**Gordon Institute
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Attributes of successful women

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ABSTRACT

In South Africa, women make up 52% of the population, yet only 45.8% of the workforce are women (Businesswomen's Association of South Africa Census, 2015). There exists an extensive body of research explaining why women are not succeeding and the many barriers preventing them from achieving the same.

The purpose of this research report is to explore the attributes of successful women and particularly, the principal drivers of female success. The research ambition is to contribute towards the advancement of women in business. Moreover, the researcher endeavoured to gain a broader understanding for women, business and South Africa holistically, thereby demonstrating the benefit of meaningful female representation at all levels, including C-suite and senior management.

The researcher adopted a qualitative method, to collect and analyse the data obtained from women in senior management from various South African organisations. Interviews were carried out with 12 respondents, in accordance with the interview questions set out in the Interview Guide.

The principal findings of this research were compared with existing literature. The research found that whilst a variety of attributes advance the success of women in the workplace, certain attributes are of particular importance to the achievement thereof. When defining success, women deem life balance to be the most crucial consideration. The main leadership attribute is authenticity. However, traditional cultural beliefs associate leadership with masculinity, making the ability to be true to oneself challenging for women, leading to the next key finding of gender diversity. The immense value derived from gender parity is widely known, yet female underrepresentation at all organizational levels persists. Self-promotion is a not a skill that women excel in, whilst men exude confidence. Networking, mentorship, and other means of support are vital to advance the success of business women.

This dissertation offers a framework for the career progression of women. The researcher set out five suggestions for purposes of future research.

KEYWORDS

Attributes, Women in Leadership, Success, Gender

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1.1   INTRODUCTION

In business, expansion around gender diversity is on the rise, both from an ethical and commercial perspective. Nonetheless, only gradual improvement is seen. There is an underrepresentation of women in all tiers within organisations, particularly at top levels. Universally, the concept of gender equality remains largely idealistic (Thomas & Ely, 1996; Eagly & Carli, 2007; Hewlett, 2008; Energy Workforce, 2009; Pitts & Wise, 2010; Alimo-Metcalfe, 2010; Keehn, 2010; Samuel & Sita, 2011; McKinsey, 2012a; Bonebright, Cottledge & Lonnquist, 2012; Rice, 2012; Dezso & Ross, 2012; Dodd, 2012; Appelbaum, Shapiro, Didus, Luongo & Paz, 2013; Govender, & Vyas-Doorgapersad, 2013); Barsh, Nudelman & Yee, 2013; Groysberg & Connolly, 2013; Hunt, Layton & Prince, 2014 Modiba, 2014; Barton, Devillard & Hazlewood, 2015; Businesswomen's Association of South Africa Census, 2015). There are numerous reasons for this. In 2010, a study showed that only 28% of organisations have this item as a top strategy priority and a third of firms did not feature it at all (Devillard, Graven, Lawson, Paradise & Sancier-Sultan, 2012). In order for any significant transformation to take place, leadership dedication is essential (Energy Workforce, 2009; Rice, 2012; Groysberg & Connolly, 2013).

In 2015, women hold a mere 22% of leadership positions, compared to 19% in 2004 (Grant Thornton International, 2015). From a continental perspective, South Africa is at the business apex (Turco, Swart, Bob, & Moodley, 2003; Games, 2012) and thus should act as the poster child for workplace equality. The democratic elections of 1994 brought hope and transformation for the country, yet the societal effects of the historical rule of discrimination remain largely evident (Department of Labour, 2009; Ntim, 2015). On the one hand the country's public sector is embracing the concept of gender diversity – women represent 38.2% of senior management and 40.5% of top management in state-owned enterprises (Businesswomen's Association of South Africa Census, 2015; Govender et al., 2013). On the other hand, the private sector's numbers are disappointing. The 2012 Businesswomen's Association of South Africa (BWA) Census revealed that only a small percentage of companies had more than 20% of women employed in senior management and constituted only 17.1% of the country's directors. The BWA 2015 census shows that, of the total population, women constitute 52%, making up 45.8% of the employed population. A mere 29.3% are in

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executive management, 21.8% hold directorships, 9.2% board chairmanships and 2.4% CEO positions. In terms of firms listed on the Johannesburg Stock Exchange (JSE), the top ranking organisation regarding the gender diversity has a 50% female representation, whilst the lowest ranked has zero representation. It is interesting to note that in relation to racial diversity, business have achieved substantial progress. There are a number of firms that have accomplished 100% representation. And so whilst there has been significant progress regarding racial diversity, that of gender is still lacking (Deloitte & Touche, 2014).

Innovative organisations strive towards a more advanced type of leadership that depicts qualities that are more feminine in nature. Whilst the data shows the positive effects thereof (Lehobo, 2011; Ntim, 2015), the noteworthy lack of women in leadership positions persists (Dodd, 2012; Du Plessis et al., 2012). This is the case in most sectors and is a global phenomenon (Alimo-Metcalfe, 2010). In certain areas there have been improvements in gender employment inequalities, however, they have yet to be totally eradicated and significant inequalities continue to exist (Durbin & Fleetwood, 2010; Du Plessis et al., 2012).

The need to increase the number of women in leadership is more than a mere corporate social responsibility tick-box exercise. The reality is that skills shortages create demand for more leaders holistically (Barsh, Cranston & Craske, 2008 Kearney, Gebert & Voelpel, 2009). Economic considerations, such as growth in productivity and competitiveness, more specifically within a global context, necessitate increased workplace diversity (Adler, 2001; Adams & Ferreira, 2009). This is particularly important within South Africa, an emerging economy where it is essential to develop human capital as far as possible (Lehobo, 2011; Samuel et al., 2011). Gross domestic product (GDP) can be increased though the augmentation of female commercial input. As indicated by the World Economic Forum Global, the parallel between an economy's gender gap, its national competitiveness, productivity and growth are beyond question (Fiorina, 2013). The approach to gender diversity must be a constructive one (Ivancevich & Gilbert, 2000; Pitts & Wise, 2010). Empowering women is smart economics (Samuel et al., 2011; Duflo, 2011; Chant & Sweetman, 2012).

Evidence shows that investors respond favourably to those organisations who appoint women in senior roles, showing that the market inevitably rewards firms with women in leadership positions (Abdo & Fisher, 2007; Slater, Weigand & Zwirlein,

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2008; Carter, D'Souza, Simkins & Simpson, 2010; Cook & Glass, 2011). On average, organisations with a minimum of one female board representative generate one more percent of increased economic value as opposed to those without the same. Research found that the financial prospects in relation to industry medians are far more promising for firms in the top quartile for gender or racial and ethnic diversity (Erhardt, Werbel & Shrader, 2003; Saenger & Foster, 2012). The probability of diversity being a competitive differentiator is highly likely and directs market share toward more diverse companies over time. It was found that, from a statistical perspective, there was a noteworthy connection between a more diverse leadership and enhanced financial performance (Hunt, Layton & Prince, 2014).

Further to the economic considerations that ensue, an array of reasons support the need to grow the number of female leaders, such as the ability to meet and support customer relations, increased sales and revenue, reputational considerations, and increased innovation stimulus (Devillard, Graven, Lawson, Paradise & Sancier-Sultan, 2012). Additional benefits include the informational and societal diversity that arise from female representation (Dezso & Ross, 2012). Conflict resolution, adapting to change, producing high-quality work, developing one's capabilities, and motivating and inspiring others are other feminine competencies (Eagly & Johnson, 1990). A gender-diverse management team extends a wide gamut of skills, competencies and abilities. Moreover, the examination of opportunities and threats as well as the ability to address problem solving and decision making is thought to be more effective (Hambrick, Cho & Chen, 1996). However, Carpenter qualified these findings by stating that this can be dependent on the relevant environment (Carpenter, 2002). Female representation encourage other women throughout the firm and also act as drivers of change (Barsh, Nudelman & Yee, 2013).

Given this it is clear that organisations are not reaping the rewards gained from a diverse mixture of leadership styles arising from higher levels of female leadership (Eagly & Carli, 2003; Lips & Keener, 2007). Furthermore, there are a number of implications at different levels, including the direct impact upon women as individuals, women in society and women in business. Another key impact is that more and more women are setting up new businesses as opposed to participating in corporate activities (Weiler & Bernasek, 2001).

The deceptive thinking of the unavailability of skilled females is exposed by recent research in the USA. It found, from over 4 000 MBA students graduated between

1996 and 2007, yet of those graduates, the females are lagging behind their male counterparts at every level in their careers. Concluding that reports of progress are not necessarily indicative of the true position (Carter & Silva, 2010; Alimo-Metcalfe, 2010).

It is accepted that when considering positions of power and leadership, women are underrepresented, even though female representation in the C-suite is likely to bring about financial benefits and many other advantages. Furthermore, in spite of various measures, including legal sanctions, legislation, increased female education, and general workforce entry, only a handful of women reach leadership positions (Wood, 2008).

1.2   BACKGROUND AND MOTIVATION FOR THE RESEARCH PROBLEM

The rationale behind this research is of great significance to South Africa in light if the many favourable reasons set out above. This research seeks to provide answers to the questions posed in Chapter 2. The researcher will structure the discoveries in a meaningful way to enable women to either gain and/or improve their career success as well as to provide overall insight and awareness in this regard, from a broader perspective (Barsh, Cranston & Craske, 2008).

This research will consider the contextual systems framework of the individual within the broader perspective of the organisation and the environment (Clark, 2006b) to gain a thorough understanding of the success attributes of women.

1.3   THE OBJECTIVES OF THIS RESEARCH

By means of a qualitative research methodology, the researcher seeks to gain a more profound understanding of the attributes facilitating, and/or likely to increase the success of women.

In essence, this research aims to establish the attributes that result in the success of women's career development. The research also seeks to establish the primary factors that drive the success of women, considering the broader environmental, organisational and individual aspects.

The researcher engaged with South African women in senior organisational positions to gain their insights into the attributes of successful women and how organisations and women themselves can develop and/or advance their careers, in an effort to establish a framework that women can make use of to gain and improve their success. Furthermore, the researcher endeavours to facilitate a broader understanding for business and South Africa as a whole, thereby demonstrating the benefit of ensuring meaningful female representation at all levels, including C-suite and senior management.

