the talent pool is optimally utilised.

The Employment Equity Report 2014-2015 revealed an imbalanced ratio of male to female representation at senior and top level management in South African businesses (Department of Labour, 2015). The report categorises occupational levels as top management, senior management, professionally qualified (middle management) and skilled technical (junior management) (Department of Labour, 2015). As mentioned by

the authors of the Employment Equity Report, the aforementioned four occupational levels used in this report are regarded as significant for decision-making in an organisation (Department of Labour, 2015).

According to the figures reported by the 15<sup>th</sup> Commission for Employment Equity 2014-2015 for all employers that submitted their figures, female representation at the respective occupational levels are 20.9% at top management level, 32.1% at senior management level, 42.9% at middle management level and 45.3% at junior management (Department of Labour, 2015).

Although there is evidence of gender equality at lower occupational levels, the gender inequality at senior and top management levels are a concern. In occupational levels such as middle management, there is evidence of gender parity in line with South Africa's population. However, at senior and top management levels there is a stark difference in gender equality with a significantly lower representation of women (Department of Labour, 2015).

From the figures reported in the Employment Equity Report 2014-2015 (Department of Labour, 2015) one can infer that there may either be a high turnover rate or career limitations that prevent women in the talent pipeline from advancing to senior and top management levels within their respective organisations.

#### *1.2.2.2. Gender Diversity and Organisational Performance*

The Global Competitiveness Report has been published since 1979 and is regarded as one of the most comprehensive assessments of national competitiveness (World Economic Forum, 2015). The Global Competitiveness Report 2015-2016 presents the rankings of the Global Competitiveness Index (GCI). These rankings are based on 12 pillars formed to reflect the competitiveness landscape in countries globally at different stages of their economic development (World Economic Forum, 2015). This report states that a more competitive economy has the likelihood of growing faster over time (World Economic Forum, 2015). South Africa is currently categorised as an efficiency-driven economy where elements such as education, training and a well-functioning labour market become crucial to the country's success (World Economic Forum, 2015). The seventh pillar of the Global Competitiveness Report looks at the labour market efficiency with specific focus on efficient use of talent, with one of its lenses looking at female participation in the labour force of women aged 25-64 (World Economic Forum, 2015). Out of the 149 countries, South Africa is ranked 49<sup>th</sup> on overall competitiveness and 107<sup>th</sup> on labour market efficiency, with a ranking of 86<sup>th</sup> relating to the participation of women in the labour force (World Economic Forum, 2015).

According to the mid-year population estimates published by Statistics South Africa, approximately 51% (27.16 million) of the South African population is female (Statistics South Africa, 2014). The last official Census conducted in 2011 reported 26.6 million (51.3%) females compared to 25.2 million (48.7%) males (Statistics South Africa, 2012).

The Global Gender Gap Index 2014 rates each country's overall performance in closing the gender gap on a scale of 0-to-1 with a ranking out of 142 countries. South Africa is perceived to have bridged the gender gap by 75% with a gender gap score of 0.753 (World Economic Forum, 2014). South Africa's ranking is relatively high compared to other developing countries in terms of health and survival and political empowerment, however, with reference to economic participation and opportunity, and educational attainment, the country is ranked 83<sup>rd</sup> and 85<sup>th</sup> respectively (World Economic Forum, 2014). With senior officials and managers' female to male ratio of 0.43, the gender equality transformation at higher leadership levels of the organisations is still unequal.

The authors of the World Economic Forum Gender Gap Report (2014) conveyed that according to studies, the involvement of women at decision-making levels results in outcomes that represent the needs of more members of society (World Economic Forum, 2014). The report further states that companies hamper their competitiveness by failing to recruit and retain talented women with development plans designed to elevate them into leadership positions, especially taking the growing female talent pool into consideration (World Economic Forum, 2014). The Gender Gap Report 2014-2015 further stipulates that companies with a higher representation of women in top management positions tend to outperform the companies with lower levels of female representation at these levels (World Economic Forum, 2014). A study conducted by McKinsey & Company (2012) reported that there is a positive correlation between the proportion of women in top management and the financial performance of the company (McKinsey & Company, 2012). In conjunction with the aforementioned, the authors of the Global Competitiveness Report 2015 highlight to policy-makers that, in order to maximise competitiveness, countries should strive for gender equality by providing women with the same rights, responsibilities and opportunities as men (World Economic Forum, 2014). In light of this, it is necessary and should be an organisation's top priority to attract, identify, develop and more importantly, retain women with the drive and capability to perform leadership roles in their organisations in order to maintain their competitive advantage.

A study conducted by McKinsey & Company (2015) through the collection and analysis of data from 50 000 managers across 90 entities globally, explored the correlation

between gender-balanced management teams and key performance indicators including not only financial metrics, but also employee engagement, brand awareness and client retention. The results show that teams with a male-female ratio between 40% and 60% produce sustained predictable results that are superior to unbalanced teams with a 4% increase in employee engagement, compared to 1% associated with unbalanced teams (McKinsey & Company, 2015).

A report published by McKinsey & Company (2013) refers to a movement towards sponsorship to provide support and access to opportunities. The authors of the report argue that the proverbial glass ceiling is not as prominent, but that the pipeline towards top management is “leaking” at every transitional point. The authors allude to the need for the evolvement of performance and leadership models to a gender neutral state (McKinsey & Company, 2013).

Taking the aforementioned into consideration, there seems to be a lack of institutional support and a continued presence of masculine cultural behaviours and stereotypes that act as barriers to the advancement of women leaders.

### **1.3. RESEARCH OBJECTIVE AND SCOPE**

The literature reviewed makes reference to career advancement barriers for women, which has provided insights into the challenges faced by women in the workforce. However, few studies have been conducted which provide insight into the enabling factors that make women successful in the pursuit of their career aspirations.

Limited insight has been provided into strategies that can be implemented by individuals (Laud & Johnson, 2013). Laud and Johnson (2013) state that the few studies that focus on upward mobility do not offer adequate insight into the difference between men and women and argue that there seems to be an overconcentration on advancement barriers and work-life issues (Laud & Johnson, 2013). Organisational responses to barriers are important within the enablement context, however there is an argument for the self-initiated career enablement factors that requires exploration.

This research report aims to uncover the career drivers that enable women to successfully transition into senior management positions in their organisations, in order to empower aspiring women with insights into thematic similarities in strategies which may be replicated to achieve success.

The research takes an exploratory approach to gain a deeper understanding of the self-initiated strategies employed by female senior managers to overcome their obstacles to achieve their career objectives and aspirations.

## **1.4. STRUCTURE OF THE REPORT**

Chapter one of this report provides an introduction to the research problem and research rationale. Chapter two provides a detailed review of the prominent literature in the field of career development; including career anchors, career drivers, career success and leadership development. The contribution of this research to academic theory will be in the form of career advancement enablers for women in senior management in the field of career development. Chapter three defines the research questions to uncover advancement strategies. Chapter four provides details into the research approach and reasoning behind the exploratory nature of the research project. Chapter five presents the analysis of data with chapter six providing an explanation of the findings with evidence supported by literature. Chapter seven highlights the main findings, limitations and recommendations for future research.

## **2. CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **2.1. INTRODUCTION**

The purpose of the literature review is to shed light on women's perception of career success, the relevance of career anchors in the decision-making process and the resulting career drivers that form the foundation in advancing women's careers.

### **2.2. CAREER ADVANCEMENT**

In order to understand what career advancement looks like for women, it is important to investigate the definition of a career and understand how that definition might differ for woman as opposed to men.

A career is defined as an amalgamation and sequence of the roles or positions a person occupies while participating in the workforce and is viewed as a decision tree that reflects a person's decision points as they move through a series of life-stages (Super, 1980). This is not necessarily confined to the boundaries of an organisation, it can be both inside and outside the organisation (Sullivan & Baruch, 2009).

Based on an evaluation of theorists in the field, O'Neil and Bilimoria (2005) state that the definitions of career have mainly been based on career experiences of men (Betz & Fitzgerald, 1987; Brown & Brooks, 1996; O'Neil & Bilimoria, 2005; Osipow & Fitzgerald, 1996). The authors posit that women's career progressions may differ from men as a result of their broader life context (O'Neil & Bilimoria, 2005). Congruent with the aforementioned, Clarke (2011) suggests that the different roles women play tend to shape their lives and while men are also constrained by these, women tend to adopt the primary care-giver role. As a result, women are likely to experience career advancement disruptions during child-bearing years (Clarke, 2011). Research suggests that women's personal choices influence their careers and that women face three career issues on their career journey, namely: challenge, balance and authenticity (Clarke, 2011). Different issues surface at different points in a woman's career; the early stage is predominantly associated with challenges, balance becomes an important factor as family responsibilities increase, and authenticity increases in importance during the final stages of a woman's career (Clarke, 2011).

#### **2.2.1. Leadership Development**

Toh and Leonardelli (2012) put forward that leaders emerge as the result of two concurrent processes: (1) when an individual is viewed by others as a leader by demonstrating qualities generally associated with leaders, known as *leader*



*categorisation*, and (2) when they see themselves as a leader by demonstrating the willingness to take on a leadership role, known as *self-categorisation*. The authors emphasise that both leader categorisation and self-categorisation need to occur in order for the individual to emerge as a leader (Toh & Leonardelli, 2012). Interestingly, without the self-categorisation aspect, individuals may consciously opt out of leadership pursuits (Toh & Leonardelli, 2012). The authors further propose that a sense of power, coupled with the belief that they portray other leadership-like traits, could motivate women to pursue leadership positions (Toh & Leonardelli, 2012).

Toh and Leonardelli (2012) argue that general beliefs about leadership tend to be incompatible with beliefs about women. Leadership views tend to favour masculine behaviours and characteristics such as strength, assertiveness, physique, tone of voice, and associate them with good leaders (Toh & Leonardelli, 2012).

### **2.2.2. Developing Women Leaders**

Morahan et al. (2011) put forward that although an increased number of women now occupy leadership roles than in the past, the consistent underrepresentation of women at these levels is problematic and that nurturing the sustained success of women leaders requires focused attention (Morahan et al., 2011).

Morahan et al. (2011) propose two approaches to the achievement of gender equality in the leadership layer of the organisation. Firstly, the leadership continuum model is a four phase model that is a non-linear process and includes elements such as self-efficacy, political savvy and personal growth (Morahan et al., 2011). Developing an understanding of organisational politics often involves conflict resolution within the organisation in order to exert influence over events in the organisation (Ladebo, 2006). Secondly, the institution-based framework has four distinct elements. The first of which works on the premise that women do not have the skills that men have and that the skills deficiency can be addressed by professional development programmes. Traditionally, development programmes for women focused on increasing self-efficacy and self-confidence. The second element involves the creation of equal opportunities through policies and procedures to address and break down barriers (Morahan et al., 2011). Morahan et al. (2011) note that the first two elements have been found to be effective in advancing junior leaders, but less effective at senior level. The third element focuses on valuing the women's relational skills and increasing their visibility whereby women and the work they do are actively promoted and made visible within the organisation (Morahan et al., 2011). The fourth element involves a change in culture, which has been noted to be the most difficult (Morahan et al., 2011).

### 2.3. CAREER SUCCESS

Career success is defined as the positive outcomes or accomplishments one accumulates as a result of different work experiences (Abele & Spurk, 2009; Judge, Cable, Boudreau, & Bretz, 1995; London & Stumpf, 1982; Seibert, Crant, & Kraimer, 1999). Visagie and Koekemoer (2014) note that career success has traditionally been viewed as the advancement through the hierarchical structures of a single organisation, accompanied by respect and recognition from others and an increase in remuneration. This has evolved to the view of constructive and psychological work-related outcomes or accomplishments.

Career success can be both objective and subjective. Objective career success is viewed in light of remuneration or hierarchical position in the company, whereas subjective career success involves the individual's self-evaluation of their career (Abele & Spurk, 2009; Abele & Wiese, 2008; Arnold & Cohen, 2008; Dries, Pepermans, & Carlier, 2008; Heslin, 2003). Although they agree that career success can be categorised as subjective and objective career success, Laud and Johnson (2012) put forward that the definition of what constitutes career success has been elusive and based on contributions from various career scholars. The authors note that cultural differences, emerging career models and scaling challenges should also be added to the definition (Laud & Johnson, 2012). In addition to this, they argue that there are difficulties in assessing career success using common standards as people may value different aspects of life and based on their values and perceptions of success, regard themselves as successful e.g. work-life balance (Laud & Johnson, 2012).

Clarke (2011) highlights the tendency for women to evaluate their career success through subjective rather than objective measures. Abele and Spurk (2009) tested the interrelationship of subjective and objective career success over time and found that women's objective career success evaluations are lower compared to that of men, in agreement with earlier studies by Abele (2003) and Kirchmeyer (1998) (Abele & Spurk, 2009; Abele, 2003; Kirchmeyer, 1998). Based on Stumpf and Tymon's (2012) argument that men have higher expectations of career opportunities and accomplishments than women and therefore women may be easily satisfied with their career opportunities and accomplishments when compared to men (Stumpf & Tymon, 2012), one could argue that women's lower evaluation of objective career success further strengthens the argument that subjective career success carries more weight in the women's career success evaluations.

Choi (2015) studied the career success factors of women in the public sector and based their study on a classification of success predictors such as (1) personal factors which include; personality, demographic characteristics, and motivation, and (2) situational factors which include home environment and work environment. The results of the study showed that situational factors affected subjective career success more than personal factors, whereas personal factors affected objective career success more than situational factors (Choi, 2015). The author noted that their findings differed from findings in previous studies, suggesting that situational factors affected objective career success rather than personal factors. The context and setting of the study and related rank systems were noted as possible reasons for the difference (Choi, 2015). Interestingly, due to the general expectation that women typically work fewer hours than men, Ng, Eby, Sorensen and Feldman (2005) argue that women who work longer hours may be recognised and rewarded for demonstrating commitment to the company (Ng, Eby, Sorensen, & Feldman, 2005). One could argue that as a result of the stronger influence of situational factors on objective career success, women with situational factors such as family responsibilities may not be in a position to work long hours. This may disadvantage them when compared with women who are able to work longer hours, as the latter may be perceived as more committed to the company.

### **2.3.1. Subjective Career Success**

Subjective career success is defined as an individual's feelings pertaining to their personal achievements, which can also be operationalised as job satisfaction, defined as positive feelings associated with one's job experiences (Judge et al., 1995) and career satisfaction, defined as fulfilment received from extrinsic and intrinsic aspects of one's career (Heslin, 2003; Judge et al., 1995; Ng et al., 2005; Ngo, Foley, Ji, & Loi, 2013). Based on amalgamated definitions of subjective success, Visagie & Koekemoer (2014) refer to subjective career success as intrinsic elements, generally based on a subjective evaluation of the individual's own career accomplishments (Visagie & Koekemoer, 2014).

Conceptually, subjective career success can be classified as self-referent and other-referent. Self-referent subjective career success refers to the assessment of a person's own career against personal standards and aspirations and is measured by career and job satisfaction. Other-referent subjective career success refers to the assessment of a person's own career in comparison to a group or another person (Abele & Spurk, 2009; Abele & Wiese, 2008; Heslin, 2003). It was noted that Heslin (2003) found that other-

referent criteria were used by more than two-thirds of his respondents to evaluate their subjective success (Abele & Spurk, 2009; Heslin, 2003).

Subjective career success research conducted specifically to understand women's view of their own success is important for the following reasons: (1) women's career mechanisms are different to men, (2) the increase in self-confidence as a result of a sense of success may motivate women to progress, and (3) in order for organisations to design strategies to advance women, it is important to understand how women perceive their own career success (Herrbach & Mignonac, 2012).

### **2.3.2. Objective Career Success**

Objective career success, which relates to compensation or hierarchical position could form the basis for subjective evaluation of success (Abele & Spurk, 2009; Judge et al., 1995; Ng et al., 2005). Ngo et al. (2013) state that in addition to total compensation and hierarchical position, measures such as promotion can also be added to the definition and measurement of career success (Ngo et al., 2013). Visagie and Koekemoer (2014) refer to objective career success as extrinsic elements (Visagie & Koekemoer, 2014).

Literature strongly suggests that objective and subjective career success are distinct aspects of career success and should therefore be considered separately, suggesting that there's no relationship between the two (Schneidhofer, Schiffinger, & Mayrhofer, 2010). Conversely, Abele and Spurk (2009) concluded in their study that although objective career success influences an individual's subjective evaluation of success when based on comparative judgement, its influence should not be overestimated, nor should the influence of subjective career success on objective career success be underestimated. The authors suggest that individuals who view themselves as subjectively successful, could become objectively successful, which is to the advantage of both organisations and the individuals themselves (Abele & Spurk, 2009).

Schneidhofer et al. (2010) are also of the opinion that women lag behind when it comes to objective career success, with women poorly represented in executive ranks because of an apparent glass ceiling and men overrepresented as a result of a glass escalator. This was coined by Williams (1992) as "the advantages that men receive in the so-called women's professions" (Schneidhofer et al., 2010; Williams, 1992).

### **2.3.3. Self-evaluation**

Zacher (2014) argues that self-evaluations predict subjective and objective career success, where people with high self-evaluations would be more likely to take interest in their own career development and will be more confident in their abilities to address

career challenges faced in order to realise personal goals. The author introduces core self-evaluation as a construct of career adaptability, which includes an integrated approach to self-appraisals rooted in four personality dimensions, namely: self-esteem, self-efficacy, locus of control, and emotional stability (Zacher, 2014).

#### *2.3.3.1. Self-esteem*

Stajkovic and Luthans (1998) described self-esteem as a person's self-evaluations across a variety of different situations and is thought to be stable and trait-like. It is based on a reflective evaluation, such as a sense of a person's own value and is the result of the perceptions about the person's own characteristics, such as intelligence and integrity (Stajkovic & Luthans, 1998).

Robins, Trzesniewski, Tracy, Gosling and Potter (2002) state that self-esteem gradually increases as one matures (Robins, Trzesniewski, Tracy, Gosling, & Potter, 2002; Zacher, 2014). Congruently, other authors have noted that a person's self-esteem can change in response to key transitions or major life events (Orth, Trzesniewski, & Robins, 2010; Trzesniewski, Robins, Roberts, & Caspi, 2003). However, other authors conclude that self-esteem does not increase or decrease at any point in an individual's lifetime (Orth et al., 2010; Wylie, 1979).

#### *2.3.3.2. Self-efficacy*

Self-efficacy is a person's expectation or belief in their own ability to successfully perform a given behaviour and can be influenced by various factors such as: achievement, the act of learning behaviour through observation, and social influence (Bandura, 1991; Clarke, 2011; Hackett & Betz, 1981).

Clarke (2011) suggests that self-efficacy has been associated with career success. According to Stajkovic and Luthans (1998), self-efficacy is said to differ from self-esteem in that where self-esteem relates to a person's evaluation of self in a variety of different situations, self-efficacy relates to the person's belief surrounding a specific task and capability within a specific context (Stajkovic & Luthans, 1998). Self-efficacy, unlike self-esteem, is dynamic and changes over time as the person gains new information and new experiences. In contrast to self-esteem, a person's self-efficacy levels may change depending on the task at hand (Stajkovic & Luthans, 1998).

#### 2.3.3.3. *Locus of control*

With respect to locus of control, Clarke (2011) highlights that studies revealed that men viewed success as something that they achieved on their own, while women viewed it as an outcome attributed to the support from others.

Rotter (1966) described locus of control as the degree to which an individual perceives that an event or reward is controlled by independent actions or parties, outside of their control or actions versus the degree to which the individual believes it to be attributed to their own behaviour or characteristics. The former is known as external locus of control, whereas the latter is known as internal locus of control (Rotter, 1966).

#### 2.3.3.4. *Emotional stability*

Zacher (2014) states that emotionally stable employees are more likely to take responsibility for their development than neurotic employees. Passer and Smith (2009) state that emotional stability and neuroticism are personality traits on opposing ends of the spectrum in the field of psychology (Passer & Smith, 2009).

Thompson (2008) states that emotionally stable individuals are calm, placid and less reactive to stress and tend to be happy and satisfied with their lives (Thompson, 2008).

#### **2.3.4. Career Motivation**

Clarke (2011) argues that career success is related to career motivation, which can be divided into three domains which include: career identity, career insight and career resilience (Clarke, 2011; London & Noe, 1997; London, 1983).

*Career identity* is the extent to which a person defines themselves by the work they do (London, 1983), which includes the extent to which they drive their behaviour towards attaining specific career objectives (Clarke, 2011; London & Noe, 1997). *Career insight* is described as the ability to realistically assess career prospects based on realistic perceptions of own skills and the alignment to goal setting (Clarke, 2011; London & Noe, 1997; London, 1983). *Career resilience* is defined as the ability to adapt to and cope with unfavourable work situations and circumstances and is regarded as the opposite of psychological fragility (Clarke, 2011; Hoobler, Lemmon, & Wayne, 2014; London & Noe, 1997; London, 1983). Clarke (2011) states that family responsibilities influence many women's career motivation to the extent that their career identity is shaped by the need to balance the multiple roles they fulfil at work and home. (Clarke, 2011). Hoobler et al. (2014) state that *career identity* is vital when it comes to managerial aspirations (Hoobler et al., 2014).

## 2.4. CAREER ANCHORS

The most widely accepted theory related to career interests was developed by Holland (1973) who included concepts like congruence, consistency and differentiation (Holland, 1973; Marshall & Bonner, 2003). Based on Holland's (1973) work, Schein (1978; 1990) developed his theory of career anchors which is based on the curiosity behind how and why individuals made career decisions (Marshall & Bonner, 2003; Schein, 1978). A career anchor is defined as an aspect of an individual's personality that remains stable and keeps the person aligned to a particular career path (Schein, 1990). Chapman and Brown (2014) describe the career anchor through a metaphor to illustrate how career anchors operate in the decision-making process pertaining to careers. It is described as a boat's tendency to return to the central anchor point, when responding to the tension created by the anchor's pull when it drifts too far away. Schein (1996) suggests that a person will not necessarily have a career anchor until they have worked for a number of years, but once evolved, it takes roughly between five and ten years for it to stabilise (Chapman & Brown, 2014; Schein, 1996). Chapman and Brown (2014) argue that career anchors can be discovered by identifying emerging themes as a person's career decisions are explored.

In Schein's (1996) later iterations he states that career anchors form part of a person's self-concept, which consists of (1) self-perceived talents and abilities, (2) their basic values and (3) motives pertaining to their career, which seem to evolve as one gains experience (Schein, 1996). He suggests that career anchors are considered to be similar to values and beliefs which they will not compromise on. He further states that most individuals are unaware of their anchors until faced with choices involving self-development, family and career and emphasises the importance of developing an awareness of one's own career anchors to enable better decision-making (Schein, 1996).

Schein's original research (1990) revealed that a majority of people's self-concept revolved around five categories (1-5) that reflect values, motives and needs, with later iterations including three more categories (6-8) based on further studies conducted. These categories are:

1. *Autonomy / Independence*: Individuals with an autonomy/independence anchor have a desire to set their own schedule, work at their own pace and are willing to sacrifice promotion opportunities for more freedom. Their motivation is rooted in situations that are without organisational restrictions (Schein, 1990, 1996).

2. *Security / Stability*: These individuals value security, stability and predictability and prefer organisations that offer long term tenure incentives and benefits. Their motivation lies in job security and long-term attachment to one organisation. They will willingly conform to an organisation's values and norms and have a tendency to dislike disruptive circumstances such as travel and relocation. (Schein, 1990, 1996).
3. *Technical-functional competence*: Specialisation rather than general management is more appealing to individuals with an inclination towards this anchor. The content of the work that they perform excites them and they prefer advancement in their careers that offer growth in their functional area of competence (Schein, 1990, 1996).
4. *General managerial competence*: These individuals find excitement in the prospect of analysing and solving problems even when presented with incomplete information attached to uncertainty. They enjoy harnessing teams to achieve common goals and are stimulated by crisis situations, rather than exhausted by them (Schein, 1990, 1996).
5. *Entrepreneurial creativity*: Individuals with a strong entrepreneurial creativity anchor tend to get bored easily and enjoy moving from one project to another. Their interest lies in starting new companies rather than managing already established ones. They find motivation in the need to build something that is entirely their own (Schein, 1990, 1996).
6. *Service or dedication to a cause*: Individuals aligned to this anchor are motivated to improve the world around them. They have a desire for their work activities to be aligned with their personal values to help society and will seek employment opportunities based on alignment with their values rather than their skills (Schein, 1996).
7. *Pure challenge*: Individuals with a strong inclination towards this anchor are driven to overcome major obstacles, solve unsolvable problems and thrive on competition (Schein, 1996).
8. *Lifestyle*: Individuals with a lifestyle anchor find motivation in the ability to balance their work life and private life. They are concerned with family oriented issues like parental leave and day-care options and look for organisations that have strong family values that will enable them to live the balanced life they desire (Schein, 1996).



Schein (1996) suggests that although most people find that one of these categories becomes the anchor that they will not forego, several of the needs that underpin each anchor can be fulfilled by most careers.