In Chapter 2 the literature review highlights pertinent topics regarding gender and leadership, and a systems approach consisting of three categories: environmental, organisational, and individual. The chapter concludes with the relevance of success, particularly within a female context.

CHAPTER 2: THEORY BASIS AND LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 INTRODUCTION

In order to comprehensively understand the successful attributes of women, an appreciation of their circumstances is useful and thus this literature review is divided into the following key sections: leadership and gender, systems approaches (including country/environmental, organisational/institutional and individual factors), and the definition and relevance of female success.

The sections are examined in sufficient detail, enabling the researcher to carry out the qualitative interviews and gain the findings as set out in Chapter 5. Furthermore, the literature review allowed the researcher to collect, interpret and analyse the data and results following the collection thereof.

2.2 LEADERSHIP AND GENDER

The concept of leadership is influenced by a variety of factors, including societal changes (Lambert, 2005). What is more is that these changes are continuously shifting, some of the factors are social, economic, demographic, technological and political, although oddly, the significance of gender diversity appears to have been forgotten (Muenjohn & Armstrong, 2008). Subsequent to the corporate scandals, such as that of Enron, there is extensive discontent regarding the once heroic models of leadership (Dodd, 2012) emphasising the importance of defining the notion.

Leadership entails far more than simply being assigned a title. Relational authenticity obliges followers to confer the authority to endorse a set of values for that particular group as established by leadership, requiring them to be true to themselves (Eagly, 2010). Effective leadership encompasses an essential shift of character. Studies showed that, as with other skills, leadership must be taught and practiced, therefore the transitioning of effective leadership roles may require the development of new, more suitable identities (Ibarra et al., 2013). What is more, is that women have not been groomed for leadership in the business environment made up of men – who are typically prepared from an early age – making this aspect an imperative for women in the workplace (Jonsen, Maznevski, & Schneider, 2010; Ibarra et al., 2013).

The affirmation gained from opportunities of growth and through overcoming challenging tasks is fundamental for the development of competence and capability. This encourages experimentation with new and unfamiliar behaviour. An absence, however, dilutes self-confidence and has the opposite effect (Ibarra et al., 2013).

Real leaders are able to acquire meaning by following goals and objectives that support their own beliefs as well as that of the organisation, thereby achieving a dual progression (Ibarra et al., 2013). In light of the perpetually changing environment, good leadership is future-oriented, as opposed to a focus on the present. This also enhances the perception of an individual's authenticity and trustworthiness as they are prepared to take risks in the service of shared goals (Trafimow, Clayton, Sheeran, Darwish, & Brown, 2010; Ibarra et al., 2013).

The amalgamation of one's principal identity with leadership is not an easy task for women. Often, leadership is described in masculine terms (Eagly & Johannesen-Schmidt, 2001; Eagly, 2005; Jonsen, Maznevski, & Schneider, 2010; Grant Thornton, 2015) and within most cultures leadership is associated with masculinity and as a consequence women find themselves in a double bind (Avolio, Mhatre, Norman & Lester, 2009; Ely, Ibarra & Kolb, 2011). Women are expected to be communal and conduct themselves in a manner viewed as "warm" and "nice." These traditional feminine qualities are perceived to be incompatible with the qualities required for leadership (Emery, 2012; Ibarra et al., 2013). Blending and effectively combining female virtues that exist in society with the agentic characteristics associated with successful leadership makes the development of a suitable leadership style challenging for women (Eagly & Carli, 2007).

The stereotype that leadership is associated with masculinity is arguably the most important obstacle for women to overcome (Eagly et al., 2001 Ibarra et al., 2007; Emery, 2012). In order to fit into their environment, women must adjust their engagements according to the social state thereof (O'Neill & O'Reilly III, 2011). An entrenched purpose empowers women to focus their attention on shared goals and deliberate on who they need to be and the key learnings required to realise those goals (Özaralli, 2003; Eagly, 2010). Plus attention on their purpose can steer women towards endeavours that are essential for success, including networking (Ibarra et al., 2013).

Furthermore, the human tendency is to gravitate to people who share similar qualities to that of oneself, meaning that influential men are more likely to encourage and promote other men where opportunities occur (Ibarra et al., 2013). What is more is that the authenticity of women leaders is often diluted through the imitation and adaption to the surrounding male environment (Barsh & Yee, 2012). However, Ibara et al., (2013) noted that credibility requires genuine leadership. This position is contradicted by the view that, if female leaders conduct themselves like women, the leadership role becomes unsuitable (Appelbaum et al., 2013).

Female leaders tend to exhibit qualities of transformational leaders, offering support and praising those surrounding them. Whilst extensive research has shown this leadership classification to be the most effective and is more often linked to women, women are perceived to be inferior leaders to their male counterparts (Dodd, 2012). In light of increasing global competition, additional social interaction is essential and thus, once again, transformational leadership should be encouraged within this business environment (Barsh et al., 2008). This view is supported by Sheaffer (2011), who indicated that women are inclined to validate a more people-oriented leadership style. In addition, women possess the requisite skills to handle ambiguous projects acquired through the various challenges encountered as their careers progress (Dezso et al., 2012). Multitasking, social, management and other skills are augmented by means of the various female roles and responsibilities that women carry out and also enhance generality in decision making and firm performance (Krishnan & Park, 2005; Devillard et al., 2012).

Vast research has been carried out to delve into the singular leadership qualities of men and women (Kark & Eagly, 2010), and much effort has been placed on the favouritism of one style as opposed to that of the other (Grant Thornton, 2015). Yet, it remains a challenge to define which gender is more suitable. This is due to an existence of a non-linear blend and collaboration of causes, including stereotypes, cultural beliefs, gender dissimilarities, and the overall environment (Appelbaum et al., 2013). This validated the position that there is no perfect definition of leadership. Having said this, there are some shared characteristics of successful leaders, consisting of attributes associated with both genders (Appelbaum et al., 2013). A balance of management styles will require collective action, failing which, individual leaders will be required to develop and demonstrate qualities of both transactional leadership associated with masculinity, and transformational leadership associated with femininity. Fundamentally the movement away from these derogatory

classifications of male and female type leadership classifications, toward that of a singular style recognising both, will facilitate progress. A persistent singular focus on separate-gender thinking will negate this opportunity (Dodd, 2012).

Studies regarding gender-related professional perceptions revealed that, while stereotyping persists, the score is far lower than that conveyed historically (Phillips & Imhoff, 1997; Ayman & Korabik, 2010). Blanco (2015) noted that equality will emanate as the number of women in corporates increases. Although a high degree of female recruitment exists within organisations, representation decreases with progress and promotion. It is encouraging to see in the evidence shown by Eagly et al. (2007) that factors such as inequality and discrimination are on the decrease.

2.3   SYSTEMS APPROACH

In order to fully appreciate an individual, an understanding of the context in which the individual operates is necessary (Yukongdi & Benson, 2005). Individuals are not able to exercise much control over their environment, however, they are intensely affected by it, the degree of which is dependent on the person's perceptions of the environment, and their biases and prejudices. Further to this notion, separate but interrelated structures are relevant, namely that of the environment, the organisation, and finally, the individual. These influence one another, but do not have the ability to directly change the performance of the others (Stone & Cilliers, 2005). This framework will be employed herein to consider these structures.

2.3.1   Country/Environmental Factors

Empowerment, particularly of women, is vital in consideration of further development, which is highly dependent on skilled labour. This will also ensure the decrease of poverty (Grant Thornton, 2015), increased prosperity and stability (Fiorina, 2013).

In 1994 South Africa became a democracy, with the appointment of Nelson Mandela (South African History Online, 2011) heralding a new era for the country, including that of business. The legislature plays a vital role in terms of policy-making and regulation. Accordingly, new and existing legislation was promulgated and amended. More significantly, the Constitution was born – one of the most innovative of its kind – specifically outlawing discrimination and promoting equality (Devenish, 2005).

Quotas are a means of expediting transformation (Dahlerup, 2013). The implementation of obligatory quotas within Europe has seen increased female management representation (Grant Thornton, 2015). However, these are unpopular in South Africa, as they neutralise natural progression, forcing action as opposed to being something that people wish to do. Another consequence is that the recognition element is nullified, leaving individuals feeling that women are then promoted based purely on their gender. This will likely hinder the fundamental societal mind-shift that is of paramount importance for meaningful transformation. An organisational appreciation of the challenge and the underlying causes thereof would be a far more valuable approach. However, mandatory measures are often a necessity (Eagly et al., 2007 Dahlerup, 2013). Companies are now compelled to implement gender diversity, in terms of the Employment Equity Act (RSA, 1998a) and the Labour Relations Act (RSA, 1995) prohibiting unfair discrimination towards women.

The truth is that, despite legislative and other measures, men are still twice as likely to become the CEO or hold other senior management positions within organisations (Carter et al., 2010). It has become clear that gender discrimination requires more precise redress and action, and this is the aim of the Gender Policy Framework of 1996. The Women Empowerment and Gender Equality Bill has been passed in the National Assembly, but not yet into law. The Bill aims to achieve at least 50% representation of women in decision-making structures (Modiba, 2014). It also aims to improve access to education, training and skills development.

As noted in Chapter 1, the public sector's efforts must be acknowledged. Many South African government departments and SME's have, though various measures, given workplace equality serious consideration and the results speak for themselves (Molebatsi, 2009).

2.3.2 Organisational/Institutional Factors

South Africa as a front-runner within the African context (Mitullah, 2003) has on offer great prospects for political leaders and businesses to evolve by appreciating, assisting and uplifting women. Undoubtedly, it is essential for firms to appreciate the status, possibilities and the likely considerable influence and impact that South African women leaders and managers can provide (Nkomo & Ngambi, 2009).

It is commonly accepted that women often are required to work harder than their male counterparts to prove themselves (Appelbaum et al.,2013). An inclusive environment is one in which individuals are able to further their success by being true to themselves, while the organisation respects and compliments their capabilities and offers a sense of connectedness (Groysberg et al., 2013). In order to remove the barriers that curtail or prevent career development for women, organisations require top-down leadership at all levels, including that of CEO, chairman and all senior management (Barsh et al., 2013).

Literature suggests that the assessment of women in organisations is mostly subjective and often leads to unequal promotional opportunities between female and male managers (Jogulu & Wood, 2011). Furthermore, evidence suggests that the absence of methodical measures and well-structured procedures regarding these assessments allows for continued discriminatory decision making, impacting the advancement of women. Similar views have been expressed in that, when it came to assessing the skills that formed the basis of leadership, a study showed that women significantly outperformed their male counterparts (Appelbaum et al., 2013).

A deeper understanding of biases, safe spaces for personal identity development, and supporting women to gain comfort with their leadership purpose will gain better results than the paths most organisations currently pursue (Ibarra et al., 2013). Increased awareness of the psychological factors that impel prejudice concerning female leaders, and actions to dilute and cause the perceptions to cease, would facilitate the advancement of women (Eagly et al., 2007). Leadership development programs illustrate the positive action organisations are taking to address this challenge. McKinsey's Women Matter 2012 report (McKinsey, 2012a) found that more companies are viewing gender diversity matters more considerably, and are investing substantially to restore such disparity, but despite such efforts, the results have not been as promising as expected (Alimo-Metcalfe, 2010).

The potential to develop individual leadership identities and open discussion is enhanced by environments that encourage the same. This also strongly influences self-confidence (Bonebright et al., 2012), another key attribute of leadership.

To retain talent, companies must take action and develop and implement meaningful policies, practices and programs that, inter alia, enable women to develop their careers and effectively balance the multiple roles they carry out, including that of

caregiver and relating to their career (Hewlett, 2008; Kark et al., 2010). And thus, organisations should pay special attention not only to the work experiences of women aiming to climb up the corporate ladder, but also to the women who wish to gain a high level of competency at their job, while also seeking a balance between their work life and their home life (Herrbach & Mignonac, 2012).

The aim of this section of the literature review is to consider a few of the corporate initiatives that have been implemented, specifically looking at which have brought about progress and why.

2.3.2.1   Policies, Practices and Programmes to Attract and Retain Women

A strong message is communicated when business, particularly senior management, demonstrate a genuine dedication to diversity and inclusion, beyond that of mere oratory (Groysberg et al., 2013; Energy Workforce, 2009). The allocation of this responsibility to the right person/s is of fundamental importance to the successful achievement thereof. As highlighted in 2.3.2 above, whilst corporates have made and are making considerable investments in these efforts, the expected results have not been forthcoming.

The success of these initiatives requires the correct assignment of responsibilities, the effective measurement thereof, and identifying suitable individuals for diversity department roles (Rice, 2012). In order to achieve this objective, gender diversity must become embedded as a primary consideration in strategic thinking and viewed as a moral and business necessity (Hewlett, 2008; Devillard et al., 2012; Rice, 2012; Groysberg et al., 2013).

Women still have to face the choice between family and career in a society where the traditional expectation is that men are the primary income earners and women are responsible for the home. Work-life balance matters such as these continue to block female progress in a way that does not affect men (Jonsen, Maznevski & Schneider, 2010; Grant Thornton, 2015). There is no full appreciate of the restrictive effects placed on women's career development by having to excel within both crucial roles, that of motherhood and in relation to their career (Schein, 2007). It is essential that women also shift their thinking (Jonsen, Maznevski & Schneider, 2010; Grant Thornton, 2015).

Another significant factor is the concept of work-life balance. Even though evidence has shown that productivity increases and longer working hours are possible when there is more flexibility (Downes & Koekemoer, 2011), the implementation thereof in developing countries is lagging as opposed to the approach seen in many developed countries (Hewlett, 2008). Supportive line-management also facilitate this (Dodd, 2012). Lewis-Enright, Crafford & Crous (2009) note that this significantly contributes to the retention of women within organisations.

The expansion of women within the workplace has led to a rise in gender exclusion and stereotyping has increased (Domenico & Jones, 2007), requiring measures to effectively address the same. Moreover, female employees have an inability or incompetence or lack of courage to converse these matters with their superiors (Maxfield & Reede, 2008). This influences their engagement in the workplace. And so, while progress is evident, new challenges are arising while the pre-existing ones remain (Bickel, 2012).

2.3.2.2   Mentorship and Networking

A mentor is concerned with the upward movement and support of his/her protégée's career (Linehan & Scullion, 2008), they provide emotional support, feedback and advice and focus on professional and personal development (Ibarra, Carter et al., 2010; Branson, 2011).

A lack of commitment or a lack of the requisite skills may result in the dilution of effective mentorship (Wells & Ross, 2012). However, through the right mentor, women can overcome many of the barriers faced in business (Orser et al., 2012) and provide support for other women (Energy Workforce, 2009). Formal programs have proven to be effective in the career development of women (Ibarra et al., 2010). Energy Workforce (2009) and Evans (2011) supported this and recognised the worth of networking initiatives directed at addressing the specific needs and interests of female employees.

Family responsibilities hinder the ability of women to network (Eagly et al., 2007). Moreover, the downside of corporate programs is the limited duration thereof, the failure to extend such programs and the measurement of the success thereof. Substantial change requires continuous involvement over a period of time (Barton et al., 2015). Prescribed agendas facilitate not only promotion, but also the transition

into new roles (Ibarra et al., 2010). Through the selection of the correct actions, approaches and implementation thereof, organisations play a crucial role in the growth of female leaders, (Ibarra et al., 2010). However, organisations cannot do this in isolation and must combine their efforts with women themselves to transform the challenges they face into opportunities to enhance their careers.

Ibarra et al., (2013) found that many women shy away from networking as they do not view it to be genuine, engaging for transactional purposes only or simply do not rate this as important enough, considering their duties outside of the office (Eagly et al., 2007). Conversely, if it is seen to be part of a meaningful objective, including new business growth, their engagement is more probable and effective. Business should assist women in understanding the importance of networking and the reasons why it should be seen as a priority (Eagly et al., 2007).

2.3.3 Individual Factors

Budworth & Mann (2010) noted that women do not excel at self-promotion, and because of this, their success and compensation potential may be discounted. Their approach is more conventional, getting the necessary done, doing it well and not necessarily discussing it or making it known. Women are conservative and modest rather than unabashedly indicating that they are capable of getting the job done or the ways in which they will do so and how they can add value. Males are inclined to have a greater self-regard (Grant Thornton, 2015). This viewpoint is supported by Lewis-Enright et al. (2009) who indicated that women are prone to underrate their contribution and achievements. This subsequently impacts their development and the way they are perceived (Appelbaum et al., 2013).

This challenge is aggravated by their limited abilities and opportunities regarding professional networking, as opposed to the prosperous position for men (Baumgartner & Schneider, 2010). And thus a material consideration for women is that of networking (Lewis-Enright et al., 2009). As indicated above, women too, need to take initiative when it comes to networking, as it rarely arises as a matter of course. Research suggested that many women attempt to sidestep this task and avoid networking for various reasons. On average 42% of men exploit networking opportunities, while only 30% of women do, indicating a significant difference in approaches. Role models also play an important role, providing inspiration to other women (Ibarra, Ely & Kolb, 2013).

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There is no single recipe that will guarantee success. There are, however, a few fundamental attributes that will increase the likelihood thereof. These attributes include: a strong work ethic, goal oriented focus, resilience, feedback, perseverance, and team focus (Barsh et al., 2012). As indicated, it is important for leaders to establish clear goals and objectives, and it is particularly important for women. Research has shown that those who place their attention on the perceptions of others are not clear on their objectives, are not as willing to gain an understanding from their mistakes, and are not as efficient when it comes to self-regulation (Ibarra et al., 2013). This can be avoided by the discovery of personal interests and identification of strong areas of excellence (Barsh et al., 2008).

The mere presence of women certainly does not mean that this will translate into high levels of female leadership (Dodd, 2012). Many talented, skilful women regarded as competent managers, commonly fail the likability test. The opposite is true for men, where competence and likeability are closely connected (Ibarra et al., 2013). This is confirmed by Sandberg (2014), arguing that there is an indirect correlation between female success and likeability. In other words, the more successful a women, the less likeable she is. It is assumed that in order to manage this dilemma, women are encouraged to tone down their feminine traits, or reduce a firm leadership approach, or develop a flawless dual equilibrium. This dynamic can be addressed by identifying when to act high versus acting low (Sandberg, 2014). As indicated above, incorporating leadership with one's principal identity is a challenge for women as most cultures associate leadership with masculinity and as a consequence women find themselves in a double bind.

Studies showed that when considering authenticity as a fundamental leadership trait, gender still plays a role from a practical perspective (Sinclair, 2013), and women and men in leadership as not viewed equally. Hofmeyr & Mzobe (2012) indicated that assertion is required when motivating for career progression, however women must do so cautiously, as characteristics of assertion and aggression are not always favourably viewed when exercised by female management (Sinclair, 2013). Because women are not taught the same skills that are customary for their male counterparts, through the services of certain brand, image and personal presentation experts, women are effectively dealing with the way they are perceived (Ibarra et al., 2013). Sandberg (2014) advocated that women must swear by and vouch for the competency of other women.

2.4 DEFINITION AND RELEVANCE OF FEMALE SUCCESS

Success by its very nature is subjective (Dyke & Murphy, 2006; Cheung & Halpern, 2010) and has multiple meanings to different people, including the enablement of others and/or financial measures and performance, and thus it is important to define the notion (Sturges, 1999).

Objective criteria such as salary, the increase thereof, and promotions, are the most commonly accepted signals of success (Dyke et al., 2006; Cheung & Halpern, 2010). However, these do not necessarily result in the related subjective feelings, which are more likely to lead to matters such as work-life balance, contribution and purpose (Cheung & Halpern, 2010; Laud & Johnson, 2012).

For women, success is commonly not viewed in terms of career exclusively – they generally expect more of themselves. Many associate more genuine characteristics with success (Laud et al., 2012). The following factors were rated as key considerations: the notion of work-life balance, being surrounded by people that are motivating, recognition, developing work relationships, moving through positions with increased responsibility, independence, and making a contribution to society (Dyke et al., 2006). The goal of making a difference is common to women leaders when defining success (Barsh et al., 2008).