One of the most important factors of career anchors is congruence (Chapman & Brown, 2014; Schein, 1990). Schein (1990) states that congruence between career anchors and a person's work environment will allow them to achieve positive career outcomes. He argues that an individual only has one anchor. Feldman and Bolino (1996) agree that although a majority of individuals hold only one career anchor, it is possible for individuals to have primary and secondary career anchors. A study conducted by Weber and Ladkin (2009) found that a host of career anchors guide career decisions, regardless of whether a single dominant or multiple anchors are present (Weber & Ladkin, 2009). Congruently, Chapman and Brown (2014) state that contrary to Schein's (1990) assertion, respondents in their study proved to have multiple career anchors (Chapman & Brown, 2014). Chapman and Brown (2013) also postulate that a career consists of the needs of both the employee and the organisation and although the needs of the organisation remain fairly constant, the needs of the employee changes as their orientation towards work changes. (Barclay, Chapman, & Brown, 2013). The aforementioned changes in an employee's needs are aligned to the needs-based and values-based career anchor contributions made by Feldman and Bolino (1996). The premise of this is that an individual's career anchors can be plural; an argument can be made that an individual's needs-based and values-based anchors may change as they progress through various life-stages.

Although congruency is important, three dimensions of career anchors impact career effectiveness, namely: talent-based, needs-based or values-based (Feldman & Bolino, 1996). Based on the content of the questions in Schein's (1996) assessment, Feldman and Bolino (1996) argue that three of the anchors (managerial competence, entrepreneurial creativity and technical / functional competence) are rooted in a person's *talents* and these focus on the type of work performed from day to day. They state that for individuals with talent-based career anchors, congruence will be concentrated on work effectiveness and job stability. Another three anchors (security / stability, autonomy / independence, and lifestyle) are rooted in a person's *motives and needs* and focus on how the person wants to structure their roles at work. They argue that for these individuals, the impact of congruence will be centred on work role adjustment and outside role conflict (Feldman & Bolino, 1996). Finally, the two remaining anchors (service or dedication to a cause and pure challenge) are rooted in an individual's *attitudes and values*. These anchors are focused on how the individual identifies with their occupation

and their company's organisational culture. The authors state that the impact of congruence for these individuals will be greatest on job satisfaction and overall psychological well-being (Feldman & Bolino, 1996). In support of this theory, Herrbach and Mignonac (2012) emphasise the importance of this distinction, as incongruence between a person's career anchor and their work environment will have different implications dependent on the career anchor's nature (Herrbach & Mignonac, 2012).

While Schein (1990) argues that career anchors integrate a person's values, talents and needs, Feldman and Bolino (1996) suggest that career anchors can be categorised into the three aforementioned components (Feldman & Bolino, 1996). The authors therefore reinforce their argument that it is possible for individuals to hold more than one career anchor, because of the categorisations of career anchors into dimensions; an individual may thus have a career anchor that is talent-based and a career anchor that is needs-based or values-based (Feldman & Bolino, 1996).

Rodrigues, Guest, and Budjanovcanin (2013) contend that although Schein's (1990) career anchor metaphor has proven attractive, there are limitations to the model. Firstly, it is individualistic in nature and although an individual identity is important to shape career preferences, it does not consider the role of social and family relations and institutional pressures. Secondly, the suggestion that career anchors are stable and immovable, may be restrictive and deceptive as careers have no boundaries and individuals should expect to move through cycles to encourage continuous learning. Therefore, career orientation can be defined as the emergence of career preferences from a combination of elements such as cultural background, education, self-identity, work experiences and labour market conditions (Rodrigues, Guest, & Budjanovcanin, 2013).

#### **2.4.1. Women and Career Anchors**

In support of Schein's (1996) reference to components such as maternity leave and day-care options, which are linked to the lifestyle anchor, and its increased level of importance to women rather than men, Marshall and Bonner (2003) and Weber and Ladkin (2009) also found this to be true in their respective studies (Marshall & Bonner, 2003; Schein, 1996; Weber & Ladkin, 2009). Weber and Ladkin (2009) note that the findings related to lifestyle are aligned with previous research uncovering that women put more emphasis on factors relating to the lifestyle anchor such as: working conditions, child-care facilities, career certainty and working hours (Heckert et al., 2002; Weber & Ladkin, 2009). Day, Zaccaro and Halpin (2004) noted that life-stages are not permanent and that most of adult life is spent in transitions, involving change and development as

one progresses through life-stages. The aforementioned statement was based on Levinson's work (1986) "the seasons of a woman's life" (Levinson, 1986). Taking the aforementioned into account, it can be inferred that a woman's need for balance may change due to the changes in life-stages whereby the need for balance as a result of child-care needs will no longer be the most important factor that drives career decisions.

Danziger and Valency (2006) state that there is still an expectation of women to maintain dual roles when it comes to their career and family responsibilities and therefore suggest that the strong presence of the lifestyle anchor stems from the need to accommodate both roles (Danziger & Valency, 2006). Studies have attempted to understand the order of importance of career anchors to women and have found varied results, with the most prominent self-rated anchor for women being lifestyle (Danziger & Valency, 2006; Marshall & Bonner, 2003). The rankings of the results do not correspond, however, lifestyle remains the most dominant anchor. Interestingly, the authors note that at the beginning stages of a career, individuals found security / stability to be the most important, between ages 23 and 54 lifestyle becomes dominant and after the age of 55, service and dedication to a cause becomes the most dominant career anchor (Marshall & Bonner, 2003). Danziger and Valency (2006) mention that there are noteworthy differences in anchor distribution between non-managerial professionals and managers; where professionals value the technical-functional competence anchor more, which is in alignment with results from earlier studies conducted (Danziger & Valency, 2006; Igbaria, Greenhaus, Jeffrey, & Parasuraman, 1991). Danziger and Valency's (2006) study consisted mainly of professionals working in Israel.

Herrbach and Mignonac (2012) state that as a result of the tendency to place high value on upward mobility by women with a strong managerial competency anchor, these women may perceive their subjective career success negatively and thus perceive their inability to achieve hierarchical positions as gender discrimination (Herrbach & Mignonac, 2012). Interestingly, the authors found that women with a dominant lifestyle anchor have a tendency to strongly react to perceived gender discrimination and offer that it may be as a result of their effort and expectation to achieve work life balance (Herrbach & Mignonac, 2012).

## **2.5. CAREER DRIVERS**

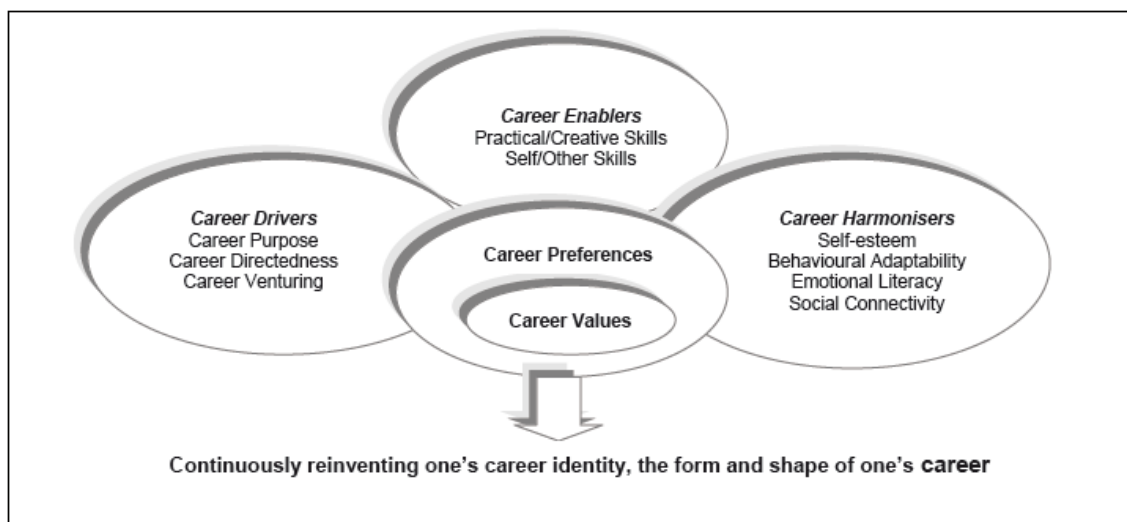
In an effort to understand women's perception of success (Herrbach & Mignonac, 2012), it is also important to understand the drivers or motivation behind women's pursuit of career success.

Coetzee (2008) introduces the concept of psychological career resources to the field of career development, and defines it as a collection of career orientations, values and attitudes designed with the intent to motivate self-empowering career behaviour (Coetzee, 2008). In the 21<sup>st</sup> century, employability depends on an individual's knowledge, skills, accumulated experience, unique characteristics and achievements where opportunities are created through career meta-competencies (Coetzee, 2008).

Career meta-competencies are referred to as skills such as behavioural adaptability, identity awareness, sense of purpose, self-esteem and emotional intelligence / emotional stability that enable self-directed individuals to manage their careers pro-actively (Coetzee, 2008).

The model consists of five components, namely: career values, career preferences, career drivers, career enablers and career harmonisers. As depicted in Figure 2, *career values* represent the motivation that guides an individual's *career preferences*, which are rooted in career anchor / career orientation model (Rodrigues et al., 2013). *Career drivers* are attitudes that motivate and energise them to explore career possibilities. *Career enablers* are the abilities that help individuals to succeed and include a person's transferable skills, including practical, creative and self-skills. *Career harmonisers* promote resilience and act as controls that keep the career drivers in equilibrium while in pursuit of new career opportunities (Coetzee, 2008; Ferreira & Coetzee, 2010; Grobler et al., 2014)

**Figure 1: Psychological Career Resources**



**Source: Coetzee (2009) Psychological Career Resources**

In developing an understanding of how women perceive their career success, it is important to investigate what motivates women to achieve their definition of success (Herrbach & Mignonac, 2012). In order to uncover this, career drivers become an important construct to investigate.

*Career drivers* include constructs such as a sense of career purpose, career directedness and career venturing (Coetzee, 2008).

*Career purpose* is referred to as a sense of calling, where a person's personal and professional goals are a result of a self-reflective quest (Coetzee, 2008; Ferreira & Coetzee, 2010). Individuals with a strong calling orientation believe that their contributions have an influence or impact on other people and thus find fulfilment in their career. Individuals with a purpose / calling orientation are reported to have lower levels of absenteeism than those with a career orientation (Coetzee, 2008). These individuals are reported to be predominantly concerned with helping others (Grobler et al., 2014). *Career directedness* is the sense of clarity in a person's mind about future career directions and related goals as well as clarity around where and how to find support to achieve those goals or new opportunities (Coetzee, 2008). Zacher (2014) states that being forward-looking with respect to one's career, enables the proactive shaping of a career and successful adaptability to transitions throughout the career journey. Conversely, *career venturing* describes the degree to which a person is willing to take risks to find and experiment with new career opportunities (Coetzee, 2008). Zacher (2014) further argues that individuals with a high future orientated focus have the ability to explore and imagine future roles and orientate themselves towards the future state.

Coetzee (2008) argues that a person's strengths and weaknesses can aid in expressing a sense of purpose and career directedness. As individuals explore their careers using abilities that represent their intellect, they pursue goals that utilise their greatest strengths (Coetzee, 2008). However, individuals with a strong sense of purpose are reported to demonstrate a willingness to search for new opportunities because they inherently believe that they will succeed and will therefore be able to deal with setbacks (Coetzee, 2008).

In light of the equilibrium that career harmonisers bring to career drivers (Coetzee, 2008; Ferreira & Coetzee, 2010; Grobler et al., 2014) in the pursuit of career opportunities, both constructs become important to uncover the elements that drive a woman to achieve success.

*Career Harmonisers* include self-esteem, behavioural adaptability, emotional literacy / emotional stability and social connectivity (Coetzee, 2008). Both Self-esteem and

emotional literacy form part of the self-evaluation components of subjective career success as described in this report (Stajkovic & Luthans, 1998; Zacher, 2014).

*Self-esteem* is described as self-evaluations people make about themselves ((Coetzee, 2008; Stajkovic & Luthans, 1998), *emotional literacy / emotional stability* is described as a person's ability to understand their own emotions (Coetzee, 2008) and is associated with the tendency to take responsibility for their own development (Zacher, 2014).

*Behavioural adaptability* is described as the ability to identify behaviours necessary for future performance, coupled with the ability to make the necessary changes to improve those behaviours (Coetzee, 2008; Hall, 2002). Complementary to behavioural adaptability, coaching can be defined as the act of enabling a person with the tools, skills and opportunity to improve and develop themselves to increase their effectiveness at work (Feldman & Lankau, 2005). The services of an executive coach is generally utilised if behavioural change is the desired end result (Brotman, Liberi, & Wasylyshyn, 1998).

*Social connectivity* forms an integral part of career harmonisers and is described as the ability to form meaningful connections with others and to maintain supportive relationships (Coetzee, 2008). Network behaviour builds relationships and has been reported to assist women in reaching senior levels of organisations (Forret & Dougherty, 2004). Forret and Dougherty (2004) note that women tend to receive fewer benefits than men when it comes to their investment in relationship building to expand their network. The networking aspect of increasing internal visibility relates to the number of promotions, compensation and a person's perceived career success. However, findings from Forret and Dougherty's (2004) study showed that it did not have the same impact that it did for men. The authors hypothesise that although women may be able to increase their visibility, they may find it difficult to enter the influential circles of the organisation (Forret & Dougherty, 2004). Personal branding is closely associated with increased visibility in the organisation and is based on the premise that success is found in explicit self-packaging rather than self-improvement (Lair, Sullivan, & Cheney, 2005). Personal branding encourages the process of turning oneself into a product and Lair, Sullivan and Cheney (2005) suggest that personal branding encourages women to advance in the work environment to reach the upper levels of an organisation and note that women have to work harder than their male counterparts to shed the image of caretaker to be viewed as a company woman.

## 2.6. CONCLUSION

The literature revealed that although the trajectory towards upward mobility to senior management may be the same for women as for men, women's personal lives play a pivotal role in career decisions that they make, depending on the life-stage and the associated roles and responsibilities at each stage. A woman may therefore experience disruptions to her career advancement.

A review of studies involving the gender differences and the impact on career anchors revealed that men and women value different anchors as most important. The research shows that women regard the lifestyle anchor as most important, which may be expected, given the additional roles and responsibilities women assume.

Women predominantly evaluate their career success through subjective measures, which emphasises the need to understand what motivates women to achieve their view of success. The career drivers and career harmonisers were explored to gain insights into typical career drivers that assist individuals to achieve success. Congruently, understanding the order of importance of career anchors as viewed by women becomes crucial in order to uncover the underlying drivers that assist them in achieving congruence with their preferred career anchors that enables them to achieve career success.

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### **3. CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH QUESTIONS**

This chapter defines the purpose of this research project. The existing literature focused on career and leadership development, career anchor preferences for women, objective and subjective career success and the concept of self-evaluation as a predictors of career success. The current literature does not explore the key drivers that enable women to successfully attain senior management positions.

In light of this, the study answered the following research questions:

#### **3.1. RESEARCH QUESTION 1**

How do women in senior management achieve their view of success?

#### **3.2. RESEARCH QUESTION 2**

Which career anchors are most prevalent among women in senior management?

#### **3.3. RESEARCH QUESTION 3**

What are the career drivers that make women in senior management successful?



## **4. CHAPTER 4: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

### **4.1. INTRODUCTION**

The nature of this study was exploratory and the objective was to uncover the career advancement enablers employed by women who have successfully transitioned into senior management positions in their organisations. The study will attempt to gain a deeper understanding of the self-initiated strategies employed by these women to overcome their obstacles.

### **4.2. RESEARCH METHOD**

The research design chosen was a qualitative research approach with an exploratory study method that aimed to pursue new insights, ask new questions, assess the topic in a new light and discover new phenomena (Myers, 2009; Saunders & Lewis, 2012). The goal of qualitative research is to uncover themes, patterns, insights and understanding (Suter, 2011). Myers (2013) suggests that qualitative research is a suited approach when a particular subject is to be studied in depth (Myers, 2013). Exploratory research is applicable when a topic is new and little published research is available on the subject (Myers, 2013), looks for explanation behind a particular occurrence and focuses on studying a situation or problem to explain the relationship between variables (Saunders & Lewis, 2012).

The nature of the enablement factors specific to career advancement of women in senior management required the discovery of new insights, patterns and themes with respect to the strategies employed by each individual as well as an in-depth understanding of the specific situational context.

The research philosophy refers to the development of knowledge and its nature in relation to research (Saunders & Lewis, 2012). The authors suggest that the philosophy adopted indicates the assumptions an individual makes about the world around them, which underpins the researcher's strategy (Saunders & Lewis, 2012). Myers (2013) states that it is important for a researcher with the intent to utilise qualitative research methods to understand the grounds of their knowledge, with reference to the validity and scope of knowledge obtained (Myers, 2013). Myers (2013) put forward that qualitative research can be philosophically positivist, interpretive or critical (Myers, 2013). Interpretivism is concerned with the greater organisational complexity and advocates the necessity to understand differences between research subjects in their environment (Saunders & Lewis, 2012). Myers (2013) states that interpretive researchers do not predefine dependent and independent variables, but focus on the complexity and

interpretations in situations and attempt to understand phenomena through meanings people assign to them (Myers, 2013). Although not as common as positivism, interpretivism was most suited for this particular research endeavour due to the desire to understand each career journey and leadership development in-depth where dependent and independent variables were not known from the outset.

The research followed an inductive approach where the researcher moved from specific observations to a broader generalisation, with the objective of conducting an open-ended exploration. Inductive reasoning is described as the logical process of establishing a general proposition on the basis of observation of particular facts (Zikmund, Babin, Carr, & Griffin, 2012).

The research was cross-sectional, because various participants were interviewed and data was collected at a single point in time (Saunders & Lewis, 2012; Zikmund et al., 2012).

One-on-one interviews as described by Yin (2015) follow a conversation style and seek to understand the experience of other people and the meaning those people make of the experience (Yin, 2015). One-on-one interviews were found to be most suited for this study in the pursuit of understanding each participant's journey in the evaluation of the behaviours that led to their success.

### **4.3. POPULATION**

A population is defined as the complete set of group members and need not include people or employees only, but could also be an organisation or any other collective entity (Saunders & Lewis, 2012). For the purpose of this study, the population consisted of women in senior management.

According to the mid-year population estimates published by Statistics South Africa, "approximately 51% (approximately 27.16 million) of the population is female" (Statistics South Africa, 2014). There were 25.2 million (48.7%) males counted in the 2011 Census, compared to 26.6 million (51.3%) females (Statistics South Africa, 2012).

Of the designated employers that reported their employment equity figures to the Department of Labour, at junior management level, the number of women were reported to be 45.3% (Department of Labour, 2015). At professionally qualified or middle management level, the number of women decreases to 42.9% and as the women move up the corporate ladder, female representation decreases even further. Senior and top management has a 32.1% and 20.9% female representation respectively (Department of Labour, 2015).

The gender parity significantly drops in the phases between middle management and senior management, with less women making the successful transition to senior management. Due to the slow progress of gender equality at senior and top management levels as evidenced by the statistics published in the Employment Equity Report 2015, the population for this study will consist of the women in senior management.

#### **4.4. SAMPLING METHOD AND SAMPLING SIZE**

A segment of the population that is selected for research is known as the sample (Bryman & Bell, 2015). The population for this study was considered homogenous in nature due to the potential similarities found among the women to be interviewed. The population sample size for a homogeneous population is advised to consist of at least 10 participants (Saunders & Lewis, 2012). The sample for this study consisted of 17 women who were regarded as senior in their organisations. The researcher did not have access to the entire population and has therefore opted to select a representative sample of the population to participate in this study.

Saunders and Lewis (2012) distinguish between two sampling techniques, namely: probability sampling and non-probability sampling (Saunders & Lewis, 2012). Probability sampling is defined as a sampling technique where a complete list of the population can be obtained, the sample can be selected from the list and each member in the population has an equal chance of being selected to participate in the study (Saunders & Lewis, 2012; Zikmund et al., 2012). Non-probability sampling is a sampling technique used when the complete list of the population is not available and cannot be considered statistically representative of the population (Saunders & Lewis, 2012).

For the purpose of this study, a combination of sampling methods was used. The first was snowball sampling where the first sample member was selected and subsequent sample members were identified by earlier sample members (Saunders & Lewis, 2012). The second was purposive sampling which involved the selection of participants based on predefined appropriate characteristics and being in the position to provide the desired information (Saunders & Lewis, 2012; Sekaran & Bougie, 2015; Zikmund et al., 2012). Snowball and purposive sampling are forms of non-probability sampling, which means that some units in the population are more likely than others to be selected due to the absence of random sampling methods used during the sample selection process (Bryman & Bell, 2015).

The criteria used for participant selection were gender and management level to ensure a fair representation of the wider population. The sample contained only women at senior management levels, from different industries as well as different cultural and educational

backgrounds. Due to limited time and travel distance, the majority of the participants were located in Gauteng.

Due to the time and cost limitations of this study, the sample included 17 women from 13 companies. The industries and number of participants per industry can be viewed in the table below:

**Table 1: Participant Industry Distribution**

<b>Industry Classification</b>	<b>Number of Participants</b>
Brewing, Beverage	1
Construction	1
Consumer Goods	1
Financial Services	4
Fishery	1
Human Capital	1
Pharmaceutical	1
Management consulting	4
Computer Software IT Consulting Cloud Service Provider Computer Hardware	3

Senior managers for this study were selected based on an amalgamated definition of Litzky and Greenhouse (2007) and Drotter (2010). Litzky and Greenhouse (2007) define a senior manager as an individual with the responsibility to set long-term priorities and decide how resources are allocated and used effectively to achieve long-term goals (Litzky & Greenhaus, 2007). The Drotter (2010) model refers to six transitions within a career, based on capability assessments at each level. Drotter (2010) defines senior management as managers of other managers, managers of functions or departments, managers of businesses and managers of groups. For the purpose of this study, the senior manager definition adopted included managers of other managers, managers of functions, as well as business unit managers (Drotter, 2010; Litzky & Greenhaus, 2007).

#### **4.5. UNIT OF ANALYSIS**

The unit of analysis defines who or what should provide the data (Zikmund et al., 2012). The unit of analysis for this study was women, selected as part of the sample, who hold senior management positions in their respective organisations.

#### 4.6. DATA COLLECTION

The data collection process included a series of in-depth face to face (one-on-one) semi-structured interviews with 17 participants that were approximately an hour in duration. A semi-structured interview is described as a data collection method where the interviewer asks predetermined questions aligned to a set of themes, by varying the order in which the themes are covered (Saunders & Lewis, 2012). In a semi-structured interview the person answering the questions is called the participant and this is normally used where the interviewer is unsure of the participant's answers or where questions are complicated (Saunders & Lewis, 2012). Face to face semi-structured interviews are considered the most appropriate interview technique for this research study, given its exploratory nature. Semi-structured interviews leverage advantages of both structured and unstructured interviews by ensuring consistency across interviews while allowing the participant to speak freely, thus allowing the discovery of new insights (Myers, 2013).

Face to face interviews were preferred as this allowed for body language signal interpretation and an ability to probe the participants (Saunders & Lewis, 2012). In addition to the aforementioned, face to face interviews provided the opportunity to validate the data immediately (Denscombe, 2008). The researcher used probing questions to obtain the necessary level of depth required to ensure richness of data (Patton, 2002).

The data collected as part of this research is considered primary data. Myers (2013) states that primary data adds richness and credibility to qualitative. The researcher ensured that the participants felt as comfortable as possible to encourage an informal conversational communication style by meeting participants in settings that were convenient to them, such as their office or coffee shops. Two of the participants felt comfortable conversing in their home language, which was then translated during the transcribing process and checked by the researcher for accuracy to remain true to the original intent and context of the conversation. Each interview was precluded by an introduction to the study, an explanation of the purpose of the study and reassurance that participation was voluntary (see Appendix 1).

To ensure accuracy of data collection and data analysis, interviews were recorded with the participants' permission, which provided the added benefit of completeness in speech and context and also allows others to validate the interviews (Denscombe, 2008). The recordings were transcribed, reviewed and edited by the researcher to ensure accuracy (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2011). Editing is the process of checking and

adjusting the data for omissions, legibility and consistency and eases the coding process (Zikmund, 2000).

#### **4.7. ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS**

Data collection commenced once the ethical clearance approval, administered by GIBS, was obtained. As part of the ethical clearance process, participants provided consent to participate in the study and with the permission of each participant, each interview was recorded and transcribed. Care was taken during the data cleansing and analysis process to ensure all participants remained anonymous and that all key identifiers were removed.

#### **4.8. METHOD OF ANALYSIS**

During the data analysis process, the researcher applied qualitative content analysis techniques to uncover meaning from the data by systematically allocating content to detailed categories and then interpreting the outcomes (Myers, 2009). During this process, key components or principles were uncovered that provide clearer understanding to the particular phenomenon of key success factors for women in senior management (Denscombe, 2008). The advantage of content analysis is that it provides a structured method to quantify the text in a repeatable format (Myers, 2009).