Success to women means the fostering of relationships holistically, including with family, colleagues and generally within. The development of relationships within the workplace and particularly the trust and faith of their subordinates is vital. Certain women weight the achievement of the group as more important than their own individual success (Dyke et al., 2006).

Whilst matters such as promotion and advancement are of interest to women, these are not viewed as fundamental. Women are more inclined to define success using internal subjective measures (Cheung et al., 2010), particularly realisation, accomplishment, feelings and authenticity (Sturges, 1999). They value recognition for their achievements in the workplace (Dyke et al., 2006). The achievement of a dual progression is optimal, encompassing the advancement of an individual's career that is aligned to that of the organisation's (Lu & Sexton, 2010).

2.5 SUMMARY OF LITERATURE

From the literature review it is clear that there are a number of attributes that contribute to the success of women, showing how these attributes contribute to the success and why they do so.

Despite the clear advantages that female representation offer, women are still largely underrepresented at all levels within organisations. The rationale behind this research was to provide a more profound analysis of the attributes facilitating, and/or likely to increase, the success of women, in consideration of the broader environmental, organisational and individual aspects.

CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The purpose of this chapter is to define the purpose of the research. This study will consider the attributes of successful women in South Africa and whether a single attribute or a combination of certain attributes is a predictor of female success, by seeking solutions to the research questions set out below, followed by a description and conversion of the findings in a way that women are able to gain and/or enhance their success. This chapter adds to the findings contained in the literature review in Chapter 2, as well as those of the research problem in Chapter 1. In order to advance a comprehensive understanding, the research will consider three perspectives, firstly the overall environment, secondly, institutional/organisational and lastly, that of the individual. Open-ended questions will be used as outlined below.

3.1   RESEARCH QUESTIONS

3.1.1   Research Question 1

Research Question 1: What are the attributes that lead to the success of women?

This research question enquired about the actual attributes that enabled the development of women and facilitated the achievement of success.

3.1.2   Research Question 2

Research Question 2: How does each attribute contribute to the success of women?

This research question enquired about the extent to which each attribute led to or facilitated the achievement of success and whether there were any significant attributes that individually stood out or whether a combination thereof is a predictor of success.

3.1.3   Research Question 3

Research Question 3: Why does a particular attribute contribute to the success of women?

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This research question enquired about the reason/s why a specific attribute impacted the success of women.

CHAPTER 4: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY AND DESIGN

4.1 INTRODUCTION

The aim of this chapter is to describe and explain the chosen research methodology. It consists of the research design, the defined population and sample, and concludes with the data collection process and method of analysis. In closing, the researcher sets out the limitations to this research approach.

4.2 RESEARCH DESIGN

The research design can be seen as the strategy employed to seek research participants, and then the method of gaining data from them (Kruger & Welman, 2001). Qualitative research is practical, requiring analysis of the personal experiences as revealed (Marshall & Rossman, 2006) and interpretation of words, observations, visual representations and other meaningful expressions (Zikmund, 2003).

The research design was qualitative. The intention of this study was to explore and examine the attributes of highly successful women, more specifically to collect data for the three research questions. Where efforts are made to unravel and understand a particular occurrence, Leedy & Ormrod (2001) advocate a qualitative design, and furthermore provides that, in solving research questions, deep scrutiny is necessary. During the process of the one-on-one interviews, the researcher remained inquisitive (Zikmund, 2003), relied on the ability to receive information and interpret the meaning thereof (Suter, 2011), and the conversational approach was one that encouraged the respondents to reveal their lived experiences and how they interpreted it (Yin, 2011).

Exploratory research is necessary where the researcher seeks to consider different facets of a problem (Creswell, 2003) and also particularly where the researcher is in pursuit of several perspectives from different individuals (Leedy & Ormrod, 2001; Williams, 2011). In order to gain a meaningful appreciation of the attributes of those women who have achieved success, a general understanding of their background and individual circumstances is fundamental, requiring the use of an exploratory method (Kruger et al., 2001). Two methods, namely researching academic literature and conducting interviews, were employed (Saunders & Lewis, 2012).

4.3   POPULATION

Saunders et al. (2012) define the population to mean the entire collection of group members. The sample was not limited to a particular industry type and the women work in various industries and organisations within South Africa. There were no limitations as to race, age, education, background, and previous work experience.

However, it was necessary that members of this group met one or more of the following criteria in relation to responsibility:

I.   Significant leadership role;
II.   Control over day-to-day operations; and
III.   Decision making powers (but does not necessarily report to the board of directors) (The Businesswomen's Association, 2006).

4.4   SAMPLE AND SAMPLING METHOD

A purposeful sample of 12 respondents from the population was drawn. A list of respondents is provided in Chapter 5, Table 3.

As the study did not have access to the whole population, the chosen respondents were not randomly selected. To simplify matters the method of convenience sampling (Creswell, 2003) and snowball sampling was used, where respondents referred the researcher to further sample members (Saunders et al., 2012).This convenience sampling was not expected to affect the research data.

In consideration of ease, the respondents included in the sample were all based in various organisations within Johannesburg. The respondents were identified through the researcher's own network and that of the researcher's supervisor.

4.5   UNIT OF ANALYSIS

The unit of analysis in this research report is an individual woman respondent meeting one or more of the criteria relating to responsibility, as set out in Section 4.3 above, within South African organisations. In analysing these individuals, the researcher sought to determine what the successful attributes are for this particular group. The findings are provided in Chapter 5.

In consideration of the nature of the research, the design and methodology was directed to ensure the research objectives, as laid out in Chapter 1, were attained.

4.6   DATA COLLECTION

The sample size governs the degree of confidence upon which it represents the population (Saunders et al., 2012). A sample size of between five to 25 is deemed satisfactory in this type of research (Leedy et al., 2001). In consideration of accessibility, the number of interviews that were carried out was 12. The researcher carried out face-to-face interviews with the respondents. Appointments were set up through an introductory email providing a brief background to the purpose of the research, and these were carried out according to the respondents' preference, ensuring convenience and allowing the respondents to feel at ease as far as possible. The researcher clarified the purpose of the research and the importance of the confidential nature of any information disclosed.

In light of the sensitive nature of the discussions, the researcher needed to build trust with the respondents, encouraging them to share their responses without any reservations.

The discussions took place at the respondents' location of choice, being either their offices or at the Gordon Institute of Business Science (GIBS). The duration thereof varied between an hour to an hour-and-a-half. During some of the interviews, the researcher asked the participants about specific matters in order to gain a more meaningful understanding of the respondents' experiences (Kruger et al., 2001; Gillham, 2005) and in order to encourage open discussions (Saunders et al., 2012).

The researcher made handwritten notes and recorded the interviews. The handwritten notes were done to keep track of interesting ideas that arose which were revisited and developed at a later point. The interview recordings were taken for backup purposes in the event that the researcher required greater detail regarding a specific matter or wished to revisit a response. In addition, the recordings helped to remember the chain of thought and were utilised during the transcription, coding and analysis process of the research. Thereafter, the researcher reserved a few minutes to reflect and brainstorm, which assisted in the development of many useful ideas.

This was particularly helpful after a few interview sessions, where certain common themes became clearly evident.

4.7 INTERVIEW QUESTIONNAIRE DESIGN AND PRE-TESTING

The Interview Guide is set out in Appendix 1 hereto, including a brief background to the purpose of the research.

Upon completing the design of the Interview Guide, the researcher carried out pre-tests with two participants within her organisation in order to ascertain the appropriateness of the questions as set out in the questionnaire (Suter, 2011), as well as determining whether the questions were clearly understood, and the suitability of the language used (Jansen van Rensburg, 2013).

The researcher asked the respondents 10 non-leading questions concerning the attributes of successful women. The respondents were requested to provide responses further to their own perceptions.

4.8 METHOD OF ANALYSIS

During the interviews, qualitative data was gathered. The individual recordings were transcribed and considered separately and the researcher's annotations were noted. As recommend by Saunders et al. (2012), three steps should be taken to examine data from a qualitative perspective, namely: sort data into purposeful categories or codes, determine a suitable unit of data to be ascribed to these codes (this can be achieved by the use of symbols, descriptive words or category names) (Stewart, & Shamdasani, 2014; Suter, 2011), and finally, confer the categories to the units of data.

A systematic content analysis approach was applied for the analysis of the responses to the interviews that were conducted. Once the researcher had created a thorough list of codes that covered the responses of the participants, every response was subsequently re-examined to provide assurance that all participants' responses were capable of be placement into at least one code. This researcher repeated this process until the observations were compared and distinguished from each other, and then emergent premises were consolidated to form meaningful units

(McCracken, 1988; Stake, 1995; Gillham, 2005). Supplementary codes were created for responses that, upon re-examination, did not accord with previously generated codes. Each of the participants' responses were re-examined in relation to those previously identified, original codes and numerical values were ascribed to each, corresponding to the particular code that responses conceptually fit. More than one numerical value (corresponding to the codes) was assigned to those responses that applied to more than one code. Following the complete generation of relevant codes, the responses were then checked for assurance that the responses previously coded were conceptually relevant. Upon examination, any responses that were not conceptually relevant to the code/s were recoded or removed from the analysis.

The researcher categorised the data and organised the same as per the research questions set out in Chapter 3. For response frequency determination, the number of references to each code are reported, with each participant's responses able to be coded more than once into the same code provided that the response formed part of a new or separate discussion point (i.e., not a continuation of a preceding response or point of discussion). The frequency analysis also facilitated the organisation of the data in accordance with the research questions.

4.9   DATA RELIABILITY AND VALIDITY

In order to deliver consistent findings, the reliability of research is dependent on the methods and procedures used to collect and analyse data (Saunders et al., 2012). To ensure that the results met the necessary quality standards, and provided valid and reliable data, the procedure for the interviews that was followed is detailed below:

- Conduct first interview (Appendix A – Interview Guide);
- Subject to the respondent's wishes, interviews were transcribed, alternatively notes were taken;
- Efforts were made to develop interview data into topics, to create a complete understanding of the data and determine the significance contained therein;
- An awareness of the respondents' position regarding factors such as the emotional state, body language, and language was used;
- In order to develop new topics, the action items listed were then repeated, followed by an analysis of such data; and
- The data was organised into tables (Gillham, 2005; Leedy, 2001).

Validity, on the other hand, is concerned with the trustworthiness of research results, and concern for the collection methods employed and whether these successfully extracted the data intended to be collected. Researcher bias is unavoidable (Daft, 1983), and thus to increase accuracy, the researcher made all reasonable endeavours to carefully consider the responses and the language used and apply the researcher's own understanding.

4.10 ETHICAL CLEARANCE PROCESS

The researcher duly followed the requisite ethical clearance process to ensure that the integrity of GIBS as well as that of the respondents was, at all times, upheld.

The researchers Ethical Clearance Letter, obtained from InfoEd (the online ethical clearance system) is attached hereto as Appendix 3.

4.11 RESEARCH LIMITATIONS

Exploratory research can be biased due to the personal nature thereof (Saunders et al., 2012) and thus it is important that the understanding of the respondents is reflected and not diluted or affected by that of the researcher (Denzin, 2009). Furthermore, exploratory research has more of an initial-type focus and thus a more comprehensive study should be carried out.

The respondents' data, as collected by the researcher, is crucial to the research outcome. Subjective aspects were omitted from the research and the data supports that of existing theory (Sekhukhune, 2013). Efforts were made not to infer the researcher's own understanding, and the data analysis was carried out according to the researcher's observations and interpretation. The procedure followed by the researcher may influence the respondents towards the provision of a more optimistic perspective and providing answers that the respondent believes the researcher wants to hear, as a consequence distorting the responses and affecting the validity of the research. Furthermore, this may have been exacerbated by the time limitation and the inability of the researchers to adequately disclose their experiences, which could have deterred effective input, and may have caused the provision of incomplete data and/or may have resulted in inadequate data being provided and possibly a non-response bias (Gremler, 2004).

Lastly, the sample is limited to South African women, more specifically those residing in Johannesburg – considered to be the economic hub of South Africa (Rogerson & Visser, 2006) – and therefore the findings may not necessarily be extended to a broader context. Furthermore the sample was not industry specific.

CHAPTER 5: RESEARCH RESULTS

5.1 INTRODUCTION

Chapter 4 covered the methodology utilised to determine the responses to the research questions, which resulted from the literature review in Chapter 2, and specifically set out in Chapter 3. In this chapter, the results are shown and have been organised according to the research questions.

5.2 THE INTERVIEWS

The interviews provided powerful, meaningful and robust data. Interviews were carried out with 12 women from various organisations who held various positions. The researcher did not obtain any further information regarding the respondents other than that gained during the interviews.

The responses received from the respondents were in relation to the 10 interview questions, as set out in the Interview Guide. Table 3 below sets out the respondents' name, designation, company, the date and time of each interview.

Table 1: Interviewee List

No.	Respondent Name	Respondent Designation	Respondent Company
1.	Tharina Gombault	Executive Advisor	Accenture South Africa (Pty) Ltd
2.	Sarah-Jane Wagg	CFO	Macquarie First South (Pty) Ltd
3.	Mary Bomela	CEO and FD	Mineworkers Investment Company (Pty) Ltd
4.	Kalyani Pillay	CEO	SABRIC
5.	Lisa Klein	Head of M&A	Discovery Limited
6.	Fawzia Suliman	Head of Cash Equities	Macquarie First South (Pty) Ltd
7.	Karen Johnson	Vitality Executive	Discovery Vitality (Pty) Ltd
8.	Lamona Rajah	People Program Manager	Accenture South Africa (Pty) Ltd
9.	Dr. Mignon Reyneke	Faculty Member	Gordon Institute of Business Science
10.	Marina Bidoli	Partner	Brunswick South Africa Ltd
11.	Mpho Nkeli	Director	LegiSa Investment Holdings
12	Nicky Newton-King	CEO	Johannesburg Stock Exchange

The results are shown for each individual research question, reviewing the findings of all the respondents.

5.3   PRESENTATION OF RESULTS

Table 2: Interview Guide in relation to Research Questions

Research Question No.	Research Question	Interview Guide Question No.
1.	What are the attributes that lead to the success of women?	Question 1 Question 2 Question 3
2.	How each attribute contributes to the success of women?	Question 4 Question 7 Question 8
3.	Why does a particular attribute contribute to the success of women?	Question 5 Question 6 Question 9 Question 10

Jansen van Rensburg, A (2013)

The results are shown for each individual research question, reviewing the findings of all the respondents. It is noted that many of the respondents made a few remarks that fell within multiple constructs and hence the frequency counts in certain tables add up to more than the total number of interviewees (12).

5.4   RESULTS FOR QUESTION ONE: WHAT ARE THE ATTRIBUTES THAT LEAD TO THE SUCCESS OF WOMEN?

The aim of this research question was to establish the actual attributes that enabled women to achieve success. The interview questions that relate to research question 1 are questions 1, 2 and 3.

5.4.1   The Meaning of Success

The first interview question requested interviewees to define what success means to them.

Table 3: What does success mean to you?

Rank	Construct: Meaning of Success	Frequency
1	Impact	5

2	Learning and Development / Growth	3
3	Achievements	2
3	Life-balance	2
4	Social Transformation	1
4	Personal Respect	1
4	Athletic Success	1
4	Family	1
4	Personal Fulfillment	1
4	Challenging Oneself	1
4	Contributing	1
4	Profitability	1

In analysing the constructs, the interviewees tended to express varied perceptions of what success meant to them, though many centered on making a meaningful impact or difference beyond personal and business success, with a participant stating, "*how many people's lives did you change for the better and how many people did you touch, figuratively*" and another stating, it is the "*impact that you are able to have within your own organisation but also within the broader community within which you serve*"; "*success means feeling that your talents, your energies and your resources that you can marshal outside of yourself are being used to their fullest extent and the impact you want to have*"; [it] "*is the ability to make a difference*"; and so where you are "*in a position, you* [should] *use that position responsibly, you recognise that responsibility in that position and you use it constructively*". This is confirmed by another respondent's words, "*so for me that's what success is about*, [it] *is definitely not about personal success, it's not about a status, it's none of that. It's about the difference*" one makes.

Others reported that success is measured through learning and growth patterns or through obtaining a balance between the various facets of life, including work, social, and spiritual components. This is supported by a participant stating, "*I suppose* [it] *means a great balance between your personal, career, and spiritual life, for me that's success. So when I have my personal life, work life, and spiritual life, I'm in balance and successful*" and another participant providing, "*I would say it's a balance of all of that really, it's a balance of career and family, health, happiness, and all of that, it's not career only.*"

Selected responses involved personal aspects such as: achievements, personal fulfilment and respect, and family-related factors, "*raising/bringing up a family*" and "*being respected for who you are and not what you are*". Another respondent stating, "*I have to define it holistically, so in terms of having a fulfilling life of which work is*

one component, [and] *as long as I am comfortable with where my life is going and I am happy and fulfilled, that is what success means to me".* These words are echoed by another respondent as follows, *"success for me is doing things that make me feel fulfilled".*

Others pertained to the organisational context, such as profit, or broader society, "*I believe that when you die, nobody is going to stand around your grave saying look at how much money he/she made, but rather what you have achieved as an individual*" and further it "*is the ability to make a difference so you know it's about being able to be in a position where you use that position responsibly, you recognise the responsibility that comes from that position and you use it constructively*" and "*success is definitely not about personal success, it's not about a status, it's none of that. It's about the difference*" [one can make].

Contributing and Challenging Oneself were also highlighted. "*I think it's making a contribution* [however] *I think it's so much more than that, I think it's about making a concrete contribution to whatever it is that you are into*"; it is also about "pushing yourself, *I am hard on myself too* [I] *take myself out of my comfort zone, if I can overcome hurdles and reach success*".

There was also an appreciation for the financial aspect, supported by a participant's remark that, "*obviously growth from a profitability perspective in the business as well*".

5.4.2 Attributes of Successful Leaders

In this second interview question, the respondents were requested to discuss those attributes that they understood to be associated with successful leaders.

Table 4: What are the Attributes of Successful Leaders?

Rank	Construct: Attributes of Successful Leaders	Frequency
1	Leading by Example	7
2	Knowledge / Intellect / Ability	4
3	Respect	3
3	Genuineness	3
4	Empowerment	2
4	Toughness	2
4	Discipline	2
4	People Skills	2
4	Communication and Clarity	2

4	Influence	2
4	Empathy	2
4	Supportive / Enabling Environment	2
4	Forward Thinking	2
5	Performance Record	1
5	Personal Confidence	1
5	Objective, Detached Perspective	1
5	Approach to Conflict	1
5	Trust	1
5	Involvement	1
5	Humility	1
5	Passion	1
5	Human Resources	1
5	Flexibility	1
5	Fair / Objective	1
5	Strategic Awareness	1
5	Shared Vision	1
5	Life Balance	1
5	Resourcefulness	1
5	Leadership During Difficulties	1
5	Teamwork Approach	1
5	Bravery / Courage	1

The quality "*leading by example*" was considered integral to being a strong leader. "*Expect people to mirror you and do what you do*" as well as "*being authentic and genuine in all types of contexts in and outside of the working environment*". A further comment, "*treat your colleagues with respect, don't talk about someone in a rude or unflattering way in front of other colleagues*" and "*the culture that I come from, says that in order to be respected, you need to provide respect*".