Saunders and Lewis (2012) suggest the following steps to analyse qualitative data: (1) develop categories, (2) decide on the unit of data based on the aforementioned categories, (3) code the units of data based on the categories (Saunders & Lewis, 2012). Coding is the formal representation of analytical thinking and involves generating categories and themes (Marshall & Rossman, 2006). This is done by assigning labels to text and classifying the data into certain categories (Myers, 2009). The coding scheme for this project was developed using inductive reasoning through open coding from evaluating the transcripts. The data was analysed by making use of Atlas.ti, a computer-aided qualitative data analysis software (CAQDAS), which eased the process of coding, categorisation and the discovery of relationships (Saunders & Lewis, 2012; Suter, 2011).

Each transcribed interview was reviewed line by line and data divided into meaningful units of analysis (Suter, 2011). An initial list of 115 codes was developed. While some codes were sourced from literature, others were developed from the analysis of the transcribed data. The initial codes list was refined through the process of grouping thematic elements together, removing duplication and making associations where relationships existed. The result of the aforementioned process is the revised final list of 52 codes grouped into categories and themes, as depicted in Table 2 below.

**Table 2: Themes, categories and codes**

Themes	Categories	Codes
Career Success	Objective	Financial success Hierarchical Position Promotion Meritocracy Performance
	Subjective	Self-referent Other-referent
Career Anchors	Preferences	Autonomy / Independence Security / Stability Technical-Functional General Managerial Entrepreneurial Service or dedication to a cause Pure Challenge Lifestyle
	Motivations	Balance Security Competence / Expertise Solving Problems Build / Create (creativity) Improvement Competition Variety Freedom
Psychological Career Resources	Values	Authority Influence Growth Development
	Drivers	Purpose Directedness Venturing
Leadership	Leadership Development	Leader Categorisation Self-categorisation
Behavioural Adaptability	Self-evaluation	Self-esteem Self-efficacy Self-confidence Emotional Literacy Locus of Control (Internal) Locus of Control (External) Coaching
	Behaviour	Resilience Relationship Building Networking Personal Branding Hard Work Political savviness Sacrifice Reach for opportunities
	Characteristics	Competitive Driven Leadership Decisive (Clear vision)

The researcher developed a table of categories (Appendices 2 – 10). The main categories are grouped according to the main research questions. Each research question contains the main themes, categories and codes. The tables in the appendices contain the noteworthy quotes made by each participant based on the categories

developed. The quotes were sourced from the transcripts, utilising Atlas.ti computer-aided qualitative data analysis software. During the analysis process the researcher selected the most pertinent quotes in Chapter 5.

#### **4.9. DATA VALIDITY AND RELIABILITY**

Reliability is about confidence that the data collection method could be repeated without the methods themselves producing different results, whereas validity is concerned with the correctness of the data interpretation and its alignment to the original intent and context (Elo et al., 2014; Payne & Payne, 2004). The researcher made reference to the theoretical framework to guide data analysis as an additional measure to validate the data collected (Marshall & Rossman, 2006).

According to Elo et al. (2014) the most widely used criteria for evaluating qualitative content analysis are those developed by Lincoln and Guba (1985) who used trustworthiness (Elo et al., 2014). Lincoln and Guba (1985) proposed four criteria for assessing the trustworthiness of qualitative research, namely: credibility, dependability, conformability and transferability (Elo et al., 2014; Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

Credibility is concerned with two concepts: (1) would a repeated study yield similar results, (2) and if the repeated study yielded the same results, would they be right i.e. were the measures correct? (Payne & Payne, 2004). Credibility has been improved in this research report through the following actions: the sampling method in the selection of participants was conducted in a way to ensure a fair representation of and as close as possible to the South African female economically active population in terms of race and industry; interviews were recorded and transcribed to ensure that the interpretations can be checked against the raw data; interpreted codes, themes and data was checked against literature. The experience of the researcher may affect the credibility of the research. Although the researcher has limited qualitative research experience, this has been mitigated through engagement with more experienced researchers.

Dependability refers to the stability of data over time and under different conditions (Elo et al., 2014). Due to the short timeframe in which the interviews were conducted, it offered limited opportunity changes in the participants' career environments that would warrant a change in their respective responses.

Conformability refers to the level of objectivity applied to the study, which relates to the congruence between two or more independent people about the data's accuracy, relevance, or meaning (Elo et al., 2014). As part of the institutional research process at GIBS, the research project was reviewed by an experienced researcher.



Transferability refers to the potential for extrapolation and relies on the reasoning that findings can be generalised or transferred to a different group or context (Elo et al., 2014; Lincoln & Guba, 1985). This report contains a detailed methodology description which allows repeatability of the study by future researchers.

#### **4.10. ASSUMPTIONS**

It was assumed that all participants shared an aspiration to reach top management levels of organisations.

#### **4.11. RESEARCH LIMITATIONS**

The following limitations may be applicable to this particular study and should be taken into consideration:

- This study offers deeper insights into particular situations that may not be extrapolated to a broader population due to the time frame and context within which the interviews were conducted (Myers, 2013). The sample selection included women predominantly residing in Gauteng (with the exception of one), which may result in findings being particular to the Gauteng region only, with limited possibility to extrapolate the findings to the South African population or populations of any other country.
- Due to the non-probability sampling technique used, the sample may not be representative of the population due to the snowball and purposive sampling techniques used (Saunders & Lewis, 2012).
- Although care was taken to ensure breadth of exposure in terms of industries covered in this study, the number of industries covered are limited. There is a possibility that different industries may offer different enablers for career advancement for women.
- Qualitative exploratory research is subjective by nature and may be subject to researcher bias (Saunders & Lewis, 2012) due to potential assumptions made during the study (Zikmund, 2003). Awareness of the researcher's own subjectivity was crucial in ensuring that leading questions were not asked during the interview process.

#### **4.12. CONCLUSION**

The research followed a qualitative exploratory approach. The sample included participants from a diverse background in terms of culture and education. Data collection was in the form of recorded and transcribed in-depth, semi-structured one-on-one interviews. Qualitative content analysis techniques were used to analyse and code the data into categories and themes to develop an understanding of the research problem. The results from the aforementioned process will be covered in the next chapter.

## **5. CHAPTER 5: RESULTS**

### **5.1. INTRODUCTION**

This chapter presents the findings that have been extracted from the interviews conducted with 17 women in senior management positions. No additional information was sourced about the women apart from the interviews held and the demographic information collected as part of the interview process. The demographic information was intended to provide additional context with respect to the women's lives holistically. The following information was requested: job title to verify and evaluate the participant's seniority; duration in last three positions to ascertain what roles the participant played and how long they were in senior management positions; marital status and number of dependents to get an understanding of the personal aspects of their lives from a work-life balance perspective. The participants were selected to be as close to the economically active population as possible, given the accessibility and time constraints. The format of this chapter will follow the research questions presented.

### **5.2. INTERVIEW DESCRIPTIONS**

The interviews were conducted with 17 women from 13 companies. The women have an overall average of 8 years' experience in senior management positions (based on their last 3 positions), ranging from between 5 years as a minimum and 14 years as a maximum. Of the women interviewed, twelve were married, while twelve of the women had children.

### **5.3. RESEARCH QUESTION 1: SUCCESS**

The first question's objective was to delve deeper into the understanding of how these women achieve success, more specifically: *"How do women in senior management achieve their view of success?"*

In order to answer this question, the interview aimed to explore the women's definition of success. This was done by firstly uncovering the reasons for their success, looking at specific defining moments that resulted in them achieving their view of success and finally, look into what they would have started doing earlier to accelerate their career progression, looking at the lessons they have learnt along the way.

#### **5.3.1. Career Success**

To obtain a view of what women perceive success to be, the participants were asked to provide a description of what success meant to them. A follow up question was asked to describe who they admire as leaders, with enquiry made into the reason for their choice.

The intent of the latter was to uncover the characteristics or behaviours that they believe lead to success.

An evaluation of the results revealed that a majority of the women interviewed, viewed success from a subjective career success perspective. The responses included a self-referent view, mainly portraying a measurement of success against their own standards and aspirations, with the following responses:

*P3: "Success for me is a process. You never arrive at success. I think it is when in that complex situation when all the dots can connect... It is a process. It shows up in different forms. And I have different successes."*

*P4: "It's about being happy. So it's about being happy and comfortable or proud of what you've achieved for yourself what your own benchmark is of what achievement means... Are you comfortable and happy with the choices you're making in relation to your whole life not just your work."*

*P8: "Initially we start our lives comparing ourselves to others. So the questions that you are asking is very valuable, the journey we go through we learn with age that it is all about us and how we want to drive things and what is success for us... Don't look on the outside for a point, it is not arriving at a destination, it is continuous improvement, driving yourself to the next level and the next level doesn't necessarily mean a higher position, it means a point where you can influence more, you can support people more etcetera."*

*P10: "Success to me is when I am happy and when I have a very good balance between being happy in my professional space and being happy at home. So you know being able to really just embrace, love my kids, spend time with my family, spend time with my husband and really do fulfilling stuff at work and have a very motivated team and a business that is vibrant for me that is success... So I cannot say success for me is when I'm vice president of HR in the region, no it comes with a lot of troubles and I could actually get there and still be very unhappy or get there at the expense of my family or get there at the expense of other people that I had to step all over to get there and for me no, it really should be wholesome in my mind and I must be in a happy space."*

*P13: "I think if you can honestly say to yourself when you are old: "I used all of my potential". I listened to a speaker the other day who said "I want to die light, because I have already left all my potential behind". That, to me, was really profound because success is about, it's not just about what position you hold or what salary you're earning. If you reach your full potential and, that self-actualisation, if you were able to do that, then I think you were successful. That's how I see it."*

*P15: "I realised it's actually not about the job title and I think for me it's become increasingly about what makes my heart sing, so when do I feel like I'm happy?"*

*P16: "Success for me means when you go home at the end of the day you feel fulfilled. You go home and you feel I have made a difference to someone's life or to someone's bottom line or it doesn't matter what it is, but it is about that feeling when you walk away from an interaction."*

Although a majority of the women described their view of success from a subjective point of view, a number of participants had a dual or combined objective and subjective view, with the main focus on the remuneration aspect of objective success as the main theme that surfaced, with their objective views as follows:

*P5: "The obvious one which is on the list for everyone is financial benefit... Financial security, as a single woman, is very important and personally, it is quite high on my values list that I am going to be okay no matter what."*

*P7: "If I have done what I have done over the years and I had been poorly paid, I would have moved to other companies and things like that. So I think it comes with the territory. If you're applying yourself and you're doing well and people recognise you, then you should be paid fine and get the other things that matter to you. Lots of leave and holidays."*

*P9: "I think it's being on top of your game in a company. For me, sitting on the executive is part of that success. If I had all of this and I was not on the executive, I probably wouldn't feel that I've reached it yet, so I guess that's about ego and about recognition and about the label and the title and all of that. So, obviously there's a financial aspect to that where you're earning at an appropriate level for the contribution that you're making and it does make things easier when you are earning more and because it enables you to buy that support system, so I think certainly financial success, but for me it's not the be all and the end all, in other words I'm not motivated entirely by money, but it helps."*

*P12: "I am the main bread-winner in our family, so I think it is important that I am well-paid... And I am talking about money as one example, but it is a big thing. My kids go to a private school so there are many costs for me. I live in Pretoria I work in Johannesburg so for me, yes money is one thing, but money mustn't be a topic."*

However, in response to the same questions, one participant presented a purely objective view of success, with no descriptors linked to subjective success. Below is her objective view of success, mainly pertaining to promotion, with no emphasis on remuneration:

*P2: “I have always wanted to be a respected leader of an organisation, to be considered as someone who is respected and contributes to the change of the organisation. So for me the big bug bear for the last couple of years has just been about promotion, but for me that is what success is. People ask why it is so important to be promoted, and it is really not about the money, it is to me about the recognition; the recognition that you are considered a senior leader of the firm that is making change and driving the organisation. And that is what I want and that is why it is always linked to the promotion but if you took promotion out of it that to me would be success and that recognition comes with “Right, we are going to promote you into this new role”.”*

Although the majority of the participants described their view of success from a subjective career success point of view, there are mixed views, with the remuneration aspect of objective career success coming through as a strong influencer of perceived objective success.

### **5.3.2. Self-evaluation**

In order to determine how women relate to self-esteem, self-efficacy, locus of control and emotional stability from their subjective or objective views, the following question was asked:

- *“What are some of the major turning points in your life that resulted in you getting to this point in your career?”*

#### **5.3.2.1. Self-esteem**

In response to the question above, ten women explicitly conveyed self-esteem as an affirmation of their abilities and the need to act with self-confidence, with the following pertinent comments highlighting their views:

*P1: “There is nothing that a woman can’t do, we just do it differently from men. I mean at work I have been accused of being soft, but I deliver in my softness. So do things your way and what feels comfortable for you – and not what somebody else expects. But you can do anything. You can do anything – just do it your way.”*

*P11: “I think it’s very important, especially someone coming from a background of previously disadvantages, not to apologise for being there. No, I am not apologising. I am here. I deserve to be here and I have a voice.”*

*P16: “I believe there is nothing that I want to be and that I want to achieve that I cannot be and achieve... I would say to my younger self: “Don’t hold back, don’t ever think you*

*are not good enough or you are not going to make it, or just believe”, because I found that when I started believing in me, then that’s when I knew nothing is impossible.”*

The following question was asked to determine the women’s perception of the reasons for their success:

- *“Why do you think you were able to achieve success?”*

Some of the most pertinent answers related to belief in self, with some of the comments as stated below:

*P3: “So I never had self-doubt. I would have self-doubt if I didn’t do my work, if I didn’t work hard enough.”*

*P5: “I have always said to myself, I am not less than anyone else... You are delivering in a manner that you are comfortable with. You can be authentic and you can do it in a way that suits you.”*

*P9: “So my putting up my hand was, I applied. Other people may not have applied because they didn’t feel they were up for it, so maybe there was an element of confidence there that was important.”*

To provide insights into lessons learnt along the way, that would have set them up for success, had they learnt them earlier in life, the following question was asked:

- *“If you had the opportunity to coach your younger self through your career, what are some of the key lessons that you would like to impart to your younger self to accelerate your progression?”*

In response to the question above, some participants made reference to self-confidence and belief in self to be realised earlier in life to accelerate their progression. This is supported by:

*P7: “Be sure of yourself. I would have had more confidence young, because I didn’t have that confidence. Be happy to speak about what you know, don’t worry about what you don’t know.”*

*P14: “So I suppose it is listen to your gut instinct, because if you do you will make decisions a lot quicker. Sometimes you drag things out, because you are scared of the consequence of a decision.”*

*P17: “Quieten the inner critic, not second guess yourself so much. Have courage, because life is for living.”*

### 5.3.2.2. Emotional Stability

In response to the question above that focused on self-evaluation, four women made reference to *emotional stability* in their response to the reasons for their success.

In response to prompting question, why it was that people saw something in them and promoted them to the next level, one participant's response was:

P3: *"It is mastering yourself in terms of what are my values; what are my perceptions; am I willing to stretch them; am I willing to learn from other people; am I willing to let go of some of the things. That is all about how I am reinventing myself to show up richer, better every day. It is a journey."*

Another participant attributed the acquisition of services of three coaches; financial, career and life to be contributing factors in her success. When enquiries were made into the reasoning behind it, the participant responded as follows:

P5: *"Life is not just about work although everything impacts each other. I am a big believer in self-development and always trying to understand yourself better and why you are the way you are; you react the way you do; and evolving for yourself and everyone else around you who benefits from that."*

With reference made to the question regarding lessons learnt over the span of her career, another participant made reference to emotional maturity as a key element:

P8: *"I think the important issue is around emotional maturity."*

In response to the same question, the fourth participant referred to the importance of not taking things personally when the impact of decisions don't play out as expected, with the following comment:

P10: *"No matter how right your decision is or how appropriate it is for these particular circumstances, it is a tough decision to make. So yes, the truth is when you are in leadership you are not always liked or loved and there are those moments where people will feel differently about you and that is fine. I think the trick for me is never to take it personal."*

### 5.3.2.3. Locus of control

In response to the question about their reasons for achieving success, more than half of the women interviewed seemed to have very clear visions for their career and follow through with strategies to advance their careers, with the most pertinent responses noted as:



P2: *"I did drive them a lot myself, so I think if I look back it wasn't like I just sat back and waited for someone to come and say – "Right, you have a promotion!..."*

P4: *"I think that I do make decisions quite intentionally."*

P6: *"So I never really had a motto, but I always knew what I wanted."*

P8: *"I was very clear in terms of what I wanted from a position..."*

P9: *"...There was definitely an intentional aspiration that if I enjoyed it, I would manoeuvre myself into that position if it was right for me..."*

P10: *"...So I had to make a choice and the choice was I am very good at what I do, I can continue on this path or I can change careers altogether, so this is the second time in my life that I am changing careers..."*

However, there were still a significant number of women who referred to certain aspects of their progression as "luck", including responses from the women who make career decisions intentionally:

P2: *"But generally, I have been very lucky."*

P3: *"I do believe there is a bit of luck in terms of being at the right place at the right time, but I also think it is how you show up at that particular time."*

P4: *"I mean the one opportunity was just luck."*

P8: *"I was lucky then to land the government position where I could actually be hands-on... I was lucky in that I was at the right point in my career where specialists in my field didn't have a defined portfolio... It was fortunate as well that the timing was right for me to be able to do it."*

P9: *"I think I was lucky... I think I have been lucky and I've had good opportunities and I've had good career progression and I've had good support and people fighting for me."*

P10: *"At the moment I'm in a fortunate space that I am managing a cluster of countries."*

#### 5.3.2.4. Career Motivation

In response to the question on major turning points, the women highlighted *resilience* to be able to deal with setbacks and hardships as an important aspect to remain motivated to continue, with the following references made to the need for *resilience*, supported by:

P4: *"I think it's tenacity to stick it out. It was the drive and the will to stick it out."*

P7: *"I think you've got to have a certain amount of resilience as a woman."*

*P8: “You cannot jump ship every time there is this dissonance and it takes a while before you’re attuned to it.”*

*P15: “Not wanting to give up and not wanting to feel like I failed at something. So just keep trying, try something else, try a different way.”*

### **5.3.3. Leadership Development**

In an attempt to discover the patterns of leadership development, including leadership categorisation and self-categorisation, the following question was asked:

- *“Tell me about a time where you felt that someone “had your back”, believed in your abilities and advocated on your behalf. What was the outcome?”*

The intent of the preceding questions were to uncover situations where management or leaders observed leadership characteristics in the women and provided them with opportunities to develop those characteristics into leadership traits.

It was discovered that out of the seventeen women, ten women recalled instances where a manager or someone in the leadership or management team, believed in them which changed their perception of themselves. Some of the responses are reflected below:

*P1: “My previous manager, she contributed a lot to my getting the promotion. She exposed me to leadership and I think when this position came about there were a whole lot of people who were interested and she basically said “I think X deserves this, and these are the reasons why I think she does”. So for presentations that needed to be done in my territory or problems that were in my territory she never took ownership. She would say ‘I want you to go and present it’. If something good happened she would say ‘send an email to the country GM and tell him’. If there was a problem she would say send an email to the country GM and tell him. And if they are good things let’s talk about them. Let everybody know. So she gave me that platform and the visibility so everybody knew who I was within the organisation.”*

*P3: “And then he looked at me and then he said to me that “the person that should have the role is sitting in front of me”. And I was completely gobsmacked and shocked because my mind hasn’t even gone that far, because I was at middle management and not for a while did I anticipate that I was going to join the executive team. Somebody has to believe in you... One of the things that makes you successful in a role like that under those difficult circumstances is a manager that believes in you; it is a manager that supports you; it is a manager that says to you, you can make mistakes it is fine we will fix them.”*

*P5: “I was originally employed as a business analyst and while in that role, I guess the CIO saw something else in terms of my abilities and at the time they needed an application support manager and to test my skill they seconded me to that role for three months... My boss had my back. I knew nothing about SAP, nothing. He took a chance on me. He gave me that opportunity, because I guess I would like to think that he had faith in my abilities and my desire to learn and to be successful.”*

*P7: “Number one: being in the right role, but it also takes somebody watching you and helping to build you up. And I think in the modern world today, we neglect that a lot.”*

*P10: “My approach, coming from a very small town, was: “There is nothing out there for a person like me” and even in the big cities, it’s like you are one in millions right? I was always a little mouse that was not visible to anyone until I actually got to a large auditing firm where the then deputy CEO took some interest in me. After my first year there, he called me and offered me a role that I knew absolutely nothing about and for me that was a turning point.”*

*P17: “When I was in the UK I had a General Manager who gave me opportunities. I was working as an Assistant Manager, where it was very male dominated. I was based in London and the manager of a branch was suspended and they wanted someone to go in and asked me to do it. I was terrified. Through the relationship with my mentor we broke it down and analysed it. I then never went back. It was almost like I had a 5 year jump overnight. The way the branch structures articulated it, you had to go from Assistant accountant, accountant, small branch etc. So that gave me a massive jump up. From there I went to Central London and got my own branch, which was like unheard of. I was only 28 years of age.”*

In addition to the abovementioned question, the researcher set out to explore whether there were instances where the belief placed in their abilities by an external party, resulted in instances where the women assumed the leadership roles. The following question was asked to delve deeper into this aspect of leadership development:

- *“Tell me about a time where you had to advocate for yourself.”*

The responses revealed that although eleven women recalled instances where their managers saw something in them and provided them with opportunities, there were three instances of a sense of realisation that resulted in them seeing themselves as leaders:

*P1: “Yes, it does, because then you suddenly are not a number or you are not in middle management anymore; you sit with EXCO and you understand how they think and what they look for, and how you relate to everyone else as well. It impacts on your growth.”*

*P3: “If people believe in me how can I not believe in myself? You are letting down other people. That is my philosophy.”*

*P5: “So I guess I worked harder probably because I didn’t want to disappoint the person who believes in me. It also gave me that sense of: “Yes, I can do this”. If there was every self-doubt I could manage that because someone who is higher than me, knows more than me believes that I can, so who am I to doubt myself? When you’re not proving yourself you tend to do so much better because you are at your pace.”*

*P10: “It said a couple of things to me; one it said: “I should be taking myself as seriously as other people perceive me” and “Here is somebody who is actually taking a chance on me and he didn’t have to”.”*

In the abovementioned responses, the participants noted the increase in self-confidence and the motivation to work harder as to not disappoint the individuals that believed in them.

#### *5.3.3.1. Political Savvy*

No specific interview questions were asked, however through the semi-structured interview process a number of women emphasised the need to familiarise oneself with the organisational politics to ensure success at senior level, with some of their views stated below:

*P2: “That is a political game again that we need to learn to play.”*

*P8: “I think it’s a lot of stakeholder management, politicking, it is a different sort of field that you go into.”*

*P10: “One of the things that my predecessor taught me was that when you get to senior level, you need to understand business politics and not in the nasty sense. But you really need to understand who the players are, how you are going to influence those players, how do you get buy-in without forming cliques.”*

*P15: “The notion that we don’t play politics is absolute nonsense, you have to. You know it’s like saying I’m going to go onto a rugby field but I’m not going to play rugby, nonsense. You’ve got to understand the politics of the work environment and to a degree you’ve got to play them and I know a lot of people don’t want to be part of the corporate politics – It’s nonsense we are all part of the corporate politics. I refuse to be part of the gossip and the back chatting and taking sides, the games, but I have to be aware of my environment and I have to be aware of who is doing what and what are the dynamics*

*and what are the sides and who's backing who, because otherwise you just get caught up."*

#### **5.4. RESEARCH QUESTION 2: CAREER ANCHORS**

The second research question related to the career anchors that form the foundation of the women's career decisions: "*Which career anchors are most prevalent among women in senior management?*" The career anchors were inferred based on the thematic responses from each of the women and interpretations were based on the descriptions of each anchor, as presented in Chapter 2 of this report.

The participants were asked to reflect on their evaluation criteria when making a decision that involved a new leadership opportunity, with follow-up questions focusing on the motivations behind career decisions in the form of career philosophies with which they view their career world. The following questions were presented:

- "*When you consider a new leadership opportunity, what are the most important criteria that you use to evaluate your options?*"

The intent behind the abovementioned question was to identify the women's values and preferences that influence their decisions pertaining to their professional lives. To delve deeper into the motivations behind career decisions made, two follow-up questions were asked whereby the participants were asked to describe their career philosophy and how it has changed over the years.

- "*What was your career philosophy "mantra" that you may have repeated to yourself in your first few roles?*"
- "*Do you still view the world the same way? How has it changed?*"

A significant portion of insights surfaced during the responses from the three aforementioned questions, which were utilised to determine the most prevalent anchors that exist for women in senior management. However, due to the semi-structured interviews conducted, further insights into the prevalent anchors surfaced although no specific questions were asked. In order to demonstrate the women's preferred rankings that surfaced as part of this study, the format of the results for this question 2 are presented in ranked order rather than the answers to the particular questions asked.

The prominent career anchors were inferred based on the exploration of each of the women's career decisions based on inferred values and preferences revealed as well as an evaluation of career philosophies that they may live by. It was noted that the most

prevalent career anchors were (1) *lifestyle*, (2) *pure challenge* (3) *service or dedication to a cause* and (4) *general managerial competence*.