The interviewees seemed to associate leaders with a range of qualities, with many relating to the abilities, skills, and intellectual capability of leaders. "*If a person is labelled as a leader, the big differentiator is in discipline and the more senior I become, the more I see this.*" And it is "*an invitation to come on a journey rather than forcing people to do what you want them to do. But that's a skill to be able to invite people and get them to come onto the journey themselves.*"

Authenticity was highlighted throughout the interviews. "*I am seeing more and more that authenticity is still the number one contributor to success, you can't fake being as driven or as engaged as those who actually are.*" Another stating, "*You cannot mimic those who are.*" However, a participant provided a more limited thinking saying, "*I still think we* [are] *not* [at] *a point where women can just be themselves.*"

Confidence was another important skill raised. "*Confidence in yourself, is something you can't buy or learn from a book but rather how your deal with yourself and your ability to meet a particular task/role you have.*" Another skill introduced was trust. It "*works both ways. As a leader you must be able to trust people and their abilities to succeed, grow and prosper, not micromanage. Likewise, you need to earn the trust of your people, it is not gained by virtue of your title – it is how you perform as a leader.*"

Leaders must be involved and have the ability "*to also get their hands dirty – they also have to work, and not sit in a nice office and simply delegate*", but rather "*find the opportunity to get involved in projects and have a role to play so that people can also see you at work*". Humility is about "*understanding that you don't know it all and that you are surrounded by people that may know a lot more than you, you are highly dependent on others to make a success of what you need to do, whilst you are doing the necessary to not step on others' toes.*"

Leadership also involves being "*clear of what the strategy is and how each of the people can contribute to that*", requiring clear communication and "*being able to communicate well, giving feedback and guiding the people in the right direction*".

Empowering employees along with creating or fostering an employment context of support and enablement were also identified as critical leadership attributes. According to the participants, "*leaders* [who] *tend to be empathetic, are able to positively influence others, and communicate and provide clarity to followers or employees*", supported by another remark that, "*empowerment, to me as a leader* [means], *I appoint people and I must let them get on with it, let them make mistakes and by the way I have no problem with people making mistakes, just don't make the same mistake twice, learn from it, positive learning and sharing experiences.*" Empowerment also means "*upskilling yourself, making yourself knowledgeable about any area that you undertake. If you do, you empower yourself, your confidence will come through, you know you have the ability to do certain things*". This is supported by a further remark that you "*need to allow people to grow and give them responsibility and give them accountability so that they are able to grow and be there to support them rather than doing the things, so sometimes it takes a little bit longer to get them to that point but I think as a leader if you give them an opportunity to do that my job becomes easier*".

Further, Passion was also considered to be highly valuable. "*For me it's about passion, this is most important."* Another participant providing, *"passion about your business, I personally believe you have to be passionate about your people, now clearly this is business specific, if you work in a factory being passionate about your people is not going to work*".

Another interesting point, was the appreciation of tenacity, "*because if you're in a tough and clinical environment, now it needs a completely different input and tenacity becomes quite important to ride a difficult part of an economy".* Confirmed by another remark, *"tenacity is what you need to make tough decisions and live with the consequences of those tough decisions. Tenacity is what you need to push when all fails, you have the very up front that takes tenacity.*"

5.4.3   The Importance of these Attributes for Women

Further to interview question 2 above, the respondents were requested, in the third interview question, to advise why they believed these particular attributes to be of importance, specifically for women.

Table 5: Which of these attributes do you think are more important for female success?

Rank	Construct: Importance of these Attributes for Women	Frequency
1	Genuineness	3
1	Application to Both Genders	3
2	Embrace Female Qualities	2
2	Influence	2
3	Passion	1
3	Emotional Intelligence	1
3	Males More Confident	1
3	Toughness	1
3	Communication	1
3	Knowledge	1
3	Life Balance	1
3	Exceptions for Males	1
3	Self-promotion	1
3	Greater Female Requirements	1
3	Combination Required Equally	1
3	Aspirational Awareness	1

When asked which types of attributes are considered more important for females, some respondents reported that, for females authenticity is most important, along with related aspects such as emotional intelligence. "*I think passion is the most*

important thing", EQ is "*one thing women are particularly good at and* [is] *what you need in order to run a big business, women due to* [their] *genetic makeup and* [also] *having to raise families*, [tend] *to have more EQ.*" Goleman

Other respondents reported the applicability of the attributes to both genders and little distinction between the two genders. "*I think it's the same, the attributes that I've outlined"*, supported by another remark that when *"I think* [of] *men and women in terms of success; I think it's the same".* Confirmed by another remark, *"I don't think there is a gender split to tell you the truth. I think if you're running a services industry like we are, I don't think it makes any difference whether you're male or female,* [there is] *absolutely no difference at all".*

Women must embrace their female qualities. "*As a female, you should not want to behave as people traditionally see men."* Confirmed by a further remark that, *"roles are now becoming merged and there also is a greater understanding of the different sexes and their traits, personalities, reactions, for example women are more emotional – and so what? Allow yourself to feel that. Don't come across as aggressive/assertive simply because men are seen to exhibit more of these qualities and women think this will earn respect and be viewed as an equal. Try balance* [this] *as best as you can – and don't be embarrassed to do so."* Another participant stating that women *"have the softer skills* [and this is] *to our advantage".*

In addition, the ability to motivate others was also reportedly important for females, "*galvanising people around a shared vision*" and embracing female qualities as a leadership attribute was outlined as critical for females, particularly as some of the respondents indicated the necessity to avoid attempting to exhibit the qualities of males. Once again authenticity is raised. [You must] *"remain a female. Sometimes women when they reach certain roles, behave like men and this can be disadvantageous, being authentic allows you to differentiate yourself and bring something different to the table. It is positive to remain true to yourself, be real."* However, another participant qualified this when she stated, "*if you* [are] *authentic to yourself and you have certain character traits that are not necessarily going to lead to success, it might be better if you master them to get success*". Men have more confidence generally. This is evidenced in an interviewee's remark that, "*women seem to be struggling more with authenticity than men do, men have more self-confidence than women. I experience this myself, if I compare the employees that report to me, I see that the men are more confident than the women.*"

There is a suggestion that women have to work harder. "*Simply because as a female you sometimes have to work twice as hard as your male counterparts and have to prove yourself in order for people to have confidence in you.*"

Increased awareness would facilitate the overall position for women. "*I think its human nature to follow men, especially in business. It is easier to follow them, and I think* [there is] *a more natural respect for that power role and security that comes with that. So for that reason women shouldn't go after the power but rather after the knowledge because that will give them the power if they really know what they are doing.*" This is supported by a further statement, "*I think there's more tolerance for men whose personalities deviate from, not necessarily the norm, but what is kind of organisationally exceptional, but also people think it is the traditional organisational personality that gets ahead.*"

Women must develop the skill of self-promotion, and must advance their ability, as one respondent stated "*putting yourself out there*". This is particularly important for purposes of aspirational awareness, "*what women leaders don't realise, is that even if you're not impressed by your* [own] *status, for other people it's aspirational. So you have this additional burden that says, I've got to do what I've got to do in a way that could be a positive example, not because it's great to have people follow you, but because whether you like it or not people want you. So therefore, behave in a manner that is worthy of the fact that people want you. I might not like the fact that I'm aspirational, that it's an aspirational position for people, but I have a responsibility for that.*"

5.5   RESULTS FOR QUESTION TWO: HOW EACH ATTRIBUTE CONTRIBUTES TO THE SUCCESS OF WOMEN?

This research question sought to prove the extent to which each attribute led to and/or facilitated the achievement of success and whether there were any significant attributes specifically, or whether a combination thereof was necessary. The interview questions that relate to Research Question 2 are questions 4, 7 and 8.

5.5.1   Three Points of Advice

In this fourth interview question, the respondents were asked to provide three points of advice for those women who wished to gain success within an organisation.

Table 6: If asked how to gain success as a female within an organisation, what three key points of advice would you provide?

Rank	Construct: Three Points of Advice	Frequency
1	Authenticity	5
2	Mentor / Promoter / Advocate	4
3	Self-Promotion	3
3	Confidence	3
3	Demonstrate Value	3
3	Work Ethic	3
4	Work-life Balance	2
4	Education / Skills	2
5	Non-Gender Specific	1
5	Expect Equal Treatment	1
5	Leadership Abilities	1
5	Susceptibility of Females to Masculine Industry	1
5	Consider Others	1
5	Career Direction	1
5	Organisational Knowledge	1
5	Respect	1
5	Structural Support	1
5	Use of Soft Skills	1
5	Seek Development / Growth	1
5	Avoid Cultural Norms	1
5	Resilience	1
5	Female Responsibility	1
5	Avoid Victim Response	1

The primary points of advice that were reported centered on authenticity and being true to oneself despite being susceptible to the male dominance of the industry. "*The first thing is don't try to be a man.*" This point is enhanced by another participant's remark, *"use what works to your advantage, women generally are better with people, they do tend to have that ability. Use that, don't try to be all rough and tough like a man, that's not how you are built.*" Furthermore, "*I think women have tried to be tough and hard and I don't think that is required. There is a degree of toughness but I don't think you should try to be a man, there's a reason why you're not.*" Echoed in, "*be true to yourself, I think that's important. You only have you, you know? So don't try and change and be a man, don't try and change and be something you're not because you don't want to change who you are as a leader because that's what makes leaders successful.*"

Others indicated that females should seek mentors, promoters, and individuals who they can talk with or obtain support from as they proceed through their careers. "*Get yourself a mentor*", furthermore, "*all the black young ladies that we bring into our firm, having different cultural backgrounds, talk to someone who has seen it, done it, like myself who can guide and navigate. We mentor all of our young ladies.*" A participant went so far as to say that, *"young women shouldn't join organisations that do not have a decent mentorship program in place. In the interview process, ask about this. Men do this so well, mentorship, they are out on the golf course, they network. Women tend to be less good at this* [networking]." Another point made is that it is "*also important for women to mentor other women in terms of taking their place as well*". It is also essential to find someone who will provide meaningful assistance; women must "*identify more senior people in the organisation that should be your advocate. So not necessarily a mentor, but actually advocate for you. Because I think a lot of women like the idea of mentorship,* [however] *a mentor is not necessarily going to advocate for you.*" Women should "*get yourself a couple of people that you can talk to and bounce ideas off*".