#### **5.4.1. Lifestyle**

The most prevalent career anchor was *lifestyle*. Ten women made statements that indicated balance to be an important factor in their decision making. These statements coincided with strong family values. Some of the participants had the following to say:

*P3: "In career it is always for me about balancing the private life with the professional life. I am the only one here. My entire family is in Namibia so it is always a challenge for me in terms of how often can I go home."*

*P4: "I don't want to be there the whole time, I don't want to work the same hours that the men work. I don't have that same thing that work is everything – it's not everything to me – it's a part of the whole picture. What's most important to me is not my family, what's most important to me is that I have a good relationship with my children and that I have a good relationship with my husband. It's not just a blanket: "my family is the most important to me". It's that I want to have a meaningful deep relationship with my children and I want to have a good relationship with my husband...If I ever feel like I'm getting out of touch I would change things dramatically... That means choices along the journey that you make to make sure that it happens."*

*P9: "From a sort of broader perspective, it would need to offer me the flexibility to be able to go and watch my kid play soccer, participate in lift clubs, meet with builders if I'm renovating (that just happens to be what I'm dealing with now). I want to be passionate about what I do and I want to be energised by what I do and I want to be excited about what I do, but there's a whole other world out there. Whether it's kids or hobbies or a relationship or whatever, and that the be all and the end all is not your work and you can still have a very successful career and make a very meaningful contribution to your company, to your peers to your staff to your world and not have to live and die by the sword of the work that you do."*

*P10: "I guess when you are led by somebody who values family it's very easy for you to be okay with the fact that your family is more important, or as important as your career and in our business we create that space. I know sometimes it is a bit tough, because we are a multi-national. We operate in different time zones, we are a matrix organisation. Some of my stakeholders are not sitting in the same location, I need to be making calls at different times of my day or night but it is possible to find the balance and really not overwork yourself while doing it but setting very clear expectations. So a simple example*

*for me: everyone knows that I leave four o'clock, because I fetch my kids from school. I can make an exception once in a while, but four o'clock all my stakeholders know that I will leave. If I need to reconnect with anyone it will be after eight, but it did not just happen. I had to have those conversations to say to my MD: "you will not find me at four". That's just how my life is."*

*P12: "Flexibility: with my two kids that is a non-negotiable. I need the flexibility to say that I am working from home today or my child is sick, or has a concert. I think for me to go into a rigid, corporate, no-flexibility..."be at work, be visible" for no other reason, I wouldn't have liked it."*

*P15: "It's all about balancing, balancing those relationships, everything at home is okay, boyfriend doesn't feel neglected everything sort of integrated and my soul feels happy. I don't think I want to be CEO to be honest. I think I've been around enough CEO's to have made a decision that that's too... that the balance then... I'll lose that balance. Maybe it's the perception from where I sit, but I think there is still an ambition to climb higher in the organisation and there's still an ambition to do something broader than communications."*

#### **5.4.2. Service or Dedication to a Cause**

The second most prevalent career anchor was found to be *service or dedication to a cause*, where a majority of the responses referred to making a difference, adding value, having a sense of purpose or making things better. The six women with an inferred preference for this anchor had the following to say:

*P2: "It is not like I am just impacting one small little area and therefore no one else will even get to know about me, because they are not impacted by it. So the broader the impact you can have across the organisation, the much bigger your chances of not you just doing well yourself but also getting reward, because you can see the change happening across multiple areas and also I quite like dealing with multiple stakeholders. If you are just doing one project for one person and no one else knows about it or cares about it – so it has to have an impact and people have got to completely buy into it... So I think the impact, the span of broadness in terms of the group and areas impact also impact on the organisation."*

*P3: "I feel my philosophy is about you allowing the universe to find your purpose. That is why you've got to show up conscious. I honestly believe that we miss opportunities because we are unconscious in terms of our purpose. If my purpose is coming to work to create an enabling environment for my employees together with the executive team*

*and if my purpose here is to contribute so there is an enabling environment, but also I need to make sure that the processes are in place, because this is a multinational.”*

*P7: “I’m always looking at things and how it could be done differently. What would I consider in a promotion - is a geographical move or to do something where I could feel like I could really make a difference.”*

*P12: “...to change people’s lives, or touch their lives.”*

*P14: “When you sit down and you start to reflect a little bit more in terms of where you are and where you are going and you give yourself enough quiet time to think about it, you start to realise there is something bigger out there, it is not just your immediate sphere in terms of where you are playing. So it is not just about the job you fulfil every day, it is around actually going “what legacy do I want to leave behind?”.”*

*P15: “It was very much more around an environment where I’d make a difference, where I’m heard, where there’s room to learn a lot more than what I’ve been doing. An environment that is changing because then there’s room for you to do things differently.”*

### **5.4.3. Pure Challenge**

The third most prevalent career anchor found in this study was *pure challenge*. With the most references made to the work offering a challenge to their daily lives. The five women with an observed preference for this anchor had the following to say:

*P2: “From a personal perspective that it is challenging. I think if it was some real easy thing we had to do, that you could do in your sleep and was easy to manage, I think I would get bored. So I think I have to feel it is challenging and hard, and you learn – as much as you hate challenge and I hate some of these things we have had to deal with on our program... but what you do, is learn from those things.”*

*P7: “Now I’m much more driven by doing things that I am just really interested in doing. So now I really want to solve something, do something great, change something, and that’s my forte. Taking a broken team and fixing it... and suddenly people are just working seamlessly in new ways and they’re producing new and better.”*

*P9: “I would say stimulation and challenge. From a work perspective it’s fulfilment. I don’t want to be bored, I don’t want to be under-stimulated, I don’t want to be undermined or under-recognised. It needs to stretch me, it needs to be challenging,”*

*P11: “I am excited about going to work, I am excited about what the challenges are going to be, what country in Africa is going to give me a headache today, how am I going to*



*solve the problem. Maybe that is why I am in this industry, there are so many issues that you can solve, it's not necessarily the most exciting thing for me but I enjoy solving problems, so that is probably what gets me going."*

*P16: "So I quite enjoyed that trouble shooting, problem solving making a difference to people at a very practical and quick type turnaround level."*

#### **5.4.3.1. Competitiveness**

No specific interview questions were asked, however through the semi-structured interview process, a number of women mentioned that they have a competitive nature, as evidenced in the following comments:

*P2: "I think there is a little bit of competitiveness and seeing people promoted around me..."*

*P11: "I was exceptionally competitive, I had to keep up with three boys growing up."*

*P14: "So everything I do is almost from a competitive perspective..."*

*P15: "Although it took me a long time to actually accept that I'm quite competitive and wanted to achieve, I think it was only when somebody pointed out to me that I realised, okay maybe I am."*

*P17: "I was quite competitive in my early career, up until I was 34 or 35 when we came back to South Africa. I would always do things tactically to achieve success. But as I matured over the last 10 odd years, it's been very much more mindful."*

#### **5.4.4. General Managerial Competency**

The fourth most prevalent career anchor, was *general managerial competency*, with four women stating the following, mostly relating to mobilising people and solving problems:

*P2: "I chose that role, because I knew it is a major problem. It impacts nearly every single area and everyone wants it fixed. So if you go and deliver a solution you are going to be a little bit of a hero because it impacts so many people. It is not just one small area."*

*P9: "I'm a very good implementer. Go behind people, make things happen, I'm not the ideas person, I think that I have this aspiration to be one of those ideas people."*

*P11: "I was saying to someone the other day, that is the ultimate leadership. That you will work yourself out of a job. You as a leader are not needed, because the people that you have led know exactly where they need to go, exactly what the vision is. You are not needed because everyone else can do what is needed."*

P12: “The Psychometric [test] says I’m a completer, finisher, but I am not necessarily the one who thinks of the bright and shiny ideas.”

#### **5.4.5. Other**

Two women made comments pertaining to *entrepreneurial creativity*, whereas one woman made comments relating to *security / stability*. Interestingly, *autonomy / independence* and *technical-functional competence* did not feature as preferences for any of the women interviewed.

### **5.5. RESEARCH QUESTION 3: CAREER DRIVERS**

The third research question related to the underlying drivers that motivate women to persevere in their pursuit of senior management positions in their respective organisations. This interview questions were specifically designed to answer the following question with the intent to uncover insights not yet discovered: “*What are the career drivers that make women in senior management successful?*”

During the interviews the women were asked the following question:

- “Please tell me more about the times that you were promoted and could you share how it happened?”

The intent was to get an understanding of the particular context around each promotion in terms of level of initiation and the resulting career decisions that were made to gain an understanding of the purposefulness of each of the decisions in driving their career.

During the semi-structured nature of the interviews, the search for specific career drivers were found during different times of the interview, then summarised and categorised under the three career driver constructs of career purpose, career directedness and career venturing.

#### **5.5.1. Career Purpose**

Of the seventeen women interviewed, ten women seemed to have made decisions based on a sense of purpose in what they would be accountable for in their new role. The dominant themes from the responses were related to the work being linked to one’s passion and the provision of a sense of fulfilment embedded in the ability to make a difference, make things better than they were as well as the need to be heard. With some of the responses reflected below:

P1: “I thought it was a place I could make a difference, it sounded exciting.” with reference to leaving a position where initial expectations were not met: “I think the hard

*part was making the decision and realising that it was wrong; I knew it was wrong but I just thought 'it will work and I will make it work'. So I tried. I think it took me back a few steps in my career."*

*P2: "I think the impact, the span of broadness in terms of the group and areas impact also impact on the organisation."*

*P4: "I have this conflicting mind of continuous improvement. I love things to be getting better; I hate when things are getting worse, whether it's the country, whether it is learning whether it is our organisation from a micro level to a macro level. In our organisation I know nothing is perfect. So I always feel like if I can contribute to make it a little bit better then I've done something."*

*P5: "So the first thing would be can I make a difference? I think that is what drives me is being able to add value to an organisation. Then is my passion going to be able to find life in that opportunity? My passion is really around leading people and coaching leaders to become better leaders."*

*P8: "I think it is important for me is that whatever it is that you are doing the passion must be burning because if the fire goes off you feel it in you and as long as you are connecting with it you will always have that comfort. Often you hear people talk about, "I have spent my career and at the end of the career I actually didn't enjoy what I am doing," it is because they didn't find that fire in them and they didn't connect to it."*

*P9: "I think first and foremost from a work perspective its fulfilment, you know, I don't want to be bored, I don't want to be under stimulated, I don't want to be undermined or under recognised, in other words I'm not a kind of back office in the corner just churn out my work and part of a cog in a wheel or engine or whatever the saying is, so that's from a work perspective, you know I need to enjoy the people that I work with, I need to enjoy the role, I need to be stimulated, it needs to stretch me, it needs to be challenging."*

*P12: "I think from work perspective the thing that gets me out of my bed every morning is making a difference. Is knowing that I can make a difference to someone's life, I can make a difference to the bottom line. I can make a difference to the way we do things."*

### **5.5.2. Career Directedness**

In response to the question to describe their career progression, a follow up question was asked whether the career moves were made intentionally. Through the semi-structured interviews it was discovered that there were mixed responses to career development and the purposefulness thereof. It was assumed from the outset that the

achievement of a senior management position was as a result of meticulous career development discussions with their direct managers.

Although ten of the seventeen women indicated that they made their career decisions intentionally, a number of women also indicated that their career progression just fell into place. The women with responses indicating intentional career progression, had the following to say:

*P4: "I think that I do make decisions quite intentionally. I don't always know what the consequences are going to be, but I'm very considered about how I do things."*

*P5: "It was definitely intentional because I moved a lot because I got bored quickly."*

*P6: "So I never really had a motto, but I always knew what I wanted."*

*P8: "I was very clear in terms of what I wanted from a position... It is continuous improvement."*

*P12: "I think it was clear to me that in my career... where I was at the time, I did not want to be an audit-manager. I had reasonable certainty about it. For me it was "Either I take this, or I go"... At that stage I was fairly certain I did not really want to be a partner in an audit firm, I wanted to get out of that Industry to get more into the market and I applied for 2 – 3 posts."*

*P14: "Because the organisation was smaller our roles were generic, so we had to get involved in anything that needed to be done from reception to marketing to recruitment to consulting to business development, which obviously allowed for me to identify the area that I wanted to specialise in, and in five years I had already identified that and it was the more relationship sales route and then it was a natural progression. I think many, so even within business development, because the career path is undefined. You kind of go "Okay, great so you are in business development" and you get your head down and your sales targets, but there is no defined career path so you have got to kind of define it as you are going along."*

*P16: "I think I have been quite deliberate in ensuring my own career progression. So I did not just depend on things happening. I kind of always made sure that things happened for me and I wouldn't stay in a company or in a place where I could see that there wasn't going to be possibilities for progression in those environments for different reason. Or it was, I needed experience in another field in IT because I wanted to have a broad experience base at a junior level and not just grow in IT in one particular tower because you know we've got different towers in IT. So I kind of made sure that I do have*

*a broad range of experience in the IT space. So those are the things that made me move industries and companies initially.”*

*P17: “Each of the changes I made, I made quite mindfully. I’m a really structured person. From a very early age I have been goal directed. Because of that, each of my career moves have been mindful. I always had an aspiration to work at a strategic group level.”*

However, in response to the same question, the comments from the following participants indicated that they did not approach their careers with the intention to move in a certain direction:

*P7: “I am not a person who has consciously planned where my career has gone actually. I don’t sit down and write and say my career in 5 years’ time or 10 years’ time. I’m not a very good example I suppose of somebody who had planned their career and aimed to get to a certain place.”*

*P15: “It just happened. I think it’s still just happening to me. I didn’t actually know what I wanted to do, so I started doing event management at a little company and I used to organise conferences in Cape Town. I thought the opportunities sounded interesting and so I moved into that role, but it just happened.”*

#### *5.5.2.1. Coaching*

No specific interview questions were asked, however through the semi-structured interview, a number of women made reference to coaching enabling them to work on specific behavioural aspects to achieve their career goals. The women had the following to say about coaching:

*P2: “One thing I have done now this year which has fundamentally helped me, is actually get a coach, and do a full proper assessment where they actually assess you and understand potentially why you are not ready for promotion, or are ready, and what those gaps are. Because it is a very thin, fine, skill set that often your normal day to day manager can’t pinpoint and that has always been my question: “How come I am always rated as exceeds expectations, but they are not being promoted? So what is the gap that is not getting me there?” ”*

*P3: “I have had an external coach as well, I can say I really don’t know how I should handle this situation and he’ll say: “Well, have you thought about this, have you thought about that?” I could be open with him that I don’t know.”*

*P5: “I have two coaches, well three coaches. I had a career coach, a life coach, and a financial coach: A career coach just to make sure that I have somebody to touch base*

*with when I am feeling a little lost or when I am having my moments of insecurity. That I just have that lifeline to call just to put everything back into perspective, or help me put everything back into perspective.”*

*P9: “I think at the time I had a coach who was able to see things for what they were and just said to me like “but why don’t you just ask?” whereas in my head it was this kind of huge thing, I mean “I can’t ask, because it’s asking too much” and you know like “Why would they give it to me” and “It’s ridiculous” and like you know all of that kind of stuff and this person was like, “Just ask” and just kind of dumbed it down on me, made it sound so simple and seeing it through his eyes was interesting. Very different from the way I saw it so my baggage and my complexities and my insecurities and my sense of self-worth and you know the contribution that I’d made, was it big enough and had I paid my dues and earned stripes and all of that I could have mulled over for years, you know and made so much more of it than it was as one does with one’s own stuff you know and this person kind of coming and going “Why don’t you ask him? What’s the worst that can happen? He’ll say no, and then you’ll be no worse off than you are right now, but what if he says yes?” ”*

*P12: “My Manager said: “Let’s send you for Coaching”. Go do a 6 month personal coaching – it is career coaching, but it has a personal aspect to it – the company will pay, I believe in you, it’s a difficult time, let’s get through this”. When I think back, it was probably the best, best, best thing that I could have done to speak to someone completely outside. I remember whenever I used to go and speak to him about something I was struggling with, he would never give me the answer. He made me think, he asked me questions. He made me get to the conclusions. It was never a case of saying you don’t know how to do something and they end up doing it for you or they tell you what to do. You had to sit and think, answer questions and draw pictures and that is how I learnt.”*

*P14: “I have three business coaches, and I have had them for years. Then obviously working with our CEO. Because he is a lot more experienced than I am, he is able to observe a lot better than I am in terms of people’s behaviour and he has really good intuition. So learning my relationship sales skill, I will often work with him quite closely in terms of saying “Okay great. How do I hone this skill?” ”*

*P17: “I’ve always been an advocate for mentoring and coaching. They give me a different perspective. I would take it very seriously and would invest a lot of time in the relationship. I’ve also had an executive coach. When I’m struggling with something, a thinking partner is also valuable. I’m a believer in growth-based coaching and mentoring.”*

However, there were views on coaching where the participant felt that it did not provide the clear direction she expected, with her view on coaching below:

*P7: “It was probably in 2004 or something like that and coaching was still new then and they gave a bunch of us coaching and I had it and it was kind of... I don’t know... it didn’t really rock my boat... I couldn’t even....it’s not that I think it is a waste of time. I mean my coach is incredible and I know we will stay friends, but I just find that we end up talking about things and stuff that I’ve done and that we carried away solving work things... Coaching seems to be a bit like Psychology or Psychiatry, which I’ve never undergone, but Psychiatry/Psychology – they never tell you, they never give you any feedback – they just ask you questions.”*

#### *5.5.2.2. Personal Branding*

No specific interview questions were asked, however through the semi-structured interview process a number of women made reference to the need to manage perceptions about their brand within the organisation, with some of their comments stated below:

*P2: “Moving away from: “If I do a great job, everyone is going to just think I am fabulous and promote me anyway” – to actually know there is a bit of sales required – and when I say sales it is more interacting with those people so that they are seeing you and it doesn’t have to be all the time, but to an extent that they go “Oh yes, absolutely!”... I think talking to people on a more informal basis, just to see what their perception is about you out there, and it is quite good to get a view of what people think. It is a very easy conversation because it is a conversation about you. I mean if it is bad news, it is bad news, if it is good news it’s great, but if you don’t ask you don’t know, and I would rather know than not know.”*

*P5: “Dress for the job you want not the job you have. That was also in the way that you carried yourself. If you continuously carry yourself at a level that people sometimes maybe are confused by your role or don’t know what your role is, then you are hitting the mark. I have always said to myself, I am not less than anyone else. I hold a position and my position is important in the entire organisation. It plays a pivotal role. I am adding as much value as the technical manager is or the systems manager is. It is just that my role happens to be different from theirs.”*

*P10: “To manage your brand, to manage perceptions around you. I have found business to be very unforgiving so I learned very early that I need to be managing my brand.”*

*P13: “It’s not just about working harder. It’s about how you handle yourself in terms of emotional control, in terms of even the type of clothing that you wear. You must be taken seriously. I would say your entire personal brand has to be serious. If people think of you and of your personal brand, they have to think of professionalism, then you will get further, otherwise if they doubt you in the slightest you have a backlog (disadvantage) that you will not easily catch up again.”*

#### **5.5.2.3. Networking / Relationship Building**

No specific interview questions were asked, however through the semi-structured interview process a number of women made reference to building relationships, expanding their networks and influencing role-players within the organisation in order to achieve their business and personal growth objectives, with some of their comments stated below:

*P2: “Recognising it is all about the relationships with very senior people who recognise you as a leader. I just think I always believed that people would just think I was fabulous and that will be how it’ll work. I quickly realised that it’s actually not the case, and you need to do a lot more working on the relationships with more senior people, getting them to see, you know the type of discussions you are having with them is very different.”*

*P6: “I managed the twelve entities in Africa, so I deal a lot with different kinds of people. So my success depends on how I influence and I like that because I like dealing with people.”*

*P9: “My network stood me in good stead because our shareholder introduced me to the CEO, so that’s how I got here... I didn’t have all the right experience I think he took a bit of a chance and I think that’s where, if you can work with someone they’ll take more of a risk with someone they know, so if you like them and you get on with them then you’re prepared to kind of overlook the fact that they haven’t done this particular thing. You’ll teach them.”*

*P15: “It’s just been managing the dynamics of EXCO and getting them to trust and engage.”*

#### **5.5.3. Career Venturing**

The following two questions were designed to obtain an understanding of the kind of obstacles that the women faced and the specific actions undertaken to overcome them.



- *“Give me an idea of the hardest career decisions you’ve made at different stages of your career journey and what are some of the outcomes of those decisions? (Both personally and professionally).”*

The intent behind these questions is to delve deeper into the areas of uncertainty where the women were forced to make a career decision that involved an element of risk taking at the benefit of their career progression or growth. In response to the question above, six women made reference to making decisions often associated with risk in pursuit of their career aspirations. Some of the women had the following to say:

*P2: “The role seems like a good career move because I was going to head up change, and I didn’t want to go. I wasn’t interested and then it carried on and on and she was very pushy and eventually made me an offer and I thought “well what have I got to lose?” I’d been too comfortable for a long time.”*

*P5: “Then also a level of courage. That if you want something then go get it regardless of perceptions or proposed or supposed shortcomings. You can always negotiate your way through those. Negotiate your way through things so that people will believe in you as much as you believe in yourself.”*

*P13: “And then I also think the day I decided that I am now going to move into consulting. That was an enormous difference because where you are coming out of a situation where everything is certain and secured, your salary, your hours that you are working, the office that you sit in, the infrastructure around you. And to get up and say but I want to do my own thing, that was a huge turning point because I also realised that I am building on things... because I built big businesses for them, but I was not a part of it. I wanted to feel but this is mine, and yes that was a turning point for me when I started going the consultation route.”*

*P17: “I won’t lie, I’ve always had to work hard for what I’ve achieved academically, but the one thing that I’ve always thought is that if I worked harder than other people and if I took on challenges that other people avoided, that would give me an edge, and it most definitely did! I also made a few lateral moves. If I was going to be senior in the organisation, I realised I needed more experience and moved to another division where I didn’t have experience.”*

A follow up question was asked to have a view into the decisions that came about as a result of negative circumstances. In order to understand the context and consequences, the following question was asked:

- *“What were some of the toughest times that you faced in your professional life?”*

*P8: “Going from general manager to director it is a leap, an exciting leap. You need to be able to take bold decisions and you need to make sure that when you put those positions on the table that you are fairly confident that the people around you are going to support you.”*

*P9: “I’ve learnt from every single one of those negative experiences and I mean I’ve been in some very challenging environments you know where I was way, put in situations that were way above my pay grade but somehow you muddle through, you know and you get through it and I think I’m better off having been thrown in at the deep end.”*

#### *5.5.3.1. Reaching for opportunities*

No specific interview questions were asked, however through the semi-structured interview process, a number of women made reference to reaching for opportunities to add value and to do things that will enrich their experience base and build credibility around their delivery and performance. Some of the responses are reflected below:

*P1: “I would have taken advantage of opportunities within the work environment. Sometimes we don’t fully exert ourselves in our whole job, you do what you need to do and you go. So I would encourage people to do things outside of your role. They expose you to the different divisions within the organisations. Put your hand up when there is something that needs to be done. Put your hand up and do it! It helps you progress. And balance, balance, balance as well – know what is important in life.”*

*P4: “Choosing for example to throw myself back into challenges. It keeps me relevant.”*

*P8: “You’ve got to do it, don’t expect others to say you have got the capabilities. There are opportunities that land on your lap and that you grab, but there are others where: “What do you know about it? Why do you want to do it? Let’s get somebody from the outside to do it and they will do it quickly and who has got an informed decision around it?” So I think yes you have to when there is an opportunity, when everybody else around you is going for that same one: put your hand up, compete for it if you have to. I think you’ve got to lean in, you’ve got to put yourself out there. Don’t be afraid of rejection, because there will be another time. I think also you need to be able to put your hand up and say, “I can do it, give me the opportunity”.”*

*P9: “it’s not always easy to move out of your comfort zone but you just kind of do and I think because you get given those opportunities, I think that’s probably something to look at is why do people get given opportunities and I do get given opportunities, maybe because I make myself open to them so and I put up my hand, you know, so when the head of sales left I said well I’ll help and then it materialised into a role, you know so*

*being available for them being able to see beyond just your little box and relationships, you know, that people recognise in you something because they've had a good relationship with you over a period of years so they want to work with you. I think that's probably quite important."*

*P10: "The people who don't say anything often don't get anywhere even though they may be ready because you sort have got to show some initiative in terms of that is what you want, that is where you want to go... I think the game changer for me is the fact that I always raised my hand up. So when I came in here and I realised that there are things that are missing that could actually be very detrimental to the business or to the reputation of the business I raised my hand up and I said "You have a risk that we need to manage" and we started putting the right things in place."*

*P12: "I didn't really ask permission, I just became involved and said I will vet the service providers."*

*P13: "When I asked: "Well, who's done it in the past, because it's not the first time we've had it at the management conference?", nobody stuck their hand up, so then I have a tendency to then just do stuff and just pick it up."*

## **5.6. CONCLUSION**

This chapter presented the findings that emerged from the semi-structured interviews with 17 women from a varied group of organisations and industries. The purpose of this chapter was to explore the women's different views of success, with insight into their perception of the reasons for their success. Thereafter the most prevalent career anchors among women in senior management were explored in an effort to uncover the main motivations that drive behaviour. The career drivers, consisting of career purpose, career directedness and career venturing were explored in the last section of this chapter. The career anchors revealed the competitive nature of the women. A detailed discussion of the results linked to literature will be discussed in the Chapter 6.