The ability or necessity to demonstrate value in one form or another was also outlined as an important area of advice. "*Be able to demonstrate where you will be able to add value. Be able to say I should get this promotion, this is how I will add value.*" Another comment, "*be good at what you do, I think don't ever blame the fact that somebody else is moving up the ladder. I think there is nothing more off-putting to the rest of the company, whether it's true or not is irrelevant, don't think you're the victim ever.*" The need to work hard and obtain the desirable skills for attaining success was also highlighted. "*It is important as an individual to know where you want to go, many are not clear where they want to go and this makes it difficult to provide support.*" Women should also "*get to know more about the organisation, know and understand the environment and industry in which the business operates and also the business itself. Don't be limited to the role that you are currently in.*"

Two related attributes, confidence and self-promotion, were also outlined by the interviewees as an area of advice that females should consider as they develop their careers. "*Promote yourself. What men tend to do and what still happens in firms, is that men get paid ahead of their achieving, partly because the men are out there being more aggressive and creating the impression that they are ready for the role, even if they are not. Whereas women tend to wait until they are 100% ready and they can tick every box, but they need to sell themselves a bit. I teach my mentees to*

come up with their own ideas, don't wait for others to tell you and don't be worried about making mistakes or about your idea being shot down, come up with something. Promote yourself and network."

Women must enhance their self-confidence, "*so the first thing I would say is that you need to be present and take your place, so don't step back. I think we mustn't be intimidated by anger or forceful behaviour, which* [we] *can sometimes come across. tand your ground.*" This is supported by another participant's comment, "*don't be afraid to win. Today women don't actually win. I think women generally have got a huge amount of competence when it comes to something and they would generally only speak when they know what they are talking about. Speak up – the whole time, and actually talk the whole time.*"

"*Communication and the ability to lead people, especially as you become more senior*", is key. "*Similarly with leadership, the more you climb, the more you need to be able to lead people who are experts in a particular area and be comfortable that you know less about a particular area than they do* [technical expertise], *your contribution is no longer within the expertise, but rather within the leadership domain.*" Focal "*skills become about leading people*".

There is a susceptibility of females to masculine industries. "*Why I mentioned this with females in particular*, [is because] *leadership or the corporate world is very masculine*, [it] *is very masculine because there are more males than females, and it tends to be easy for females to try and act like a man without them being aware because they are trying to fit in with this leadership masculine culture that they find themselves in.*"

"*When you lead, it is not just about yourself but also a team and in doing so you have to consider others, appreciate that they are different, don't measure them by what you are able to do, understand issues of diversity irrespective of sex. People are all different – where they come from, their culture,* [etc. and] *this must be taken into account.*"

"*The world is changing in terms of what is happening around you*, and therefore *continuous improvement of yourself*" is imperative, "*because you're never perfect and therefore be open to constructive criticism, ask for it, and that then will enable you to*

grow and become a better leader". Feedback will allow for an individual to "*grow to become a better person and a better leader*".

5.5.2   Ownership of Development

Interview question 7 requested that participants describe who owns the development of women within an organisation and to elaborate upon their response.

Table 7: What are your views for developing women in organisations? Who owns this (ie HR/ExCo/Leaders), and why?

Rank	Construct: Ownership of Development	Frequency
1	Leadership	7
2	Individual / Woman	3
2	Entire Organisation	3
2	Line Manager / Exco	3
3	Organisational Advantage	2
3	Human Resources	2
3	Avoid Magnification of Issue of Development	2
3	Not Human Resources	2
4	Attraction of Females	1
4	Diversity	1
4	Depends on Individual Requirements	1
4	Development Important	1
4	Aligned to Business Needs	1
4	Individual Development Assignment	1

The participants indicated that the primary drivers or owners of development in organisations are those in positions of leadership, such as CEOs. "*Leadership owns it,*" furthermore, "*which set the tone and underpin the type of culture and developmental trajectory of company employees*", another providing that, "*the attitude of the leader influences the behavior of the team and the organisation*". Furthermore, "*real values come from the top. Then the CEO must be able to say that* [these] *matter to this organisation*" and "*provide support in the form of action carried out thereafter*".

Others reported the necessity for females themselves to take personal responsibility for their development first, which is likely assisted by organisational bodies such as human resources (HR).

Interestingly, there was a sense that the consideration and emphasis on female development obtained an increased attraction of female employee candidates. At the

same time "*you don't want to push women into roles where they are too inexperienced to handle* [it], *this can break someone, when you are failing – you don't need others to tell you this – you know that you are. This can break a person's confidence, you need to nurture, grow and develop individuals. You don't necessarily need to have years of experience to climb but also ensure that they have the relevant experience. This is a considered effort,* [as an] *example, women in specialist roles must ensure that they gain general experience in order to grow. You create a path setting out how you will grow these individuals within the organisation.*"

The diversity that emanates from an increased female presence provides organisations with a competitive advantage, "*in that it is critical to have members of different races, genders etc. on a board because of the diverse thinking that they bring*". This is supported by the opinion that "*the diverse thinking, viewpoint and alternative perspective should be a criteria for promotion and development of the company and this is also in the company's best interests*".

On the other hand, there should also be an effort to avoid magnifying the issue of development. "*I'm not a big fan of this idea that women have to be treated differently, you know if you do, they can't complain that they're treated differently if they asked for it. I believe women should be developed but more focus* [should be] *put on other poor women that don't get promoted etc. The more they become victims the more they complain about it and then you get the reverse effect of what you're supposed to do.* [And] *so, I'm not a big fan of making it a policy.*" A more subtle approach can be more effective, implemented "*on the quiet. We do need more women in higher positions, but I don't like the idea of* [it] *being a big expert discussion every time they have a meeting about women. I think there needs to be an awareness, but I'm not a fan of making it an obvious deal, because I think we make it worse.*"

5.5.3   Success Obstacles

Interview question 8 sought to establish the reasons why women believe that some women are not as successful as others in the same or similar circumstances, and whether they felt that these obstacles were institutional or of a personal nature.

Table 8: For women who are not as successful as other women in similar circumstances would you say the obstacles are more of a personal nature rather than institutional?

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Rank	Construct: Success Obstacles	Frequency
1	Combination	5
2	Personal	4
3	Dependent on Environmental Constraints / Context	3
4	Organisation	2
5	Varied Promotion Opportunities	1

There were mixed responses as to whether variations in promotions and success depended on personal or organisational factors. Many suggested that these obstacles depended on contextual and environmental factors, such as the organisation one is employed within. A participant providing, "*from my own perspective, and within my environment, the constraint is more personal rather than institutional*". This was supported by another participant's perspective that, "*in small corporates like ours, I don't think there are institutional barriers. I think it's more personal choices*" but then an acknowledgement of the institutional barriers. "*I think there are institutions which are just bitter difficult, and maybe you know you get to the stage perhaps where you say I'm giving up so much of myself to fit in that I can't actually bring a maximum part of me to make a difference in this business, I need to leave. Sometimes you know one doesn't have the opportunity to change in an institution, that isn't failure.*"

Some reported a combination of personal and organisational factors, as one participant stated, "*there are still countries and cultures that do not allow women to succeed but there are also women that prohibit themselves from succeeding, there* [is a] *cultural mindset that prevent them from pursuing their careers, it is* [that] *they are* [not] *successful in their own minds*". Another stating, "I *suppose it's a combination, I think there certainly are institutional barriers, particularly in large organisations*", and "*I imagine it's always a combination of both. It's very hard to say it's more than that.*" A final comment, "*I think it's not necessarily a personal failure, I think it's a combination of things*".

On a personal basis, some indicated that females sometimes have greater freedom to choose their career trajectory, they may not emphasise promotions and hierarchical movement as much as males, so their lack of "success" may be a personal choice as opposed to an organisational impediment. "*I think on a personal side the issues above, societal and cultural background etc, because of your own thinking – this may create barriers to your own success.*" This was supported by another participant saying, "*I'm leaning towards personal, because if they have the*

same ability and they're in the same company, why would one be promoted and not the other. Maybe the one is just a little bit more, can work faster or maybe you know there is something she does that's slightly different. So I don't think that it's necessarily an institutional thing. I would then definitely say it's personal, definitely." Another confirmed this thinking by providing, "*so my default would have to be, if we* [are] *in the same institution, that one lady may be more successful than the other for personal reasons.*"

Some commented on the relevance of the particular organisations. "*On the other hand, if organisations don't create a path for women, they may just disappear into the system and so there must be a concerted effort to develop women.*" This is confirmed in another comment that, with the prevalence of "*institution's masculine and leadership culture and the expectations and stereotypes of women, they either don't think they can do it, or they shouldn't be doing it, or they won't have the time because of children. All those are stereotypes, and that is what the institutional culture will be limiting in terms of female growth.*"

5.6 RESULTS FOR QUESTION THREE: WHY DOES A PARTICULAR ATTRIBUTE CONTRIBUTE TO THE SUCCESS OF WOMEN?

This research question enquired about the reason why a specific attribute impacted the success of women.

5.6.1 Reasons for Prioritisation

This interview question 5 related to interview question 4 above, and the researcher wished to pursue the reasons why the respondents deemed the points of advice as provided, to be of priority. The interview questions that relate to the third research question are questions 5, 6, 9 and 10.

Table 9: Why are these points ranked as priority?

Rank	Construct: Reasons for Prioritisation	Frequency
1	Important for Success	4
2	Likeability	2
3	Guidance	1
3	Positive Employee Outcomes	1
3	Attainment of Organisational Goals	1
3	Demonstrating Value	1
3	Leadership Development	1

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3	Developmental Exemplar	1
3	Cultural Impediments	1
3	Female Options and Choice	1

Overwhelmingly, the general sense was that these areas are prioritised because they promote success and are important for successful outcomes. "*Irrespective of how brilliant you are, if you don't do those things, there's a good chance that you won't progress in the organisation.*" Confirmed by another remark that, "*once you're in a position which others may describe as successful, that's the start, it's not the end. In fact, it comes with additional responsibilities, so you won't get there without all of those things,* [and] *you don't continue without doing those and doing them at an even higher level.*"

Others indicated that the areas outlined are critical for likeability, which is essential to ensuring that one is able to obtain support as a leader from subordinates. "*More cohesive teams, motivate staff, encourage staff, when they come into the office – have a spring in your step, energy etc. in terms of their work, enthusiasm about their work. People* [should] *feel encouraged, feel confident enough to express their point of view and express themselves, have the ability to disagree with you and not fear being victimised etc., it's about growing people. Be a leader and role model, you will then build successful teams that will help achieve the goals of the organisation.*" Both positive organisational and employee outcomes were reported as a reason for prioritising the points provided, denoting the importance of these for organisational and employee performance.