## 6. CHAPTER 6: DISCUSSIONS OF RESULTS

### 6.1. INTRODUCTION

The results from the research process was presented in the preceding chapter. Three research questions were posed through semi-structured interviews of 17 women from different organisations. This chapter discusses the results shown in the previous chapter in light of the reviewed literature in an effort to highlight insights discovered through the research process. The purpose of this study was to explore the drivers behind the self-perceived career success of women in senior management in an effort to ascertain whether the particular career advancement strategies can be replicated by aspiring women who have the objective of attaining senior management positions.

### 6.2. DISCUSSION OF RESEARCH QUESTION 1

The first research question relates to career success, specifically *“How do women in senior management achieve their view of success?”* In order to evaluate how women achieve success, it is important to have a view of what women perceive success to be.

#### 6.2.1. Subjective career success

In Chapter 5, the results reflected a strong tendency towards a subjective view of success. With a majority of the women describing their view as purely subjective. Authors such as Laud and Johnson (2012) have put forward that there are difficulties involved in assessing career success to derive a standard of evaluation that is widely used as a result of perceptions influenced by different life experiences (Laud & Johnson, 2012). This is evident in the different descriptions provided by the women who offered views of success relating to it being a process involving continuous improvement, based on the impact-reach, inner peace, fulfilment and happiness with the ability to add value on a daily basis. This is expressed by P3: *“Success for me is a process. You never arrive at success. I think it is when in that complex situation when all the dots can connect... It is a process. It shows up in different forms. And I have different successes.”*, P10: *“Success to me is when I am happy and when I have a very good balance between being happy in my professional space and being happy at home. So you know being able to really just embrace, love my kids, spend time with my family, spend time with my husband and really do fulfilling stuff at work and have a very motivated team and a business that is vibrant for me that is success...”*, and P16: *“Success for me means when you go home at the end of the day you feel fulfilled...”*

Contrary to Heslin’s (2003) study where two-thirds of his participants evaluated their subjective career success by using other-referent criteria by comparing their career

success to others, this study presented subjective career success evaluated by means of self-referent criteria whereby women defined their success using their own standards and aspirations (Heslin, 2003). This can be viewed in the self-referent perceptions of P15 through the measurement against her own standards: *“I realised it’s actually not about the job title and I think for me it’s become increasingly about what makes my heart sing, so when do I feel like I’m happy?”* Participant P8 described her experience and change in perception in the following manner *“Initially we start our lives comparing ourselves to others. So the questions that you are asking is very valuable, the journey we go through we learn with age that it is all about us and how we want to drive things and what is success for us... Don’t look on the outside for a point, it is not arriving at a destination, it is continuous improvement, driving yourself to the next level and the next level doesn’t necessarily mean a higher position, it means a point where you can influence more, you can support people more etcetera.”* Whereas P4 described the use of own standards and benchmarks as measures *“...it’s about being happy and comfortable or proud of what you’ve achieved for yourself what your own benchmark is of what achievement means...”*

### **6.2.2. Objective career success**

Although a number of women evaluated their success in light of subjective career success (Clarke, 2011), a significant number of women (five of the seventeen interviewed) provided objective views of success, citing financial remuneration as a major contributor to their perception of success, as stated by participant P5: *“The obvious one, which is on the list for everyone, is financial benefit.”* and P9: *“...obviously there’s a financial aspect to that where you’re earning at an appropriate level for the contribution that you’re making...”*

The results from this study revealed that four out of the six objective descriptions of career success were with reference to remuneration or financial success, whereas the reasons presented include; being the primary bread-winner of the family, being a single woman with the primary need to provide for herself, being able to afford a support system for child-care, and the ability to afford the lifestyle that their children are accustomed to as described by P5: *“...Financial security, as a single woman, is very important and personally, it is quite high on my values list that I am going to be okay no matter what.”* and P12: *“I am the main bread-winner in our family, so I think it is important that I am well-paid... And I am talking about money as one example, but it is a big thing. My kids go to a private school so there are many costs for me. I live in Pretoria I work in Johannesburg so for me, yes money is one thing, but money mustn’t be a topic.”*

Contrary to the results found in Choi's (2015) study, the aforementioned references to financial success (remuneration) relates to situational factors (more specifically home environment) rather than personal factors such as personality, demographics and motivation, although it can be conceded that the financial success descriptors could also be related to demographics and motivations, which form part of personal factors influencing objective career success.

### **6.2.3. Interrelationship: objective and subjective success**

Although some authors suggest that subjective and objective success should be considered separately (Schneidhofer et al., 2010), results from this study suggest that their effect on one another should not be underestimated (Abele & Spurk, 2009) as supported by P7 with reference to fair remuneration affective their career decision: *"...If I have done what I have done over the years and I had been poorly paid, I would have moved to other companies and things like that..."* and P9 with reference to earning enough to be able to sustain a balanced life: *"...obviously there's a financial aspect to that where you're earning at an appropriate level for the contribution that you're making"*

### **6.2.4. Self-evaluation**

In exploring the reasons for success, the research sought to evaluate career success through core self-evaluation, which has been shown to positively predict career success (Zacher, 2014) as well as an evaluation of their leadership development journey through the lens of leadership categorisation and self-categorisation (Toh & Leonardelli, 2012). Zacher (2014) states that self-evaluation, which consists of self-esteem, self-efficacy, locus of control, and emotional stability, predict career success (Zacher, 2014) and that a high level of self-evaluation indicates a higher likelihood of self-driven career development. The results revealed references to self-esteem, emotional stability, locus of control and resilience as an aspect of motivation. While reviewing the dimensions of self-evaluation, the following was found:

- Self-esteem: Stajkovic and Luthans (1998) state that self-esteem is stable and more akin to traits, whereas Robins et al. (2002) argue that it gradually increases throughout adulthood (Robins et al., 2002; Stajkovic & Luthans, 1998). Based on the comments pertaining to self-esteem, an inference was made that self-esteem formed part of innate personality traits that guided the behaviour of some women with supporting comments such as P5: *"I have always said to myself, I am not less than anyone else... You are delivering in a manner that you are comfortable with. You can be authentic and you can do it"*

*in a way that suits you.” and P9: “So my putting up my hand was, I applied. Other people may not have applied because they didn’t feel they were up for it, so maybe there was an element of confidence there that was important.”* The aforementioned comments may suggest that it remains stable (Stajkovic & Luthans, 1998). However, based on inferences made through the evaluation of comments made by other women, some references to self-esteem (confidence) related to an increase in self-esteem as they matured and gained experience as supported by P7: *“Be sure of yourself. I would have had more confidence young, because I didn’t have that confidence. Be happy to speak about what you know, don’t worry about what you don’t know.”* or P16: *“I believe there is nothing that I want to be and that I want to achieve that I cannot be and achieve... I would say to my younger self: “Don’t hold back, don’t ever think you are not good enough or you are not going to make it, or just believe”, because I found that when I started believing in me, then that’s when I knew nothing is impossible.”*

- Self Efficacy: No specific comments related to self-efficacy were made as related to beliefs about the women’s abilities relating to a specific context (Stajkovic & Luthans, 1998). Based on the observations, the women referred to an overall increase in self-esteem when recalling events and lessons to impart on their younger selves that were more broadly defined and categorised as self-esteem.
- Emotional Stability: The participants in this study demonstrated behaviour that suggests being in control of their own career development (Zacher, 2014). This is demonstrated by participant P3, who speaks about reinventing herself through adaptive behaviour to increase self-improvement: P3: *“It is mastering yourself in terms of what are my values; what are my perceptions; am I willing to stretch them; am I willing to learn from other people; am I willing to let go of some of the things. That is all about how I am reinventing myself to show up richer, better every day. It is a journey.”* and Participant P5, who sought input and guidance from self-identified coaches to assist her on her career journey: P5: *“Life is not just about work although everything impacts each other. I am a big believer in self-development and always trying to understand yourself better and why you are the way you are; you react the way you do; and evolving for yourself and everyone else around you who benefits from that.”* This supports Zacher’s (2014) statement that emotionally stable individuals take responsibility for their own development (Zacher, 2014).

- Locus of control: In addition to the *emotional stability* element of self-evaluation above, the participants demonstrated behaviour that indicated a tendency to take control of their own career development, by taking actions to drive their career (Zacher, 2014) as demonstrated by P2: *“I did drive them a lot myself, so I think if I look back it wasn’t like I just sat back and waited for someone to come and say – “Right, you have a promotion!...”* and P9: *“...There was definitely an intentional aspiration that if I enjoyed it, I would manoeuvre myself into that position if it was right for me...”*. Clarke (2011) states that women see their success as an outcome of support from others (Clarke, 2011). In support of the aforementioned statement, despite being intentional about their own career development, which indicates an internal locus of control (Rotter, 1966), their speech pattern during parts of the interview, was inclined towards attributing their success to “the luck of the draw”. It was observed that in instances such as being asked about the reasons for their objective success (hierarchical position), a significant number of the women included phrases such as “lucky”, effectively attributing their success to factors external to themselves (Clarke, 2011). This is supported by P2: *“But generally, I have been very lucky.”* and P9: *“I think I have been lucky and I’ve had good opportunities and I’ve had good career progression and I’ve had good support and people fighting for me”*
- Career Motivation: Clarke (2011) argues that career success is related to career motivation. As part of this study, the reference to resilience specifically was observed as a theme that came through as a motivator to achieve success as supported by P4: *“I think it’s tenacity to stick it out. It was the drive and the will to stick it out.”* and P15: *“Not wanting to give up and not wanting to feel like I failed at something. So just keep trying, try something else, try a different way.”*

### **6.2.5. Leadership Development**

With respect to leadership development, when reviewing the commentary made by the participants, it was found that in support of Toh and Leonardelli’s (2012) study, the results discussed in Chapter 5 reveal that the eleven women recalled instances of leadership categorisation, whereby management believed enough in them to provide them with opportunities to lead at a level that they haven’t operated at before (Toh & Leonardelli, 2012) as evidenced by P3: *“And then he looked at me and then he said to me that “the person that should have the role is sitting in front of me”.”*, or P7: *“Number one: being in the right role, but it also takes somebody watching you and helping to build you up. And I think in the modern world today, we neglect that a lot.”*



Contrary to Toh and Leonardelli's (2012) statement that both leader categorisation and self-categorisation need to occur in order for an individual to develop as a leader, this study found it to be true for four of the eleven women that reported instances of leader categorisation as shown above. Congruent with Toh and Leonardelli's (2012) argument that a sense of power would motivate women to pursue leadership positions (Toh & Leonardelli, 2012), this study found it to have an effect on the women's perceptions about themselves that relate more to self-esteem and the belief in themselves as a result of others believing in them, evidenced by:

- P1 recalled an instance where her manager provided her with a platform to take ownership of her role to create more exposure and when asked whether it affected the way she conducted herself, responded with *"Yes, it does, because then you suddenly are not a number or you are not in middle management anymore; you sit with EXCO and you understand how they think and what they look for, and how you relate to everyone else as well. It impacts on your growth."*
- P3 mentioned being provided an opportunity at an executive level as an instance where someone believed in them, and noted the following as a response to that belief in their abilities: *"If people believe in me how can I not believe in myself? You are letting down other people. That is my philosophy."*
- P5, with reference to the resulting belief in self, offered an instance of being placed in a position where she knew less than desired about the subject matter, presented the following realisation: *"So I guess I worked harder probably because I didn't want to disappoint the person who believes in me. It also gave me that sense of: "Yes, I can do this". If there was every self-doubt I could manage that because someone who is higher than me, knows more than me believes that I can, so who am I to doubt myself? When you're not proving yourself you tend to do so much better because you are at your pace."*
- Upon recalling being offered a role that she *"knew nothing about"*, P10 noted the following regarding her change in perspective and attitude: *"It said a couple of things to me; one it said: "I should be taking myself as seriously as other people perceive me" and "Here is somebody who is actually taking a chance on me and he didn't have to"."*

#### 6.2.5.1. Political Savvy

In addition to self-efficacy and personal growth, political savvy has been included in leadership development programs (Morahan et al., 2011). The development of an

understanding of the organisational culture is important to exert influence within the organisation (Ladebo, 2006). This is supported by the number of women who indicated the importance of understanding organisational politics in order to navigate their career at senior management level. P2 described in the following manner: *“That is a political game again that we need to learn to play.”* P10 emphasises the importance of knowing who the stakeholders and influencers are: *“One of the things that my predecessor taught me was that when you get to senior level, you need to understand business politics and not in the nasty sense. But you really need to understand who the players are, how you are going to influence those players, how do you get buy-in without forming cliques.”* The awareness of the environment and the players involved is emphasised by P15 who states that everyone in the organisation gets involved in politics and goes on to describe it using a metaphor of playing a rugby game: *“The notion that we don’t play politics is absolute nonsense, you have to. You know it’s like saying I’m going to go onto a rugby field but I’m not going to play rugby, nonsense. You’ve got to understand the politics of the work environment and to a degree you’ve got to play them and I know a lot of people don’t want to be part of the corporate politics – It’s nonsense! We are all part of the corporate politics. I refuse to be part of the gossip and the back chatting and taking sides, the games, but I have to be aware of my environment and I have to be aware of who is doing what and what are the dynamics and what are the sides and who’s backing who, because otherwise you just get caught up.”*

### **6.3. DISCUSSION OF RESEARCH QUESTION 2**

The second research question relates to the career anchors that form the foundation of the women’s career decisions *“Which career anchors are most prevalent among women in senior management?”*

Chapter 5 reflected the anchors that were found to be the most prominent foundational aspect to career decisions as revealed through the interviews conducted with the women that participated in this study.

#### **6.3.1. Career Anchor Ranking**

As discussed in the previous chapter, the order of prevalence for career anchors is (1) *lifestyle*, (2) *pure challenge* (3) *service or dedication to a cause* (4) *general managerial competence*, (5) *entrepreneurial creativity and jointly*, (6) *security / stability and jointly*, (7) *autonomy / independence and technical-functional competence*.

These results are aligned with both studies by Danziger and Valency (2006) and Marshall and Bonner (2003), who reported *lifestyle* to be the most prevalent self-rated career

anchor for women (Danziger & Valency, 2006; Marshall & Bonner, 2003). However, when compared to this study, similar to the comparison between the two aforementioned studies, there are no similarities in rank order past the first anchor. The prevalence of the *lifestyle* anchor among women is aligned to studies that revealed that women place higher value on lifestyle factors (Marshall & Bonner, 2003; Schein, 1996; Weber & Ladkin, 2009). Due to the prevalence of the *lifestyle* anchor, it can be inferred that the preference may be guided by the need for the women to play a dual career-family role (Danziger & Valency, 2006).

Various authors have found that managers rate *general managerial competence* higher than the *technical-functional competence* (Danziger & Valency, 2006; Igbaria et al., 1991). This study supports these findings, through the evaluations of inferred preferences that *general managerial competence* was ranked fourth, whereas the *technical-functional competence* anchor did not feature in the rankings. The notable difference is that, unlike the previous studies that were based on self-evaluations, the anchors were inferred based on the evaluation of the participants' comments and career decisions to date (Chapman & Brown, 2014).

### **6.3.2. Career Anchor Plurality**

Contradictory to Schein's (1990) argument that career anchors are singular in nature and congruent with authors such as Feldman and Bolino (1996) and Barclay, Chapman and Brown (2013), many women had more than one career anchor (Barclay, Chapman, & Brown, 2013; Schein, 1990) as can be seen in Annexure 5. This can be seen in P12's observed preferences for *general managerial competence*, *service or dedication to a cause and lifestyle* as demonstrated by her varying comments relating to the respective anchors: "The Psychometric [test] says I'm a completer, finisher, but I am not necessarily the one who thinks of the bright and shiny ideas." relating to general managerial competence, "...to change people's lives, or touch their lives." relating to service or dedication to a cause, and "Flexibility: with my two kids that is a non-negotiable. I need the flexibility to say that I am working from home today or my child is sick, or has a concert. I think for me to go into a rigid, corporate, no-flexibility..." "be at work, be visible" for no other reason, I wouldn't have liked it." relating to lifestyle. Similarly, this can be seen through P7's observed preferences for *service or dedication to a cause and pure challenge* as demonstrated by her varying comments relating to the respective anchors: "I'm always looking at things and how it could be done differently. What would I consider in a promotion - is a geographical move or to do something where I could feel like I could really make a difference." relating to service or dedication to a cause, and "Now I'm much

*more driven by doing things that I am just really interested in doing. So now I really want to solve something, do something great, change something, and that's my forte. Taking a broken team and fixing it... and suddenly people are just working seamlessly in new ways and they're producing new and better."* relating to pure challenge.

### **6.3.3. Congruency**

Congruence between the *lifestyle* career anchor and the women's work environment has surfaced as an important factor in decisions pertaining to their career and resulting successes in their roles and contributions (Chapman & Brown, 2014; Schein, 1990). This can be seen in the description of the need for balance by P12: *"...I think for me to go into a rigid, corporate, no-flexibility..."* *"be at work, be visible" for no other reason, I wouldn't have liked it.*" and P4: *"...It's that I want to have a meaningful deep relationship with my children and I want to have a good relationship with my husband...If I ever feel like I'm getting out of touch I would change things dramatically... That means choices along the journey that you make to make sure that it happens."*

Similarly, congruence between the pure challenges anchor and the women's work environment as supported by P2: *"...I think if it was some real easy thing we had to do, that you could do in your sleep and was easy to manage, I think I would get bored."* and P11: *"I am excited about going to work, I am excited about what the challenges are going to be."*

With a view into the most prevalent career anchors among women in senior management positions, a deeper understanding can be gained by looking at the key areas of motivation that allow these women to achieve their view of success.

### **6.3.4. Motivators**

#### **6.3.4.1. Lifestyle Anchor**

The primary motivator for women with *lifestyle* as a preferred anchor is the ability to balance their work and private life (Schein, 1990, 1996) as evident in the comments made by P3 with reference to balance: *"In career it is always for me about balancing the private life with the professional life..."* and P9: *"From a sort of broader perspective, it would need to offer me the flexibility to be able to go and watch my kid play soccer, participate in lift clubs, meet with builders if I'm renovating (that just happens to be what I'm dealing with now)..."* An argument can be made that the need for balance will only be relevant, given the situational factors such as family responsibilities (Choi, 2015) that may be at play during a specific life-stage that may affect the women's career decisions (Day, Zaccaro, & Halpin, 2004). It is thus suggested that women's life anchor may shift

to their secondary preference in the absence of family responsibilities (Rodrigues et al., 2013).

#### 6.3.4.2. *Service or Dedication to a Cause Anchor*

For women with *service or dedication to a cause* as their anchor preference, their primary motivation is to improve the world around them (Schein, 1990, 1996). The congruence of a woman's role and career goals to the feeling that they can make a difference to their immediate surroundings could lead to career satisfaction which is linked to subjective career success (Judge et al., 1995). It can therefore be argued that a woman's subjective career success evaluation can be affected by the state of career satisfaction experienced, which could lead to the achievement of positive career outcomes (Chapman & Brown, 2014; Schein, 1990).

Both the *lifestyle* and *service or dedication to a cause* anchors are regarded as a *motives* and *needs* based anchor, which is focused on how a person wants to structure their roles at work (Feldman & Bolino, 1996). Based on the high preference for this anchor, it can be inferred that the possibility of freedom to structure their lives in a way that suits their lifestyle and need to make a difference, could lead to a positive perception of subjective career success.

#### 6.3.4.3. *Pure Challenge Anchor*

For women with *pure challenge* as their preferred anchor, motivations are rooted in competition and the thrill of solving problems (Schein, 1996) as supported by P9: *"I would say stimulation and challenge. From a work perspective it's fulfilment. I don't want to be bored, I don't want to be under-stimulated, I don't want to be undermined or under-recognised. It needs to stretch me, it needs to be challenging,"* and P16: *"So I quite enjoyed that trouble shooting, problem solving making a difference to people at a very practical and quick type turnaround level."*

A number of women indicated that they are *competitive* in nature, including P2 and P11, who have a preference for pure challenge as evidenced by P2, mentioning her competitive nature in reaching objective success, linked to promotion: *"I think there is a little bit of competitiveness and seeing people promoted around me..."* supported by her preference for the pure challenge anchor: *"From a personal perspective that it is challenging. I think if it was some real easy thing we had to do, that you could do in your sleep and was easy to manage, I think I would get bored. So I think I have to feel it is challenging and hard, and you learn – as much as you hate challenge and I hate some of these things we have had to deal with on our program... but what you do, is learn from*

*those things.” and P11, who mentioned her inclination towards competitiveness: “I was exceptionally competitive, I had to keep up with three boys growing up.”, coupled with her preference for pure challenge as an anchor: “I am excited about going to work, I am excited about what the challenges are going to be, what country in Africa is going to give me a headache today, how am I going to solve the problem. Maybe that is why I am in this industry, there are so many issues that you can solve, it’s not necessarily the most exciting thing for me but I enjoy solving problems, so that is probably what gets me going.”*

#### *6.3.4.4. General Managerial Anchor*

Women with the general managerial anchor are motivated by solving problems as can be seen by P9: *“I’m a very good implementer. Go behind people, make things happen, I’m not the ideas person, I think that I have this aspiration to be one of those ideas people.”* and P12: *“The Psychometric [test] says I’m a completer, finisher, but I am not necessarily the one who thinks of the bright and shiny ideas.”*

Based on the most prevalent anchors in this study being lifestyle, service or dedication to a cause, pure challenge and general managerial, the underlying motivations and drivers based on the responses from the women support the theory (Schein, 1990, 1996). Thus, the underlying motivations as seen by the results shown in Chapter 5, surfaced as balance, making a difference (improvement), working in challenging environments and the opportunity solving problems.

### **6.4. DISCUSSION OF RESEARCH QUESTION 3**

The third research question was designed to dig deeper into the specific underlying drivers behind the women’s behaviour that attributed to them attaining senior management positions. Specifically, *“What are the career drivers that make women in senior management successful?”*

In addition to the driver categories in the conceptual model contributed by Coetzee (2008), this research question also gained insights into the specific drivers perceived to be successful (Coetzee, 2008).

During the semi-structured nature of the interviews, the different constructs of career drivers were explored, namely career purpose, career directedness and career venturing (Coetzee, 2008).

#### **6.4.1. Career Purpose**

A significant number of women's responses made reference to the need to make a difference or have an impact on the world and people around them, which is congruent with the description of this drive, which relates to a sense of calling and fulfilment as a result of the reach of their work (Coetzee, 2008). This is supported by P2, who referred to the scale of impact that their contribution will have on others: *"I think the impact, the span of broadness in terms of the group and areas impact also impact on the organisation."*, reinforced by P5's reference to the ability to make a difference: *"P5: "So the first thing would be can I make a difference? I think that is what drives me is being able to add value to an organisation. Then is my passion going to be able to find life in that opportunity? My passion is really around leading people and coaching leaders to become better leaders." "* and P8 emphasising the need to link her contribution to her passion, which is congruent with the calling orientation (Coetzee, 2008): *"I think it is important for me is that whatever it is that you are doing the passion must be burning because if the fire goes off you feel it in you and as long as you are connecting with it you will always have that comfort. Often you hear people talk about, "I have spent my career and at the end of the career I actually didn't enjoy what I am doing," it is because they didn't find that fire in them and they didn't connect to it."* Based on the aforementioned responses, one can infer that women who attach meaning to the work that they do are more likely to achieve success.

#### **6.4.2. Career Directedness**

This particular career driver implies a strong sense of clarity in terms of future career directions coupled with the ability to find the applicable support in assistance of achieving the goals (Coetzee, 2008). The majority of women that participated in this study demonstrated behaviours congruent with being forward-looking with respect to their careers, which enabled them to proactively shape their careers by making intentional or purposeful decisions pertaining to their career progression (Zacher, 2014). This is evidenced by responses from P4: *"I think that I do make decisions quite intentionally. I don't always know what the consequences are going to be, but I'm very considered about how I do things."* P12: *"I think it was clear to me that in my career... where I was at the time, I did not want to be an audit-manager. I had reasonable certainty about it. For me it was "Either I take this, or I go"... At that stage I was fairly certain I did not really want to be a partner in an audit firm, I wanted to get out of that Industry to get more into the market and I applied for 2 – 3 posts."* and P17: *"Each of the changes I made, I made quite mindfully. I'm a really structured person. From a very early age I have been goal*

*directed. Because of that, each of my career moves have been mindful. I always had an aspiration to work at a strategic group level.”*

It is also worth noting that two women indicated that their career progression did not involve intentional decision-making to driver their career outcomes. This is evident in the responses from P7: *“I am not a person who has consciously planned where my career has gone actually. I don’t sit down and write and say my career in 5 years’ time or 10 years’ time. I’m not a very good example I suppose of somebody who had planned their career and aimed to get to a certain place.”* and P15: *“It just happened. I think it’s still just happening to me. I didn’t actually know what I wanted to do, so I started doing event management at a little company and I used to organise conferences in Cape Town. I thought the opportunities sounded interesting and so I moved into that role, but it just happened.”*

#### *6.4.2.1. Coaching*

In addition to the intentional career decisions, a number of women indicated adapting their behaviour to prepare for transitions into new roles (Zacher, 2014) by means of seeking direction from a coach, thus demonstrating the ability to know where to obtain the relevant support to achieve their goals (Coetzee, 2008). Complementary to career drivers are career harmonisers, designed to bring equilibrium to the career drivers in the women’s journey to driving their career goals. With particular reference to the recognition that help is required to assist with the identification and correction of behaviour changes, behavioural adaptability refers to the ability to identify these behaviours that are necessary for advancement (Coetzee, 2008). As a mechanism to address the aspect of behavioural adaptability, a number of women indicated that they requested the services of a coach to assist with the identification and reinforcement of the required behavioural change in order to grow and move into the roles identified as part of the women’s intentional career decisions (Brotman et al., 1998). As stated by P3: *“I have had an external coach as well, I can say I really don’t know how I should handle this situation and he’ll say: “Well, have you thought about this, have you thought about that?” I could be open with him that I don’t know.”* and P5: *“I have two coaches, well three coaches. I had a career coach, a life coach, and a financial coach...”*

#### *6.4.2.2. Personal Branding*

Personal branding is associated with the explicit self-packaging of one’s image through the management of perceptions that people may have and is different to self-improvement (Lair et al., 2005). The need for the brand management element in the advancement, attributed to the women’s success in achieving and sustaining senior level



positions is emphasised and supported by P2 who highlighted the need to manage perceptions with particular reference to the “sales” element involved at senior management levels: *“Moving away from: “If I do a great job, everyone is going to just think I am fabulous and promote me anyway” – to actually know there is a bit of sales required – and when I say sales it is more interacting with those people so that they are seeing you and it doesn’t have to be all the time, but to an extent that they go “Oh yes, absolutely!”... I think talking to people on a more informal basis, just to see what their perception is about you out there, and it is quite good to get a view of what people think. It is a very easy conversation because it is a conversation about you. I mean if it is bad news, it is bad news, if it is good news it’s great, but if you don’t ask you don’t know, and I would rather know than not know.”* and supported by P5, emphasising the physical appearance involved in looking the part: *“Dress for the job you want not the job you have. That was also in the way that you carried yourself. If you continuously carry yourself at a level that people sometimes maybe are confused by your role or don’t know what your role is, then you are hitting the mark. I have always said to myself, I am not less than anyone else. I hold a position and my position is important in the entire organisation. It plays a pivotal role. I am adding as much value as the technical manager is or the systems manager is. It is just that my role happens to be different from theirs.”* P10 noted the necessity to manage one’s brand before opinions are formed that are misaligned to the person one would like to portray: *“To manage your brand, to manage perceptions around you. I have found business to be very unforgiving so I learned very early that I need to be managing my brand.”*

#### 6.4.2.3. Networking / Relationship Management

An argument can also be made that self-packaging, that is associated with personal branding, is similar to the increased visibility networking strategy. The increased visibility network strategy focuses on building relationships to increase visibility within the organisation and has been reported to assist women in reaching senior levels of the organisation (Forret & Dougherty, 2004). This is supported by P9, who recalled a leadership opportunity that arose due to well-managed networks: *“My network stood me in good stead because our shareholder introduced me to the CEO, so that’s how I got here... I didn’t have all the right experience I think he took a bit of a chance and I think that’s where, if you can work with someone they’ll take more of a risk with someone they know, so if you like them and you get on with them then you’re prepared to kind of overlook the fact that they haven’t done this particular thing. You’ll teach them.”* and P2, with the emphasis on increased visibility as a result of good relationship building skills: *“Recognising it is all about the relationships with very senior people who recognise you*

*as a leader. I just think I always believed that people would just think I was fabulous and that will be how it'll work. I quickly realised that it's actually not the case, and you need to do a lot more working on the relationships with more senior people, getting them to see, you know the type of discussions you are having with them is very different."*

### **6.4.3. Career Venturing**

A majority of women made reference to taking risks in their career advancement decisions to move in the desired direction (Coetzee, 2008), with reference to taking on roles that are not based in their proven strengths. This is described by P5 as having the courage to go after what one wants: *"Then also a level of courage. That if you want something then go get it regardless of perceptions or proposed or supposed shortcomings. You can always negotiate your way through those. Negotiate your way through things so that people will believe in you as much as you believe in yourself."* P17 described her change in career, which seemed like a step sideways in order to progress to the next level in the organisation, with a clear decision to take the risk: *"...If I was going to be senior in the organisation, I realised I needed more experience and moved to another division where I didn't have experience."*

#### *6.4.3.1. Reaching for opportunities*

A significant number of women indicated that they reached for opportunities in order to advance in their career. The act of reaching for opportunities can be regarded as a form of risk taking in experimenting with new opportunities, as opposed to waiting for opportunities to come their way (Coetzee, 2008). By reaching for opportunities, the women demonstrate a high future orientated focus with the ability to explore and imagine future roles and orientate themselves towards the future state (Zacher, 2014). Evidence of this can be seen in the responses from P8, referring to taking as many opportunities as possible to learn as much as possible: *"You've got to do it, don't expect others to say you have got the capabilities. There are opportunities that land on your lap and that you grab, but there are others where: "What do you know about it? Why do you want to do it? Let's get somebody from the outside to do it and they will do it quickly and who has got an informed decision around it?" So I think yes you have to when there is an opportunity, when everybody else around you is going for that same one: put your hand up, compete for it if you have to. I think you've got to lean in, you've got to put yourself out there. Don't be afraid of rejection, because there will be another time. I think also you need to be able to put your hand up and say, "I can do it, give me the opportunity"."* P10 made reference to speaking up to add value in the organisation and being the one to take on the challenge: *"The people who don't say anything often don't get anywhere*

*even though they may be ready because you sort have got to show some initiative in terms of that is what you want, that is where you want to go... I think the game changer for me is the fact that I always raised my hand up. So when I came in here and I realised that there are things that are missing that could actually be very detrimental to the business or to the reputation of the business I raised my hand up and I said "You have a risk that we need to manage" and we started putting the right things in place."* and emphasised by P12 with reference to getting involved and not necessarily waiting for permission, within reason and area of responsibility: *"I didn't really ask permission, I just became involved and said I will vet the service providers."*

## **6.5. CONCLUSION**

This chapter provided a discussion of the results in relation to the three research questions presented in Chapter 5 of this report. . The findings revealed women's views of success, which were mainly described from a subjective point of view. When unpacking the reasons for success, emphasis was placed on the importance of self-esteem as an important factor to their success. When unpacking the self-evaluation subjective success, resilience had a strong presence in the responses received in addition to self-esteem, emotional stability, locus of control and career motivation. The noteworthy observation regarding locus of control was made that although women took intentional decisions in relation to their career progression, a number of women's speech patten still referred to an element of "luck" when referring to their perceived success. While exploring their leadership development process, a number of women indicated that their leadership journey started when someone placed belief in their abilities, known as leader categorisation, which resulted in them taking on the responsibility of the leadership position, known as self-categorisation. The lifestyle anchor was discovered as the most prevalent anchor among women in senior management. In addition to career purpose, career directedness and career venturing additional career drivers were discovered as part of the interview process, namely; political savvy, competitiveness, personal branding, networking / relationship management, reaching opportunities and coaching. The research findings, recommendations and conclusion will be discussed in the next chapter.

## **7. CHAPTER 7: CONCLUSION**

### **7.1. INTRODUCTION**

Chapter 1 of this report introduced a business problem relating to the absence of gender parity at top levels of organisations. The business problem highlighted the significant underutilisation of the country's talent proven to be detrimental to South Africa's national competitiveness with far-reaching economic consequences. With sparse representation of women at senior and top management levels, the aim was to discover the key career drivers that enable women to achieve the upper echelons of organisations.

Chapter 6 discussed the results from the data presented in Chapter 5 linked to the existing literature on career success and career drivers in order to answer the research questions posed. The findings identified the key factors that attribute to women's ability to achieve their view of success, with key motivators that drive behaviour based on the most prevalent career anchors that exists among women in senior management. The findings identified key drivers that guide behaviour that enable successful upward mobility for these women.

This chapter reviews and compares the research objectives with the findings from the study in order to address the research problem identified. The chapter provides a consolidation of the results and discussions presented in the form of key findings and seeks to provide a view of implications to business and recommendations to stakeholders. Based on the exploration of the topic, limitations to this study as well as suggestions for future research are presented and finally a conclusion of the research project.

### **7.2. RESEARCH BACKGROUND AND OBJECTIVES**

Despite the increased focus on gender parity issues over the past three decades, studies suggest that attempts to address the imbalance have produced limited results (Clarke, 2011) although women enter the workforce at the same rate as men (Ely et al., 2011).

Even though there has been an increased focus by both government and business to address gender parity, merely motivating and enabling women to participate at increased levels is not enough, the development of women leaders should be prioritised (Šidlauskienė & Butašova, 2011).

Although extensive research has been conducted in the field of gender equality, limited insights have been gained into strategies that can be implemented by women to advance their careers, with an overconcentration on barriers to entry to top management positions

(Laud & Johnson, 2013). The efforts for legislative bodies to ensure that minority groups are fairly represented within organisations cannot be underplayed, however efforts cannot be one-sided. There is a need for women to develop their own leadership styles (Baker, 2014) and to take personal action to identify the key elements that will enable them to advance in their careers.

An understanding of how women perceive their own success is imperative to uncover what motivates women to drive their own careers in an attempt to achieve their view of success (Herrbach & Mignonac, 2012). When reviewing the literature on career success, it was evident that women predominantly assess their perceived career success from a subjective point of view, indicating that hierarchical position and remuneration alone cannot be used as motivation for women to continue to actively participate in the economy. Subjective success evaluations are diverse and perceptual and can therefore not be standardised (Laud & Johnson, 2012).

Through the process of understanding the motivations that drive women to achieve their view of success, the objective of this research was to explore the drivers that enable women to attain senior management positions. Career anchors, based on preferences, needs and values, were used to uncover the underlying motivations of each of the prevalent career anchors (Schein, 1996) and were explored in light of career drivers with thematic key drivers that enable women to achieve their view of success.

### **7.3. KEY FINDINGS**

#### **Research question one: “How do women in senior management achieve their view of success?”**

The majority of women evaluated their success based on subjective measures compared to their own standards and aspirations. The main thematic evaluations indicated that it success is viewed as a process of continuous improvement rather than a designation and is rooted in the sense of fulfilment and happiness, coupled with the ability to make a difference and have a wide reach in terms of the impact of their actions and decisions.

The objective evaluations of a number of women indicated that the financial aspect of remuneration play a role in the evaluation of their own success primarily in order to maintain their lifestyle, based on the situational factors that are at play in their lives.

Based on an evaluation of the women’s success, the self-evaluation used to evaluate career success revealed the following key success factors that enabled women to achieve success:

- As women gain experience there is an inclination towards the increase in self-esteem, which added to their achievement of success. Coupled with this, the need for self-confidence relating to own decisions and actions was emphasised with the need for stronger reliance on their own abilities much earlier in their careers to guide behaviours.
- The majority of the women demonstrated a strong inclination towards taking control of their own careers by making intentional and purposeful career moves to advance in the direction they desire, based on their view of success. In light of this, it was surprising to find that a significant number of women, despite driving their career progression by making purposeful career move decisions, still refer to some of their successes as “*luck*” or “*being in the right place at the right time*”.
- Apart from resilience explicitly being referred to as an important element of career motivation, the descriptions of the women’s career progression, which included difficult situations and decisions, resilience to carry on despite challenges was also found to be an important aspect to them achieving success.
- Political savvy, referring to the ability to navigate ones way through the organisation has surfaced as a key skill that attributes to the achievement of success. Political savvy includes elements such as knowing who the key stakeholders and key influencers are.

**Research question two: “Which career anchors are most prevalent among women in senior management?”**

The ranked order of career anchors were (1) *lifestyle*, (2) *pure challenge* (3) *service or dedication to a cause* (4) *general managerial competence*, (5) *entrepreneurial creativity and jointly*, (6) *security / stability*, with no women showing any inclination towards *autonomy / independence* and *technical-functional competence* as a career anchor preference.

In support of theory regarding career anchors, congruence between the women’s career anchors and their work environment was found to be imperative to their success. The alignment to preferences, which form the base of career anchors ensures that the underlying motivations associated with each anchor assists the women to drive their career decisions.

The ranked order of preferred career anchors revealed the following key motivators to drive behaviours to achieve success:

- *Balance*: The results revealed a strong preference for balance due to situational factors such as family responsibility.
- *Significance (making a difference)*: Doing things that matter to them. The women were primarily concerned with the ability to improve their sphere of influence with the need to add value and for their opinion to matter.
- *Challenge*: The women prefer roles that require complex environments where creative problem solving skills are required in order to feed the need for a sense of accomplishment and the need to be stretched to expand their skillset.
- *Competition*: A number of women made references to themselves being competitive by nature, which they attribute to being the reason for their drive to achieve success.

**Research question three: “What are the career drivers that make women in senior management successful?”**

The review of the career driver categories, which involve career purpose, career directedness and career venturing, the following was found:

- *Meaning*: Aligned with the motivation of significance (making a difference) rooted in the *service or dedication to a cause anchor*, the career purpose aspect of career drivers showed that the women want to find meaning in what they do in order to remain fulfilled.
- *Clear career vision*: A significant number of women indicated that they had a clear vision of the direction they wanted to take their career progression with specific actions taken to enable a move in the desired direction. Conversely, a few women noted that their career decisions were not intentional.
- *Taking risks*: Some of the women with clear visions for their career indicated that they took on roles that were not aligned to their proven strengths or perhaps lateral moves that enabled them to move into a new direction, thus taking a risk in a particular direction to advance their career in the desired direction.

Enablers that surfaced that proved to assist the women in achieving success, were the following:

- *Coaching*: An enabler that surfaced as part of conversations involving career decisions is that significance of the objective perspective of a coach to assist them in evaluating options, identify and change required behavioural change to

achieve success in the roles that they fulfil, or the roles that they prepare for their intentional career decisions.

- *Personal Branding*: The need to manage one's own brand surfaced as a key enabler to advancing in their career, which assisted them in managing perceptions about them in the organisation.
- *Networking / Relationship Management*: This was highlighted as being key to increasing visibility within the organisation as well as creating opportunities to move into senior management positions.
- *Reaching for opportunities*: A number of women noted that their tendency to reach for and take opportunities that others would normally shy away from has created a platform for them to showcase their skills and commitment, which assisted them in achieving success.

### **7.3.1. Conclusion of findings**

Based on the results presented in Chapter 5 and the discussion of the results in Chapter 6, this research concluded that the key driver behind success lies in having a clear vision of the career path, which seems to be rooted in the individual's view of success. It was further revealed that once the vision is clearly defined, women who took control of their own careers by making intentional decisions relevant to their career progression, seemed to progress faster towards their definition of career success, which consequently resulted in the attainment of senior management positions in their organisations. The main enablers discovered to have an impact on the achievement of success were related to the soft skills that focus on behavioural aspects of being a leader.

## **7.4. RECOMMENDATIONS TO STAKEHOLDERS**

The objective of this research was to explore the drivers that enable women to attain senior management positions.

### **7.4.1. Implications for Management**

Through the establishment of leadership development programs aimed at development women leaders to create a sustainable pipeline of talented women to enter the senior ranks within organisations, companies should focus on the following elements:

- *Human Resource Practices*: Establishing human resource practices supported by work environments that encourage work-life balance, flexibility and the ability for women to structure their own working conditions within the boundaries of their roles.



- *Development Programmes:* Offer leadership programs that provide training, guidance and support in the areas of organisational politics, networking and personal branding.
- *Networking:*
  - Creating a gender neutral platform that provide networking opportunities within the organisation.
  - Focused attention on creating internal visibility around the women and the work they do in an effort to build stronger networks.
- *Career development discussions:* Establish regular career discussions focused on growth and skills development tailored to the specifically defined career path that the female employee developed collaboratively with their direct manager.
- *Coaching:* Offer coaching as a benefit to develop and prepare the female employee for the leadership roles that they will fulfil.

#### **7.4.2. Recommendations to Aspiring Women**

The findings from this study revealed that women are inspired by meaning in the work they do. Company strategies to elevate women into the top management positions have been proven to be successful, however not all companies are focused on the growth and development of women as a primary focus.

Based on the findings from this report, women are encouraged to take their own career development into their own hands by employing the following strategies:

- *Career Management:* It is imperative for aspiring women to take control of their career development independent of the roles that they play in their respective organisations. The following strategies:
  - *Define success:* Women are encouraged to define a clear vision of what success looks like to them.
  - *Discover key motivations:* In exploring the definition of success, in light of career anchors, women are encouraged to discover their non-negotiable anchors that will provide clarity around what their key motivations are.
- *Develop soft skills:* The research findings revealed that soft skills such as networking, relationship management, political savviness and conscious personal brand management.
- *Coaching:* The research findings revealed that the women found coaching to be an effective tool to develop their soft skills.

- *Take opportunities:* Women are encouraged to take risks and reach for opportunities that will help them achieve their personal career development goals.

## **7.5. RESEARCH LIMITATIONS**

This study offered deeper insights into the career journeys of women at a particular point in time, which were observed within a particular context. It may therefore not be possible to generalise and extrapolate the findings to a broader population due to the time frame and context within which of the interviews will be conducted.

A further limitation relates to the sample that was restricted to participants in Gauteng due to the geographic proximity and time constraints associated with the timeframe in which the study was conducted. It may therefore not be possible for findings to be generalised and extrapolated to a wider group of women in other geographical regions or nationalities.

The subjectivity associated with the qualitative exploratory nature of this study may lend itself to researcher bias.

## **7.6. RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH**

In light of the need for insights to be gained in the field of strategies that can be implemented by women to focus on upward mobility, studies of a similar nature can be undertaken to uncover these strategies employed. The following research is suggested:

- A case study at a particular organisation to understand how women have ensured their upward mobility through self-directed career planning, independent of the organisation.
- In an attempt to look at affirmative action and gender parity, future studies could be focused at looking at the different enablers and drivers for women from different cultural background and race within the context of a particular organisational culture setting.
- Future research should replicate this study within different industries to uncover whether career enablers differ across industries.
- Studies that would identify and compare the career drivers and enablers between men and women in an attempt to see whether there are key differences.
- The participants in this study had a significant number of mothers. A comparison between career drivers and enablers of women in different life

stages may offer insights into what women find important, which could provide companies with insight into retention and development strategies tailored specifically for the women's needs.

- In an attempt to develop a leadership pipeline to advance women into senior positions, future studies could look at the key enablers at each level of the organisation to assist aspiring women in accelerating their career progression. Likewise, it could assist organisations in understanding which key developmental areas to focus on at each stage of a woman's career and thus focus on a career progression acceleration model.

## **7.7. CONCLUSION TO RESEARCH PROJECT**

More than half of the South African population consists of women. Even with the career advancement programs put in place by organisations coupled with government initiatives to address the underrepresentation of women, progress is still slow. The underutilisation of women has been noted as a global trend. Given the efforts by both organisations and government, the individual element of taking ownership of one's own career development by actively driving career decisions becomes imperative.

The scope of the research specifically focused on women in senior management. The study provided an understanding into the motivators, drivers and enablers for women that have attained senior management positions to enable aspiring women to replicate the strategies implemented by these women. Through the semi-structured interview process, the study revealed the key motivations behind career driven women through the exploration of career anchors. The study also revealed that career driven women made intentional career decisions to move their career in the direction that they wanted to progress towards. Finally, the study revealed the importance of focus on soft skills such as; political savvy, personal brand management, networking with a particular focus on increased visibility) and reaching for opportunities, that will allow women to progress into the upper echelons of the organisation.

Through the analysis of data, thematic insights were gained into the career advancement of women. The research thus adds value to the body of knowledge in the field of career development in the form of career drivers and enablers that assist women in the attainment of senior management positions. Given this information, aspiring women are well positioned to replicate these advancement strategies to assist them in accelerating their career progression. The study has found the particular drivers and enablers that will assist women to effectively manage their careers in their aspiration to attain senior management positions.

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## APPENDICES

### APPENDIX 1: INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

#### *Introductory Letter*

*“Dear Participant*

*Thank you for availing yourself to meet with me today. The objective of this discussion is to provide a platform for you to share your career progression story and for me to gain insights into the specific career advancement enablers that you have employed to advance in your career.*

*I would like to highlight that this discussion is aimed at a personal level and is not linked to the organisation that you are currently employed with. My area of interest is in your personal managerial career progression journey to date and future career aspirations.*

*I would also like to highlight that these conversations will be recorded for transcribing purposes only and will be safeguarded and only used for my study purposes. The name of the company will not be used in my study and all personal information shared in this room will be respected and treated with confidentiality. The research results will be collated in a confidential manner with no reference to specific individuals or organisations.*

*I also request that you please sign the attached consent letter as an indication of your voluntarily participation in this study. The raw information gathered in these interviews will not be shared with the company.*

*Finally, I would like to thank you for your time. I look forward to reliving your journey with you.”*

## ***Interview Guide***

### **Preliminaries**

1. Welcome and thank person for attending
2. Explain the purpose of the research
3. Ask permission to interview and record session and store digital content in a safe location
4. Ask participant to sign consent form
5. Demographic form

### **Questions**

1. Please tell me more about the times that you were promoted and could you share how it happened?
2. What was your career philosophy “mantra” that you may have repeated to yourself in your first few roles?
3. Do you still view the world the same way? How has it changed?
4. When you consider a new leadership opportunity, what are the most important criteria that you use to evaluate your options?
5. What does success look like to you?
6. Why do you think you were able to achieve success?
7. Tell me about a time where you felt that someone “had your back”, believed in your abilities and advocated on your behalf. What was the outcome?
8. Tell me about a time where you had to advocate for yourself.
9. What were some of the toughest times that you faced in your professional life?
10. What are some of the major turning points in your life that resulted in you getting to this point in your career?
11. Who do you admire as great leaders?
12. Give me an idea of the hardest career decisions you’ve made at different stages of your career journey and what are some of the outcomes of those decisions? (Both personally and professionally).
13. If you had the opportunity to coach your younger self through your career, what are some of the key lessons that you would like to impart to your younger self to accelerate your progression?

## **Consent Form**

Dear Participant

I am conducting research on the career advancement enablers for women in senior management. The interview will be in the form of a one-on-one interview and is expected to last about 1 – 1.5 hours. Your participation is voluntary and you can withdraw at any time without penalty. All data will be kept confidential. No company names or individual data will be revealed. If you have any concerns, please contact me or my supervisor.

Our details are as follows:

Researcher: Chantéll Lubbe

Email: [410344@mygibs.co.za](mailto:410344@mygibs.co.za)

Phone: +27 79 893 7974

Signature of participant:

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Date:

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Signature of researcher:

---

Date:

---

## Demographic Form

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1. Job Title

---

2. Duration in last three positions

---

3. Marital Status

---

4. Number of dependents

---

Thank you

Chantéll Lubbe

## APPENDIX 2: RQ1\_CAREER SUCCESS

Research Question 1: What are women in senior management's views of success?						
	P1	P2	P3	P4	P5	
Career Success	Objective Career Success	<p>I believe if I have set a target for something and I have achieved it, I have a comfortable life, I am able to get into a car and go wherever I want at whatever time without worrying about tyres, about service, and about worrying about anything. If I can take my kids on holiday, if I decide I want to go on holiday and I am afforded that. If I can take my kids to good schools, that is what success looks like to me. Those are the things that I would like for my family and if I can't afford those things then I haven't succeeded.</p>	<p>I have always wanted to be a respected leader of an organisation, to be considered as someone who is respected and contributes to the change of the organisation. So for me the big bug bear for the last couple of years has just been about promotion, but for me that is what success is. People ask why it is so important to be promoted, and it is really not about the money, it is to me about the recognition; the recognition that you are considered a senior leader of the firm that is making change and driving the organisation. And that is what I want and that is why it is always linked to the promotion but if you took promotion out of it that to me would be success and that recognition comes with "Right, we are going to promote you into this new role".</p>			<p>The obvious one which is on the list for everyone is financial benefit... Financial security, as a single woman, is very important and personally, it is quite high on my values list that I am going to be okay no matter what.</p>
		P6	P7	P8	P9	P10
			<p>If I have done what I have done over the years and I had been poorly paid, I would have moved to other companies and things like that. So I think it comes with the territory. If you're applying yourself and you're doing well and people recognise you, then you should be paid fine and get the other things that matter to you. Lots of leave and holidays.</p>		<p>I think it's being on top of your game in a company. For me, sitting on the executive is part of that success. If I had all of this and I was not on the executive, I probably wouldn't feel that I've reached it yet, so I guess that's about ego and about recognition and about the label and the title and all of that... I think that's probably what my definition of success would be; the kudos and the recognition and ego and all of that. So, obviously there's a financial aspect to that where you're earning at an appropriate level for the contribution that you're making and it does make things easier when you are earning more, because it enables you to buy that support system, so I think certainly financial success, but for me it's not the be all and the end all, in other words I'm not motivated entirely by money, but it helps.</p>	
		P11	P12	P13	P14	P15
	<p>I am the main bread-winner in our family, so I think it is important that I am well-paid... And I am talking about money as one example, but it is a big</p>					



**Research Question 1: What are women in senior management's views of success?**

			thing. My kids go to a private school so there are many costs for me. I live in Pretoria I work in Johannesburg so for me, yes money is one thing, but money mustn't be a topic.			
	<b>P16</b>	<b>P17</b>				
	<b>P1</b>	<b>P2</b>	<b>P3</b>	<b>P4</b>	<b>P5</b>	
	I am strong believer in being content. I don't complain about a lot of things in life.		Success for me is a process. You never arrive at success. I think it is when in that complex situation when all the dots can connect... It is a process. It shows up in different forms. And I have different successes.	It's about being happy. So it's about being happy and comfortable or proud of what you've achieved for yourself what your own benchmark is of what achievement means... Are you comfortable and happy with the choices you're making in relation to your whole life not just your work.	Success is that your work is being remembered and that when you are not there anymore people actually miss you. Not miss you as in I'm heartbroken, they can feel the impact you have made is still there even though you are not there and you are remembered by what you achieved.	
	<b>P6</b>	<b>P7</b>	<b>P8</b>	<b>P9</b>	<b>P10</b>	
Subjective Career Success	I think success is when you are comfortable with yourself and you think that you've arrived, because I don't think more money or more power or more direct reports means that you're successful.	Success for me is actually doing what I've just described. Taking a broken team and fixing it... The other sign of success for me is I absolutely love it when I see people that I've worked with, just blossoming.	Initially we start our lives comparing ourselves to others. So the questions that you are asking is very valuable, the journey we go through we learn with age that it is all about us and how we want to drive things and what is success for us... Don't look on the outside for a point, it is not arriving at a destination, it is continuous improvement, driving yourself to the next level and the next level doesn't necessarily mean a higher position, it means a point where you can influence more, you can support people more etcetera.	So I think success for me holistically, is where every aspect of my life is fulfilled.	Success to me is when I am happy and when I have a very good balance between being happy in my professional space and being happy at home. So you know being able to really just embrace, love my kids, spend time with my family, spend time with my husband and really do fulfilling stuff at work and have a very motivated team and a business that is vibrant for me that is success... So I cannot say success for me is when I'm vice president of HR in the region, no it comes with a lot of troubles and I could actually get there and still be very unhappy or get there at the expense of my family or get there at the expense of other people that I had to step all over to get there and for me no, it really should be wholesome in my mind and I must be in a happy space.	
	<b>P11</b>	<b>P12</b>	<b>P13</b>	<b>P14</b>	<b>P15</b>	
	I suppose success in the work place will be knowing that I am adding value, that whatever I am implementing and the changes I am making or the people I am working with is adding value.	I think success for me is inner peace about what you do on a daily basis and to change people's lives, or touch their lives. Also to go home and to feel good that you have achieved something, done something that may not have a large impact, but that one small thing, from a person perspective, am I personally challenged and am I happy with what I do at work on a daily basis... I compare myself with people whom I worked with, studies with, did articles with at and look to see where that person is now.... but then I think that	I think if you can honestly say to yourself when you are old: "I used all of my potential". I listened to a speaker the other day who said "I want to die light, because I have already left all my potential behind". That, to me, was really profound because success is about, it's not just about what position you hold or what salary you're earning. If you reach your full potential and, that self-actualisation, if you were able to do that, then I think you were successful. That's how I see it.	For me it is around adding value, maximising opportunity.	I realised it's actually not about the job title and I think for me it's become increasingly about what makes my heart sing, so when do I feel like I'm happy?	

**Research Question 1: What are women in senior management's views of success?**

			<p>wasn't a route for me, what am I doing here? How many lives to I affect here, how many people do I have an impact on? I think often to me success is when people leave and they say "I learned a lot from you". That makes me feel good, but I think success is what you make of it I think.</p>			
		<p><b>P16</b>          Success for me means when you go home at the end of the day you feel fulfilled. You go home and you feel I have made a difference to someone's life or to someone's bottom line or it doesn't matter what it is, but it is about that feeling when you walk away from an interaction.</p>	<p><b>P17</b>          That piece around belonging, there were times in my career where a particular cadre has been very important. Then there's esteem. At certain points of my career, having been promoted it wasn't about the money, but the profile and prestige, not the tangible stuff, but how others would view you. To me it's not about my esteem anymore, it's about self-actualisation.</p>			

### APPENDIX 3: RQ1\_SELF-EVALUATION

Research Question 1: How do women in senior management achieve their view of success?						
		P1	P2	P3	P4	P5
Self-evaluation	Self-esteem	<p>There is nothing that a woman can't do, we just do it differently from men. I mean at work I have been accused of being soft, but I deliver in my softness. So do things your way and what feels comfortable for you – and not what somebody else expects. But you can do anything. You can do anything – just do it your way.</p>		<p>So I never had self-doubt. I would have self-doubt if I didn't do my work, if I didn't work hard enough.</p>		<p>I have always said to myself, I am not less than anyone else... You are delivering in a manner that you are comfortable with. You can be authentic and you can do it in a way that suits you.</p>
		P6	P7	P8	P9	P10
			<p>Be sure of yourself. I would have had more confidence young, because I didn't have that confidence. Be happy to speak about what you know, don't worry about what you don't know.</p>		<p>So my putting up my hand was, I applied. Other people may not have applied because they didn't feel they were up for it, so maybe there was an element of confidence there that was important.</p>	
		P11	P12	P13	P14	P15
		<p>I think it's very important, especially someone coming from a background of previously disadvantages, not to apologise for being there. No, I am not apologising. I am here. I deserve to be here and I have a voice.</p>	<p>It was a definite career-move and I think not as much for them and with the fact that it was such a prestigious post. I just thought: "What do I have to lose? If I don't apply, I will never know. Let me apply and see"... I think to listen more to my instincts (gut).</p>		<p>So I suppose it is listen to your gut instinct, because if you do you will make decisions a lot quicker. Sometimes you drag things out, because you are scared of the consequence of a decision.</p>	
		P16	P17			
<p>I believe there is nothing that I want to be and that I want to achieve that I cannot be and achieve... I would say to my younger self: "Don't hold back, don't ever think you are not good enough or you are not going to make it, or just believe", because I found that when I started believing in me, then that's when I knew nothing is impossible.</p>	<p>Quieten the inner critic, not second guess yourself so much. Have courage, because life is for living.</p>					
Emotional stability	P1	P2	P3	P4	P5	
			<p>It is mastering yourself in terms of what are my values; what are my perceptions; am I willing to stretch them; am I willing to learn from other people; am I willing to let go of some of the things. That is all about how I am reinventing myself to show up richer, better every day. It is a journey.</p>		<p>Life is not just about work although everything impacts each other. I am a big believer in self-development and always trying to understand yourself better and why you are the way you are; you react the way you do; and evolving for yourself and everyone else around you who benefits from that.</p>	
	P6	P7	P8	P9	P10	
		<p>I think the important issue is around emotional maturity.</p>		<p>No matter how right your decision is or how appropriate it is for these particular circumstances, it is a tough</p>		

**Research Question 1: How do women in senior management achieve their view of success?**

						decision to make. So yes, the truth is when you are in leadership you are not always liked or loved and there are those moments where people will feel differently about you and that is fine. I think the trick for me is never to take it personal.
	P11	P12	P13	P14	P15	
	P16	P17				
Locus of control	P1	P2	P3	P4	P5	
		<p><b>Internal:</b> "I did drive them a lot myself, so I think if I look back it wasn't like I just sat back and waited for someone to come and say – "Right, you have a promotion!..."</p> <p><b>External (luck):</b> But generally, I have been very lucky.</p>	<p><b>External (luck):</b> I do believe there is a bit of luck in terms of being at the right place at the right time, but I also think it is how you show up at that particular time.</p>	<p><b>Internal: P4:</b> I think that I do make decisions quite intentionally.</p> <p><b>External (luck):</b> I mean the one opportunity was just luck.</p>	<p><b>Internal:</b> It was definitely intentional...</p>	
	P6	P7	P8	P9	P10	
	<p><b>Internal:</b> So I never really had a motto, but I always knew what I wanted.</p>		<p><b>Internal:</b> I was very clear in terms of what I wanted from a position...</p> <p><b>External (luck):</b> I was lucky then to land the government position where I could actually be hands-on... I was lucky in that I was at the right point in my career where specialists in my field didn't have a defined portfolio... It was fortunate as well that the timing was right for me to be able to do it.</p>	<p><b>Internal:</b> There was definitely an intentional aspiration that if I enjoyed it, I would manoeuvre myself into that position if it was right for me...</p> <p><b>External (luck):</b> I think I was lucky... I think I have been lucky and I've had good opportunities and I've had good career progression and I've had good support and people fighting for me.</p>	<p><b>Internal:</b> ...So I had to make a choice and the choice was I am very good at what I do, I can continue on this path or I can change careers altogether, so this is the second time in my life that I am changing careers...</p> <p><b>External (luck):</b> At the moment I'm in a fortunate space that I am managing a cluster of countries.</p>	
	P11	P12	P13	P14	P15	
	<p><b>External (luck):</b> So I have really been lucky, his business partner has gone to a large auditing firm and has punted me at this firm... I have been exceptionally fortunate in my career, I really, really have been.</p>		<p><b>External (luck):</b> I think I am unbelievably lucky to be in the right places at the right times.</p>	<p><b>Internal:</b> ...but there is no defined career path so you have got to kind of define it as you are going along.</p>	<p><b>External (luck):</b> I mean I've also been fortunate in that I've had various experiences so now I know what works for me and what doesn't.</p>	
	P16	P17				
<p><b>Internal:</b> I think I have been quite deliberate in ensuring my own career progression...</p>	<p><b>Internal:</b> Each of the changes I made, I made quite mindfully...</p>					

## APPENDIX 4: RQ1\_CAREER MOTIVATION

Research Question 1: How do women in senior management achieve their view of success?						
		P1	P2	P3	P4	P5
Career Motivation	Resilience	I also believe in making things work so being unhappy doesn't mean you can't make it work. I believe in trying.		I also know the capacity that I have to bounce back. I have had failure. I was staring it right in the face.	I think it's tenacity to stick it out. It was the drive and the will to stick it out.	
		P6	P7	P8	P9	P10
		This guy [manager] said to me, "They have only hired you because they wanted bonus points [because I'm black]". I am not going to choose to believe that, I could sit in a corner and cry, but I'm not going to do that because all it does is give power to that other person.	I think you've got to have a certain amount of resilience as a woman.	You cannot jump ship every time there is this dissonance and it takes a while before you're attuned to it.		I've said no to a very big thing last week because I was just not agreeing with the approach that the business... Certain individuals in the business had a certain approach that they wanted to adopt on a problem and I just put my foot down, because I just could not understand the reason. There is a very clear case against going in that direction and I had to push back so, I remember one night I actually got home and my husband said to me I actually look terrible but it's because the decision and the pushing back was really draining me because I was standing up to very senior people in the business but it was really a matter of principle and I was not willing to let it go.
		P11	P12	P13	P14	P15
			That also makes me good in my work – when everyone else is tired, when they don't see their way fit to put in a little more, when they feel the deadline is long gone, I'll be the one to say: "Come guys what can we do, how can we approach it, what will make it easier?"	I think to a certain extent you can keep up your resilience, standing up and saying I'll show them. Maybe it is a bit of a rebel in me that is saying "I will show you" that made me do it, but that specific position, after five years, it wore me down. I honestly have to say, at one stage I felt like this is not it. I cannot make the difference that I am supposed to, but what got me out of bed was a little of that: "I will show them", "I won't tell them", "I will just show them". It's a difficult question, unbelievable perseverance; you must really follow through, perseverance through the most difficult times. In fact it is during those times that you realise what you are made of.		Not wanting to give up and not wanting to feel like I failed at something. So just keep trying, try something else, try a different way.
P16	P17					

## APPENDIX 5: RQ1\_LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT

Research Question 1: How do women in senior management achieve their view of success?							
		P1	P2	P3	P4	P5	
Leadership Development	Leader categorisation	<p>My previous manager, she contributed a lot to my getting the promotion. She exposed me to leadership and I think when this position came about there were a whole lot of people who were interested and she basically said "I think X deserves this, and these are the reasons why I think she does". So for presentations that needed to be done in my territory or problems that were in my territory she never took ownership. She would say 'I want you to go and present it'. If something good happened she would say 'send an email to the country GM and tell him'. If there was a problem she would say send an email to the country GM and tell him. And if they are good things let's talk about them. Let everybody know. So she gave me that platform and the visibility so everybody knew who I was within the organisation.</p>		<p>And then he looked at me and then he said to me that "the person that should have the role is sitting in front of me". And I was completely gobsmacked and shocked because my mind hasn't even gone that far, because I was at middle management and not for a while did I anticipate that I was going to join the executive team. Somebody has to believe in you... One of the things that makes you successful in a role like that under those difficult circumstances is a manager that believes in you; it is a manager that supports you; it is a manager that says to you, you can make mistakes it is fine we will fix them.</p>		<p>I was originally employed as a business analyst and while in that role, I guess the CIO saw something else in terms of my abilities and at the time they needed an application support manager and to test my skill they seconded me to that role for three months... My boss had my back. I knew nothing about SAP, nothing. He took a chance on me. He gave me that opportunity, because I guess I would like to think that he had faith in my abilities and my desire to learn and to be successful.</p>	
		<p>So what happened is I joined as a vice principal... After about a month my new boss came now, he's a male and he came after about a month and we actually worked together for about two or three months and I got promoted immediately after we worked together because he was like: "You know what, it doesn't make sense that you are doing this role and you are actually so good at it and you are still not at the right level". I got promoted immediately after he got in the role.</p>	<p>Number one: being in the right role, but it also takes somebody watching you and helping to build you up. And I think in the modern world today, we neglect that a lot.</p>		<p>I started as a marketing assistant straight out of varsity and quite quickly the MD (Managing Director) called me aside and said he wanted to put me on some kind of internship program and if I'm honest I think realistically the only real reason why I was selected was because I was one of the few who actually had a degree.</p>	<p>My approach, coming from a very small town, was: "There is nothing out there for a person like me" and even in the big cities, it's like you are one in millions right? I was always a little mouse that was not visible to anyone until I actually got to a large auditing firm where the then deputy CEO took some interest in me. After my first year there, he called me and offered me a role that I knew absolutely nothing about and for me that was a turning point.</p>	
							<p>The DG (Director General) had my back, so there it was less about... he had my back because he knew I could do the job.</p>
		<p>The CIO that I worked for there. I really feel that he supported me. He saw me as CIO material, because I was starting a new thing in the organisation he was there to help me in influencing the change.</p>	<p>When I was in the UK I had a General Manager who gave me opportunities. I was working as an Assistant Manager, where it was very male dominated. I was based in London and the manager of a branch was suspended and they wanted someone to go in</p>				

**Research Question 1: How do women in senior management achieve their view of success?**

		and asked me to do it. I was terrified. Through the relationship with my mentor we broke it down and analysed it. I then never went back. It was almost like I had a 5 year jump overnight. The way the branch structures articulated it, you had to go from Assistant accountant, accountant, small branch etc. So that gave me a massive jump up. From there I went to Central London and got my own branch, which was like unheard of. I was only 28 years of age.				
Self-categorisation	<b>P1</b>	Yes, it does, because then you suddenly are not a number or you are not in middle management anymore; you sit with EXCO and you understand how they think and what they look for, and how you relate to everyone else as well. It impacts on your growth.	<b>P2</b>	<b>P3</b>	<b>P4</b>	
	<b>P6</b>		<b>P7</b>	<b>P8</b>	<b>P9</b>	
	<b>P11</b>		<b>P12</b>	<b>P13</b>	<b>P14</b>	
	<b>P16</b>	So I think it was an affirmation for me that I can do this thing. You with me, it kind of said before I was just a worker and now I am a manger of people. You walk in, it's your first management job... for me it was one of the things that just changed my outlook of myself to myself... I think that a lot more young people should get into the mode of believing in themselves earlier rather than later, because as you were saying I think it is such a powerful thing to have when you have that belief in yourself. I don't know how, I know it happens differently for different people but I just wish for so many young people that	<b>P17</b>			
					<b>P5</b>	
					<b>P10</b>	
				<b>P15</b>		

Research Question 1: How do women in senior management achieve their view of success?			
		they could get into that mode sooner rather than later.	



## APPENDIX 6: RQ1\_OTHER

Research Question 1: How do women in senior management achieve their view of success?				
	P1	P2	P3	P5
			That is a political game again that we need to learn to play.	
	P6	P7	P8	P10
		I'm very non-political. I'm very – what you see is what you get. If I was more political I would be more senior and more powerful and make more money all those sorts of things, but I'm very true to myself and so I think that's a quality that people will see...hopefully.	I think it's a lot of stakeholder management, politicking, it is a different sort of field that you go into.	One of the things that my predecessor taught me was that when you get to senior level, you need to understand business politics and not in the nasty sense. But you really need to understand who the players are, how you are going to influence those players, how do you get buy-in without forming cliques.
	P11	P12	P13	P14
Political savvy				The notion that we don't play politics is absolute nonsense, you have to go onto a rugby field but I'm not going to play rugby, nonsense. You've got to understand the politics of the work environment and to a degree you've got to play them and I know a lot of people don't want to be part of the corporate politics – It's nonsense! We are all part of the corporate politics. I refuse to be part of the gossip and the back chatting and taking sides, the games, but I have to be aware of my environment and I have to be aware of who is doing what and what are the dynamics and what are the sides and who's backing who, because otherwise you just get caught up.
	P16	P17		

## APPENDIX 7: RQ2\_CAREER ANCHORS

Research Question 2: Which career anchors are most prevalent among women in senior management?						
Career Anchors	Security / Stability	P1	P2	P3	P4	P5
		P6	P7	P8	P9	P10
		P11	P12	P13	P14	P15
		I think the one thing that stuck in my mind was my mom: my mom gave up her job to kind of look after us. When I went to varsity, she always said to me: "When you get older, you always need to make sure that no matter what happens in your life, financially you will be able to support yourself, make sure you are armed with the tools that you need to be able to do that, the only way to do that is through education, people can't take what you have learnt away from you".				
		P16	P17			
	P1	P2	P3	P4	P5	
	General managerial competence		I chose that role, because I knew it is a major problem. It impacts nearly every single area and everyone wants it fixed. So if you go and deliver a solution you are going to be a little bit of a hero because it impacts so many people. It is not just one small area.			
		P6	P7	P8	P9	P10
					I'm a very good implementer. Go behind people, make things happen, I'm not the ideas person, I think that I have this aspiration to be one of those ideas people.	
		P11	P12	P13	P14	P15
I was saying to someone the other day, that is the ultimate leadership. That you will work yourself out of a job. You as a leader are not needed, because the people that you have led know exactly where they need to go, exactly what the vision is. You are not needed because everyone else can do what is needed.		The Psychometric [test] says I'm a completer, finisher, but I am not necessarily the one who thinks of the bright and shiny ideas.				
P16	P17					
Entrepreneurial creativity	P1	P2	P3	P4	P5	
	P6	P7	P8	P9	P10	

**Research Question 2: Which career anchors are most prevalent among women in senior management?**

		I am actually quite structured and I organise myself, but for me the novelty, the open-mindedness of inventing things is where I get my inspiration from. But I am very disciplined and organised, I can harness that I think, reasonably effectively.			
	<b>P11</b>	<b>P12</b>	<b>P13</b>	<b>P14</b>	<b>P15</b>
				So it was around the fact that you have to learn like a wide variety of skill. And also what we focused on is my passion is around entrepreneurship, so to be an entrepreneur it is not just about delivering great work and it is not just about being able to identify opportunities, but you have to learn all facets of running a business	
	<b>P16</b>	<b>P17</b>			
Service or dedication to a cause	<b>P1</b>	<b>P2</b>	<b>P3</b>	<b>P4</b>	<b>P5</b>
		It is not like I am just impacting one small little area and therefore no one else will even get to know about me, because they are not impacted by it. So the broader the impact you can have across the organisation, the much bigger your chances of not you just doing well yourself but also getting reward, because you can see the change happening across multiple areas and also I quite like dealing with multiple stakeholders. If you are just doing one project for one person and no one else knows about it or cares about it – so it has to have an impact and people have got to completely buy into it... So I think the impact, the span of broadness in terms of the group and areas impact also impact on the organisation.	I feel my philosophy is about you allowing the universe to find your purpose. That is why you've got to show up conscious. I honestly believe that we miss opportunities because we are unconscious in terms of our purpose. If my purpose is coming to work to create an enabling environment for my employees together with the executive team and if my purpose here is to contribute so there is an enabling environment, but also I need to make sure that the processes are in place, because this is a multinational.		
	<b>P6</b>	<b>P7</b>	<b>P8</b>	<b>P9</b>	<b>P10</b>
		I'm always looking at things and how it could be done differently. What would I consider in a promotion - is a geographical move or to do something where I could feel like I could really make a difference.			
	<b>P11</b>	<b>P12</b>	<b>P13</b>	<b>P14</b>	<b>P15</b>
	...to change people's lives, or touch their lives.		When you sit down and you start to reflect a little bit more in terms of where you are and where you are going and you give yourself enough	It was very much more around an environment where I'd make a difference, where I'm heard, where there's room to learn a lot more than	

Research Question 2: Which career anchors are most prevalent among women in senior management?					
				quiet time to think about it, you start to realise there is something bigger out there, it is not just your immediate sphere in terms of where you are playing. So it is not just about the job you fulfil every day, it is around actually going "what legacy do I want to leave behind?"	what I've been doing. An environment that is changing because then there's room for you to do things differently.
	P16	P17			
	P1	P2	P3	P4	P5
		From a personal perspective that it is challenging. I think if it was some real easy thing we had to do, that you could do in your sleep and was easy to manage, I think I would get bored. So I think I have to feel it is challenging and hard, and you learn – as much as you hate challenge and I hate some of these things we have had to deal with on our program... but what you do, is learn from those things.			
	P6	P7	P8	P9	P10
		Now I'm much more driven by doing things that I am just really interested in doing. So now I really want to solve something, do something great, change something, and that's my forte. Taking a broken team and fixing it... and suddenly people are just working seamlessly in new ways and they're producing new and better.		I would say stimulation and challenge. From a work perspective it's fulfilment. I don't want to be bored, I don't want to be under-stimulated, I don't want to be undermined or under-recognised. It needs to stretch me, it needs to be challenging,	
	P11	P12	P13	P14	P15
	I am excited about going to work, I am excited about what the challenges are going to be, what country in Africa is going to give me a headache today, how am I going to solve the problem. Maybe that is why I am in this industry, there are so many issues that you can solve, it's not necessarily the most exciting thing for me but I enjoy solving problems, so that is probably what gets me going.			It was the thrill of the chase, so around the fact that rather than being on the receiving end of "Here's a project, and go and work on it" it was around understanding what is the problem and working with clients to understand and to shape what that problem really was, and very early on you found that often the people we dealt with were on the receiving end of their executives going: "Just put a project together and give me an outcome" and they didn't always understand why.	
	P16	P17			
	So I quite enjoyed that trouble shooting, problem solving making a difference to people at a very practical and quick type turnaround level.				
Lifestyle	P1	P2	P3	P4	P5

**Research Question 2: Which career anchors are most prevalent among women in senior management?**

		<p>You need to be able to know what is important and how to deal with it. There are certain events that I would not miss, it doesn't matter if there is a board meeting or our president is coming or something – there are just certain events in the school calendar that I don't miss. And there are certain things I will not miss doing with my husband and everything else I work around... You also need to set boundaries at work: they need to understand that you will be there when they need you, but there are certain times when you won't be able to – and it shouldn't be an issue. So there is nothing like balance. If you pay more attention to the one, the other suffers, and in most cases our families suffer. I try not to work on weekends, I try not to work while they are still up. So if I do take work home I do it after everyone has gone to sleep – including my husband. So it is just being there when you are there.</p>	<p>I definitely want to take a good chunk of maternity leave, but I definitely believe I would come back to work. I think the thing I am battling with is if you go on maternity leave when you are quite a junior resource and you come back it is a lot easier in my mind to get a role where you can manage your work/life balance because you haven't got that massive responsibility... I don't want to have to come home if I am being paid half a day; I just want to leave at half, I don't want to be on calls and checking on what is going on all afternoon and into the evening. To me that is sort of failure. So how is it all going to work and what is the role going to be that I may come back into, that enables me to have that balance right?</p>	<p>In career it is always for me about balancing the private life with the professional life. I am the only one here. My entire family is in Namibia so it is always a challenge for me in terms of how often can I go home.</p>	<p>I don't want to be there the whole time, I don't want to work the same hours that the men work. I don't have that same thing that work is everything – it's not everything to me – it's a part of the whole picture. What's most important to me is not my family, what's most important to me is that I have a good relationship with my children and that I have a good relationship with my husband. It's not just a blanket: "my family is the most important to me". It's that I want to have a meaningful deep relationship with my children and I want to have a good relationship with my husband...If I ever feel like I'm getting out of touch I would change things dramatically... That means choices along the journey that you make to make sure that it happens.</p>	
<b>P6</b>	<b>P7</b>		<b>P8</b>	<b>P9</b>	<b>P10</b>	
			<p>If you reach a point in your life where you have taken your family along, your friends along and you are spiritually and physically healthy, then yes consider yourself successful.</p>	<p>From a sort of broader perspective, it would need to offer me the flexibility to be able to go and watch my kid play soccer, participate in lift clubs, meet with builders if I'm renovating (that just happens to be what I'm dealing with now). I want to be passionate about what I do and I want to be energised by what I do and I want to be excited about what I do, but there's a whole other world out there. Whether it's kids or hobbies or a relationship or whatever, and that the be all and the end all is not your work and you can still have a very successful career and make a very meaningful contribution to your company, to your peers to your staff to your world and not have to live and die by the sword of the work that you do.</p>	<p>I guess when you are led by somebody who values family it's very easy for you to be okay with the fact that your family is more important, or as important as your career and in our business we create that space. I know sometimes it is a bit tough, because we are a multi-national. We operate in different time zones, we are a matrix organisation. Some of my stakeholders are not sitting in the same location, I need to be making calls at different times of my day or night but it is possible to find the balance and really not overwork yourself while doing it but setting very clear expectations. So a simple example for me: everyone knows that I leave four o'clock, because I fetch my kids from school. I can make an exception once in a while, but four o'clock all my stakeholders know that I will leave. If I need to reconnect with anyone it will be after eight, but it did not just happen. I had to have those conversations to say to my MD: "you will not find me at four". That's just how my life is.</p>	
<b>P11</b>	<b>P12</b>		<b>P13</b>	<b>P14</b>	<b>P15</b>	

Research Question 2: Which career anchors are most prevalent among women in senior management?					
			Flexibility: with my two kids that is a non-negotiable. I need the flexibility to say that I am working from home today or my child is sick, or has a concert. I think for me to go into a rigid, corporate, no-flexibility... "be at work, be visible" for no other reason, I wouldn't have liked it.	I came to a point where when my son was younger, where I needed a little bit more flexibility in my career and that is why I started the consulting business, because I felt that I had all the necessary experience to consult.	It's all about balancing, balancing those relationships, everything at home is okay, boyfriend doesn't feel neglected everything sort of integrated and my soul feels happy. I don't think I want to be CEO to be honest. I think I've been around enough CEO's to have made a decision that that's too... that the balance then... I'll lose that balance. Maybe it's the perception from where I sit, but I think there is still an ambition to climb higher in the organisation and there's still an ambition to do something broader than communications.
		P16	P17		

APPENDIX 8: RQ2\_OTHER

Research Question 2: Which career anchors are most prevalent among women in senior management?						
	P1	P2	P3	P4	P5	
Other	Competitiveness		I think there is a little bit of competitiveness and seeing people promoted around me, and that "I don't think they are that much better than I am" and that sort of drove me to go and say "okay right. I need to manage this". I think that definitely helps contribute to be competitive, or wanting to be better, wanting to be good at what you do, like people to think you are great.	I don't compete.		
		P6	P7	P8	P9	P10
		P11	P12	P13	P14	P15
		I was exceptionally competitive, I had to keep up with three boys growing up.			So everything I do is almost from a competitive perspective, but it is around how do I keep unique, how do I keep adding value.	Although it took me a long time to actually accept that I'm quite competitive and wanted to achieve, I think it was only when somebody pointed out to me that I realised, okay maybe I am.
		P16	P17			
			I was quite competitive in my early career, up until I was 34 or 35 when we came back to South Africa. I would always do things tactically to achieve success. But as I matured over the last 10 odd years, it's been very much more mindful.			

## APPENDIX 9: RQ3\_CAREER DRIVERS

Research Question 3: What are the career drivers that make women in senior management successful?							
		P1	P2	P3	P4	P5	
Career Drivers	Career Purpose	I thought it was a place I could make a difference, it sounded exciting.	I think the impact, the span of broadness in terms of the group and areas impact also impact on the organisation.	So when I am interviewed I want to know how are they going to receive my thinking ability because if you put me on an executive team and you don't allow me to have a voice just for you to at least consider what I have to say, I won't go there.	I have this conflicting mind of continuous improvement. I love things to be getting better; I hate when things are getting worse, whether it's the country, whether it is learning whether it is our organisation from a micro level to a macro level. In our organisation I know nothing is perfect. So I always feel like if I can contribute to make it a little bit better then I've done something.	So the first thing would be can I make a difference? I think that is what drives me is being able to add value to an organisation. Then is my passion going to be able to find life in that opportunity? My passion is really around leading people and coaching leaders to become better leaders.	
		P6	P7	P8	P9	P10	
			I'm always looking at things and how it could be done differently to my own detriment sometimes is – I'm always looking how things can be better...how can you shape them differently?	I think it is important for me is that whatever it is that you are doing the passion must be burning because if the fire goes off you feel it in you and as long as you are connecting with it you will always have that comfort. Often you hear people talk about, "I have spent my career and at the end of the career I actually didn't enjoy what I am doing," it is because they didn't find that fire in them and they didn't connect to it.	I think first and foremost from a work perspective its fulfilment, you know, I don't want to be bored, I don't want to be under stimulated, I don't want to be undermined or under recognised, in other words I'm not a kind of back office in the corner just churn out my work and part of a cog in a wheel or engine or whatever the saying is, so that's from a work perspective, you know I need to enjoy the people that I work with, I need to enjoy the role, I need to be stimulated, it needs to stretch me, it needs to be challenging,	Not for a role per se but when I am, and this is really where I believe grace comes in, so when I am in a space I look at what is required of me to do here, I am required to do these four things okay but really is this it, surely this could be done better and I think that is what opens doors.	
		P11	P12	P13	P14	P15	
		P16	P17				
			I think from work perspective the thing that gets me out of my bed every morning is making a difference. Is knowing that I can make a difference to someone's life, I can make a difference to the bottom line. I can make a difference to the way we do things.				
	Career Directedness	P1	P2	P3	P4	P5	
			I did drive them a lot myself, so I think if I look back it wasn't like I just sat back and waited for someone to come and say – "Right, you have a promotion!" So I very much knew I was quite driven in terms of that is what I wanted. And I started to have those discussions with my boss quite early, way in advance so that when it came to when I was ready, that discussion had been had and everyone was on the same page... I		I think that I do make decisions quite intentionally. I don't always know what the consequences are going to be, but I'm very considered about how I do things.	It was definitely intentional because I moved a lot because I got bored quickly.	



**Research Question 3: What are the career drivers that make women in senior management successful?**

			<p>have always had those discussions and been clear on what I wanted and also what they thought I needed to do to achieve that and then also what I wasn't doing that I needed to work further on, so that I was very clear and it wasn't like "Oh you haven't got it and you don't really know why not". I think the way you manage it differs as you go up. So you might recognise that you need to manage it yourself, but the types of things that need to be done or achieved to enable them are slightly different. I think being clear on what those things are: so what is it that is going to take me from a director to an MD and really understanding what the gaps are, crystal clear.</p>			
		<b>P6</b>	<b>P7</b>	<b>P8</b>	<b>P9</b>	<b>P10</b>
		<p>So I never really had a motto, but I always knew what I wanted.</p>	<p>I am not a person who has consciously planned where my career has gone actually. I don't sit down and write and say my career in 5 years' time or 10 years' time. I'm not a very good example I suppose of somebody who had planned their career and aimed to get to a certain place.</p>	<p>I was very clear in terms of what I wanted from a position... It is continuous improvement.</p>	<p>There was definitely an intentional aspiration that if I enjoyed it, I would manoeuvre myself into that position if it was right for me. So there is quite a degree of focus, like where do you want to go? How are you going to make it happen and when the right opportunity presents itself make sure that you're available and that everybody knows and then go for it, you know, and that's the way it works.</p>	<p>I've been in a specialist role for a very long time and the way my current organisation is structured, I will not be able to grow in a manner that I anticipate I should when I am in a specialist role. So I had to make a choice and the choice was I am very good at what I do, I can continue on this path or I can change careers altogether, so this is the second time in my life that I am changing careers and I decided okay I want to move into HR generalist. Again, a space that I knew nothing about. I had to make a sacrifice, purely because I really believe in depth when I want to be good at things I do, I want to have credibility those are things that I value the most in a professional environment. So I had to make a career sacrifice and actually drop a couple of grades, go to a manufacturing plant, which was rough, and have to really start from the bottom and build up the skill.</p>
		<b>P11</b>	<b>P12</b>	<b>P13</b>	<b>P14</b>	<b>P15</b>
			<p>I think it was clear to me that in my career... where I was at the time, I did not want to be an audit-manager. I had reasonable certainty about it. For me it was "Either I take this, or I go"... At that stage I was fairly certain I did not really want to be a partner in an audit firm, I wanted to get out of that industry to get more into the market and I applied for 2 – 3 posts.</p>		<p>Because the organisation was smaller our roles were generic, so we had to get involved in anything that needed to be done from reception to marketing to recruitment to consulting to business development, which obviously allowed for me to identify the area that I wanted to specialise in, and in five years I had already identified that and it was the more</p>	<p>It just happened. I think it's still just happening to me. I didn't actually know what I wanted to do, so I started doing event management at a little company and I used to organise conferences in Cape Town. I thought the opportunities sounded interesting and so I moved into that role, but it just happened.</p>

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					relationship sales route and then it was a natural progression. I think many, so even within business development, because the career path is undefined. You kind of go "Okay, great so you are in business development" and you get your head down and your sales targets, but there is no defined career path so you have got to kind of define it as you are going along.
	<b>P16</b>	<b>P17</b>			
	I think I have been quite deliberate in ensuring my own career progression. So I did not just depend on things happening. I kind of always made sure that things happened for me and I wouldn't stay in a company or in a place where I could see that there wasn't going to be possibilities for progression in those environments for different reason. Or it was, I needed experience in another field in IT because I wanted to have a broad experience base at a junior level and not just grow in IT in one particular tower because you know we've got different towers in IT. So I kind of made sure that I do have a broad range of experience in the IT space. So those are the things that made me move industries and companies initially.	Each of the changes I made, I made quite mindfully. I'm a really structured person. From a very early age I have been goal directed. Because of that, each of my career moves have been mindful. I always had an aspiration to work at a strategic group level.			
Career Venturing	<b>P1</b>	<b>P2</b>	<b>P3</b>	<b>P4</b>	<b>P5</b>
		The role seems like a good career move because I was going to head up change, and I didn't want to go. I wasn't interested and then it carried on and on and she was very pushy and eventually made me an offer and I thought "well what have I got to lose?" I'd been too comfortable for a long time.		Going a bit out on a limb for those things that you're excited about. That stimulate you. Although I must say that talking about choices and also about what's been key to my success is that I continued to pursue a track that keeps me interested	Then also a level of courage. That if you want something then go get it regardless of perceptions or proposed or supposed shortcomings. You can always negotiate your way through those. Negotiate your way through things so that people will believe in you as much as you believe in yourself.
	<b>P6</b>	<b>P7</b>	<b>P8</b>	<b>P9</b>	<b>P10</b>
			Going from general manager to director it is a leap, an exciting leap. You need to be able to take bold decisions and you need to make sure that when you put those positions on the table that you are fairly confident that the people around you are going to support you.	I've learnt from every single one of those negative experiences and I mean I've been in some very challenging environments you know where I was way, put in situations that were way above my pay grade but somehow you muddle through, you know and you get through it and I think I'm better off having been thrown in at the deep end.	
	<b>P11</b>	<b>P12</b>	<b>P13</b>	<b>P14</b>	<b>P15</b>

Research Question 3: What are the career drivers that make women in senior management successful?						
				And then I also think the day I decided that I am now going to move into consulting. That was an enormous difference because where you are coming out of a situation where everything is certain and secured, your salary, your hours that you are working, the office that you sit in, the infrastructure around you. And to get up and say but I want to do my own thing, that was a huge turning point because I also realised that I am building on things... because I built big businesses for them, but I was not a part of it. I wanted to feel but this is mine, and yes that was a turning point for me when I started going the consultation route.		
		<b>P16</b>	<b>P17</b>			
			I won't lie, I've always had to work hard for what I've achieved academically, but the one thing that I've always thought is that if I worked harder than other people and if I took on challenges that other people avoided, that would give me an edge, and it most definitely did! I also made a few lateral moves. If I was going to be senior in the organisation, I realised I needed more experience and moved to another division where I didn't have experience.			

**APPENDIX 10: RQ3\_OTHER**

Research Question 3: What are the career drivers that make women in senior management successful?							
		P1	P2	P3	P4	P5	
Other	Coaching		One thing I have done now this year which has fundamentally helped me, is actually get a coach, and do a full proper assessment where they actually assess you and understand potentially why you are not ready for promotion, or are ready, and what those gaps are. Because it is a very thin, fine, skill set that often your normal day to day manager can't pinpoint and that has always been my question: "How come I am always am rated as exceeds expectations, but they are not being promoted? So what is the gap that is not getting me there?"		I have had an external coach as well, I can say I really don't know how I should handle this situation and he'll say: "Well, have you thought about this, have you thought about that?", I could be open with him that I don't know.	I have two coaches, well three coaches. I had a career coach, a life coach, and a financial coach: A career coach just to make sure that I have somebody to touch base with when I am feeling a little lost or when I am having my moments of insecurity. That I just have that lifeline to call just to put everything back into perspective, or help me put everything back into perspective.	
			It was probably in 2004 or something like that and coaching was still new then and they gave a bunch of us coaching and I had it and it was kind of... I don't know... it didn't really rock my boat... I couldn't even....it's not that I think it is a waste of time. I mean my coach is incredible and I know we will stay friends, but I just find that we end up talking about things and stuff that I've done and that we carried away solving work things... Coaching seems to be a bit like Psychology or Psychiatry, which I've never undergone, but Psychiatry/Psychology – they never tell you, they never give you any feedback – they just ask you questions.			I think at the time I had a coach who was able to see things for what they were and just said to me like "but why don't you just ask?" whereas in my head it was this kind of huge thing, I mean "I can't ask, because it's asking too much" and you know like "Why would they give it to me" and "It's ridiculous" and like you know all of that kind of stuff and this person was like, "Just ask" and just kind of dumbed it down on me, made it sound so simple and seeing it through his eyes was interesting. Very different from the way I saw it so my baggage and my complexities and my insecurities and my sense of self-worth and you know the contribution that I'd made, was it big enough and had I paid my dues and earned stripes and all of that I could have mulled over for years, you know and made so much more of it than it was as one does with one's own stuff you know and this person kind of coming and going "Why don't you ask him? What's the worst that can happen? He'll say no, and then you'll be no worse off than you are right now, but what if he says yes?"	
			But that "letting go" was actually something that I had to be coached	My Manager said: "Let's send you for Coaching". Go do a 6 month personal		I have three business coaches, and I have had them for years. Then	

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	<p>through, so I have had a coach, a career coach and she actually had to tell me “You know, you actually can’t do that”, because I don’t like to micro managed, so you don’t want other people to feel that they are being micro managed.</p>	<p>coaching – it is career coaching, but it has a personal aspect to it – the company will pay, I believe in you, it’s a difficult time, let’s get through this”. When I think back, it was probably the best, best, best thing that I could have done to speak to someone completely outside. I remember whenever I used to go and speak to him about something I was struggling with, he would never give me the answer. He made me think, he asked me questions. He made me get to the conclusions. It was never a case of saying you don’t know how to do something and they end up doing it for you or they tell you what to do. You had to sit and think, answer questions and draw pictures and that is how I learnt.</p>		<p>obviously working with our CEO. Because he is a lot more experienced than I am, he is able to observe a lot better than I am in terms of people’s behaviour and he has really good intuition. So learning my relationship sales skill, I will often work with him quite closely in terms of saying “Okay great. How do I hone this skill?”</p>	
	<p><b>P16</b> The guy that used to sponsor me, he got me on this coaching programme and thy used a method called consciousness coaching.</p>	<p><b>P17</b> I’ve always been an advocate for mentoring and coaching. They give me a different perspective. I would take it very seriously and would invest a lot of time in the relationship. I’ve also had an executive coach. When I’m struggling with something, a thinking partner is also valuable. I’m a believer in growth-based coaching and mentoring.</p>			
Personal Branding	<p><b>P1</b></p>	<p><b>P2</b> Moving away from: “If I do a great job, everyone is going to just think I am fabulous and promote me anyway” – to actually know there is a bit of sales required – and when I say sales it is more interacting with those people so that they are seeing you and it doesn’t have to be all the time, but to an extent that they go “Oh yes, absolutely!”... I think talking to people on a more informal basis, just to see what their perception is about you out there, and it is quite good to get a view of what people think. It is a very easy conversation because it is a conversation about you. I mean if it is bad news, it is bad news, if it is good news it’s great, but if you don’t ask you don’t know, and I would rather know than not know.</p>	<p><b>P3</b> You have to have a set of principles, because you are not sure what people are looking into your deliverables on a daily basis.</p>	<p><b>P4</b></p>	<p><b>P5</b> Dress for the job you want not the job you have. That was also in the way that you carried yourself. If you continuously carry yourself at a level that people sometimes maybe are confused by your role or don’t know what your role is, then you are hitting the mark. I have always said to myself, I am not less than anyone else. I hold a position and my position is important in the entire organisation. It plays a pivotal role. I am adding as much value as the technical manager is or the systems manager is. It is just that my role happens to be different from theirs.</p>
	<p><b>P6</b></p>	<p><b>P7</b></p>	<p><b>P8</b></p>	<p><b>P9</b></p>	<p><b>P10</b> To manage your brand, to manage perceptions around you. I have found</p>

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					business to be very unforgiving so I learned very early that I need to be managing my brand.
	<b>P11</b>	<b>P12</b>	<b>P13</b>	<b>P14</b>	<b>P15</b>
			It's not just about working harder. It's about how you handle yourself in terms of emotional control, in terms of even the type of clothing that you wear. You must be taken seriously. I would say your entire personal brand has to be serious. If people think of you and of your personal brand, they have to think of professionalism, then you will get further, otherwise if they doubt you in the slightest you have a backlog (disadvantage) that you will not easily catch up again.	So everything I did, from choosing what university I went to, to choosing what degree I was going to study, has been around "How do I make myself unique?", and "How do I make myself stand out, so I am adding more value than somebody else?"	
	<b>P16</b>	<b>P17</b>			
	It's kind of, it is built into what you do, in how you are, in who you are, in how you interact with everybody every day. That is how you advocate for yourself, you know there might be opportunities where you have to stand up and say who you are, but I think and again I think this is a South African thing. I think in South Africa we tend to want our work or our people to speak for us rather than standing on a podium and say 'I am the greatest' I think for me it's more about the things I've done, who I am, what I stand for, how I am with my peers and my subordinates and my seniors.				
Networking / Relationship Management	<b>P1</b>	<b>P2</b>	<b>P3</b>	<b>P4</b>	<b>P5</b>
	You are not in middle management anymore; you sit with EXCO and you understand how they think and what they look for, and how you relate to everyone else as well. It impacts on your growth. So if you are going to be fighting with people in EXCO they will not support you for this kind of promotion, so it is how you handle relationships as well. That contributes.	Recognising it is all about the relationships with very senior people who recognise you as a leader. I just think I always believed that people would just think I was fabulous and that will be how it'll work. I quickly realised that it's actually not the case, and you need to do a lot more working on the relationships with more senior people, getting them to see, you know the type of discussions you are having with them is very different.	You get there because of your empathy, the way you build relationships with people. It is when people promote you, you have to make opportunities for other people. I must be honest it sounds a bit esoteric.	I already had a relationship with the CEO that I formed, again I nurtured that relationship so that I've got a strong relationship... [talking about relationships built to create business opportunities] I give him [manager] enough ammunition to carry on fighting for me. I think that he values how brutally honest I am and how I can always bring a balanced view, a different view and he can also ask me things. I'm trustworthy.	
	<b>P6</b>	<b>P7</b>	<b>P8</b>	<b>P9</b>	<b>P10</b>
I managed the twelve entities in Africa, so I deal a lot with different kinds of people. So my success depends on how I influence and I like that because I like dealing with people.	I think in an organisational level, one of my other competencies is I am a very good connector, so I can connect things to make things happen... I am very good at networking. So I will find I have no fear of connecting with	I think for me that is the biggest area that I would have changed if I go back, it is just understanding people a lot more, building relationships and entrenching that trust... So that you can get alignment because as long as	My network stood me in good stead because our shareholder introduced me to the CEO, so that's how I got here... I didn't have all the right experience I think he took a bit of a chance and I think that's where, if you	So beginning of the year I really turned the strategy around and formed personal relationships and you know have more coffee sessions and asked for their opinion even when I don't need it. It was important that they feel	

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		somebody, maybe from your interest point of view is....I have relationships right across organisations and I think one of the things that people have always commented about me on is that "you just know everybody". And I do, but I mean I don't know them deeply, but I don't have fear of connecting with people.	people can see the business value you have a higher probability of success.	can work with someone they'll take more of a risk with someone they know, so if you like them and you get on with them then you're prepared to kind of overlook the fact that they haven't done this particular thing. You'll teach them.	part of my space, they feel I value their experience over the years, I acknowledge that they have been in this business for much longer than I have been and they are special. So it was a lesson for me to also how I lead my team. So I built those relationships and I had what I call my contact points, so before I go to a board meeting and I need a certain decision made by the board. I go to my contact points and I align with them on the messages that I want to deliver and the decision that I want made.
	<b>P11</b>	<b>P12</b>	<b>P13</b>	<b>P14</b>	<b>P15</b>
			My father was an amazing example because he was an exceptional business man. I learned a lot from him about how you should interact. So I would say that I am very thankful for that, because I think it is a skill that I have that counts in my favour quite a lot.		It's just been managing the dynamics of EXCO and getting them to trust and engage.
	<b>P16</b>	<b>P17</b>			
	So my thing about the higher you go, I think that you need to have very good relationship with your peers, with your bosses, with the people that work for you, because you stop being a doer, you start becoming a facilitator for people to do what needs to be done. So your ability to connect your guys with other guys in ensuring that doors are opened for them, you can't do that if you can't do it for yourself. So you need to up skill yourself in ensuring that you built relationships.				
Reach for opportunities	<b>P1</b>	<b>P2</b>	<b>P3</b>	<b>P4</b>	<b>P5</b>
	I would have taken advantage of opportunities within the work environment. Sometimes we don't fully exert ourselves in our whole job, you do what you need to do and you go. So I would encourage people to do things outside of your role. They expose you to the different divisions within the organisations. Put your hand up when there is something that needs to be done. Put your hand up and do it! It helps you progress. And balance, balance, balance as well – know what is important in life.			Choosing for example to throw myself back into the, throw myself back into challenges it keeps me relevant.	
	<b>P6</b>	<b>P7</b>	<b>P8</b>	<b>P9</b>	<b>P10</b>
			You've got to do it, don't expect others to say you have got the capabilities.	it's not always easy to move out of your comfort zone but you just kind of	The people who don't say anything often don't get anywhere even though

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				<p>There are opportunities that land on your lap and that you grab, but there are others where: "What do you know about it? Why do you want to do it? Let's get somebody from the outside to do it and they will do it quickly and who has got an informed decision around it?" So I think yes you have to when there is an opportunity, when everybody else around you is going for that same one: put your hand up, compete for it if you have to. I think you've got to lean in, you've got to put yourself out there. Don't be afraid of rejection, because there will be another time. I think also you need to be able to put your hand up and say, "I can do it, give me the opportunity".</p>	<p>do and I think because you get given those opportunities, I think that's probably something to look at is why do people get given opportunities and I do get given opportunities, maybe because I make myself open to them so and I put up my hand, you know, so when the head of sales left I said well I'll help and then it materialised into a role, you know so being available for them being able to see beyond just your little box and relationships, you know, that people recognise in you something because they've had a good relationship with you over a period of years so they want to work with you. I think that's probably quite important.</p>	<p>they may be ready because you sort have got to show some initiative in terms of that is what you want, that is where you want to go... I think the game changer for me is the fact that I always raised my hand up. So when I came in here and I realised that there are things that are missing that could actually be very detrimental to the business or to the reputation of the business I raised my hand up and I said "You have a risk that we need to manage" and we started putting the right things in place.</p>
	<b>P11</b>	<b>P12</b>	<b>P13</b>	<b>P14</b>	<b>P15</b>	
		I didn't really ask permission, I just became involved and said I will vet the service providers.			When I asked: "Well, who's done it in the past, because it's not the first time we've had it at the management conference?", nobody stuck their hand up, so then I have a tendency to then just do stuff and just pick it up.	
	<b>P16</b>	<b>P17</b>				



## APPENDIX 11: ETHICAL CLEARANCE APPROVAL

# **Gordon Institute of Business Science**

University of Pretoria

Dear Chantell Lubbe

Protocol Number: **Temp2015-01517**

Title: **Career advancement enablers for women in senior management**

Please be advised that your application for Ethical Clearance has been APPROVED.

You are therefore allowed to continue collecting your data.

We wish you everything of the best for the rest of the project.

Kind Regards,

Adele Bekker