In terms of likeability, "*there is a degree of, yes you've got to be good at your job but also nobody follows a leader loyally that they don't like.* [And] *so I think if you have people skills and you have those kinds of things your likeability increases and if you're really good at what you do, the respect for you increases.*"

Continuous focus on the attainment of organisational goals was stressed by a participant. "*I never lose sight of the strategy, goals, etc. because I am accountable ultimately, but if people make mistakes whilst genuinely trying to execute their roles*", this is different, "*but not if they are simply irresponsible or lazy*".

Demonstrating value was another point raised. "*The ability to be able to articulate what you are able to bring to the table. It's not about what you can gain from the company but what you can bring and being able to align that* [to] *your own vision and*

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objectives, this is also important. You are able to show what you want to do and show the company how this will also benefit the company, grow and be more successful."

Cultural impediments can also create issues. "*Culture for me is a key hindrance. So if you get married and have children and you want to have a career, make sure that your spouse understands that before you get married because if he doesn't you're not going to have a career or you're going to have to take a subservient role or you're not going to have a happy marriage.*"

"*It is still, in many fields, a male world and so if you don't have a mentor and some help, it could be difficult to navigate.*" This is repeated in another participant's response, "*I think if you look at the steps, the reality is that more males rise to the top than females. But is that because males don't have an option to opt out and females do? Not in all cases, but in most cases females have an option to opt out and if it becomes too hard, they do have the option to say, 'well I'm not the primary responsible breadwinner in our household', maybe it's not about opting out of work but saying that I'm opting out of having to be in this race to get to the top. 'I'm going to stand where I am, I'm saying at this stage, I'm happy to just be the senior manager and use that to earn X income but still be able to devote a certain amount of time to my family.' Versus the male, saying that, 'I have to get top, I'm the alpha male, I need to be the primary breadwinner', so he just keeps on pushing, whereas for females we can at some stage say we opt out and it's that potential reason why there's less females found at the top, I think it's an element of that as well.*"

5.6.2   Results from Implementation

This interview question 6 questioned what the respondents believed would result from the implementation of the points of advice as provided in response to interview question 4 above.

Table 10: What do you think would be the results of a women doing one or more of the suggested points?

Rank	Construct: Results from Implementation	Frequency
1	Development/Growth	4
2	Increase in Senior / Leadership Positions	3
2	Success	3
3	Personal Well Being	1
3	Change	1

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3	Contribution Recognised	1
3	Garner Respect	1
3	Task Completion	1
3	Removal of Bias	1
3	Personal Fulfilment	1
3	Designated Plan	1
3	Diversity	1
3	Impact Consciousness	1

The interviewees tended to suggest that if these areas are implemented, females are likely to develop, grow, and enhance themselves in terms of personal and career facets, providing that this would result in a "*very good chance of success*" and the "*achievement of your own objectives*", and lastly "*she'd be happier if that's what she wants*". These actions will also garner respect. Women "*will be respected for the job that they can do*" and "*be recognised for what they can contribute*".

An increase in senior/leadership positions is likely to arise. "*I think you will have more women in senior positions",* and get *"rid of some of the biases that exist. In a sense that if you had lots of women be like men, when it comes to speaking up or taking on work when they* [are] *not 100% sure that they can do it*", and yet will still put themselves forward.

Others denoted that females are more inclined to achieve success and that organisations will acquire an increase in the number of females in senior management and high leadership positions. "*I look at a young lady I am mentoring, she is doing really well, she came in as our bursar and she became our intern last year and then she became our graduate and we put her onto permanent and we gave her a 97% salary hike this year. This is because of the industry and the expectations. And as a young black female, she will undoubtedly be able to demand a premium. She has developed significantly, I am very proud of what she has done. I can give many examples.*"

Outside of work, females may acquire personal fulfilment and psychological well-being, which has undeniable benefits for employment and non-employment context functioning. "*Women can't also merely be satisfied with the work that they are doing within their job, and do it very well, but this doesn't necessarily guarantee success, you may have success within your own space but this doesn't necessarily translate into growth, it has to be bigger than that.*"

Development is another advantage. "*I think they would definitely grow. Growth is a journey. So they'd find themselves as they grow and they would get to a stage where they are comfortable in their* [own] *skin and do the best they can.*" There would be a sense of personal well-being, "*on a micro scale, women would be less stressed* [personally], *when a person is not authentic the 'faking' can create a lot of stress and anxiety, so much unnecessary pressure* [is placed] *on the individual. People can also see when you are not being authentic.*"

Change would ensue, "*at a macro level, this will go a long way to change perception and the environment. The more women that are authentically feminine within the workplace, the more normal it will become over time, and this will make it easy for those women who follow to be themselves and be comfortable within themselves.*"

It is necessary to have a set of goals and objectives, to "*decide up front what she wants out of life, you need some sort of game plan, even if you haven't been able to articulate it very clearly in your early 20s, as you start progressing through the career*". It is fundamental to have direction.

"*Females lead differently to men and they create a better environment for cultural diversity, for racial diversity,* [and] *for gender diversity.*"

5.6.3   Importance for Nation Building

This interview question 9 sought to establish what the success of women in corporate would mean to the country and why it is important for nation building.

Table 11: Why is the success of women in corporate South Africa important for nation building?

Rank	Construct: Importance for Nation Building	Frequency
1	Economic Impact	3
2	Organisational Benefits	2
2	Human Capital Use	2
2	Underutilisation	2
2	Social Benefits	2
2	Diversity	2
3	Greater Breadth of Skills	1
3	Cultural Variations in Emphasis on Women	1
3	Importance of Increasing Role of Women	1
3	Financial	1
3	Equality	1

3	Entrepreneurial Importance	1
3	Empowerment	1
3	Empathy	1

There seemed to be a host of reasons as to the importance of the success of women towards building the South African nation. Many considered this to be important for economic considerations and for driving certain aspects of the economy. After all, in South Africa, women constitute 52% of the total population (Businesswomen's Association of South Africa Census, 2015) and so female involvement within the employment contexts is essential to stimulating the economy even further. This perspective is confirmed by the participants' remarks as follows, "*I think that* [this] *has an impact on the economy*"; "*a variety of things that are very big in building an economy*"; "*Saving and so on*"; "*in terms of business as well, women who* [are] *earning, ecause you know it* [will] *probably go back to productive use into the economy*" and lastly, "*women drive the household, drive the responsibility,* [and are] *responsible for the use of disposable income.*"

Organisationally, women are likely to benefit organisations because of the diversity of ideas and abilities that they bring with them, which can only contribute positively to organisational functioning, performance, and outcomes. "*I see and believe that women bring a different perspective and this benefits the organisation, having a broader perspective, across different dimensions of background and exposure.*" And further, "*start to help create the environment where we are enabling our employees to still provide some sort of stability at home and still be there for the kids, rather than being absent parents who are focusing on work all the time.*"

With a diverse management team comes a wide gamut of skills, competencies, abilities and further, the ability to examine opportunities and threats as well as the ability to tackle problem solving, is likely to be more effective (Hambrick et al., 1996).

In addition, others suggested that we have a large number of females that are not being utilised in terms of human resources. "*50% of our population is female, so if you look at the basics of using your resources for success, we have physical resources, we have financial resources, we have human resources,* [and] *so if 50% of our human resources if female, if you only use a portion of that you not using all your human resources for the development of your country*" *and* "*why choose to use only 50% of what you have*" by doing so "*you are not fully utilising the resources of the country for development*". By not having efficient utilisation we "*limit the ability of*

the country to develop itself further, both economically and socially", and "*you want to get maximum use of your talent pool. If you're only going to use half or a portion of your talent pool, we can't afford that as a country, we've got things to do. We need to get the maximum part of that.*"

Another motivation is that of social benefits, particularly the effect that women play in their role as a mother and caregiver. This is advocated by the following participant remarks, "*these women interact differently with their children, you* [are able to] *provide your child with a different perspective and prepare them for the life that they will one day be leading. Your role as a mother is not restricted to that of playing a nurturing role, you can also show your child responsibility, earning of money and contributing to society, how to be independent. Show them how to run a household whilst also running a home, these are important life skills*", and supported by, "*I think that ultimately it's going to produce a better generation of children, it's going to help create more well-rounded individuals and hopefully take care of some of the issues in society that is too broad to try and discuss right now*". The inclusive nature of women was also raised. "*I think* [that] *because we have become quite aggressive as a nation, with good reason, and mistrusting each other etc., the soft skills of women and that sort of calming effect that women could have are essential in those roles just for the whole unity thing.*"

The theme of diversity was also raised as significant. "*The success of women is very important for purposes of diversity, we have different strengths that we bring*", echoed by the words of another participant stating that, "*it is vitally important because women bring a different perspective, we have different attributes and can bring different values".* Diversity brings further advantages, as evidenced by one of the remarks that, "*it is important not only to represent the demographics of your population but it is also about understanding the consumer. Having diversity also ensures that you have different ideas and perspectives. Everyone can add value.*" Again this is supported by another participant, "*I do think that* [by] *having more men around in product development, that you do get a different view of what those products are, just sometimes there is a different gender view.*"

Additional benefits relate to finances. "*You will make more money and then you will build a better nation because you are richer.*" In addition to equality "*it* [is] *also important for other reasons, the other reasons to me are just so obvious. Why should one's sex mean that someone should be treated differently? We have gone through*

immense hardship with the apartheid regime, any form of discrimination is a part of apartheid, we should not have any of this at any level."

The development of women would also mean a greater breadth of skills, it is a "*numbers game. How many men there are versus how many women there are within the country, average intelligence across both genders, the pool of people to draw leaders is limited and thus you have to pool from the female pool otherwise you simply will not be able to fill these positions with the caliber of leadership required.*" Empathy was also raised as a reason why women's development is important. "*Because of that empathy that women bring.*" A participant shared an example of where an employee demonstrated her ability to understand and appreciate the circumstances of her employees as follows, "*you have had the coaching and* [we have] *seen significant change, but we can see that something is still bothering. We* [are] *really happy with the progress that you've made, but it is still clear that there is an issue bothering you. He sat there and this man cried, he obviously tried to contain himself but he said, 'I just don't spend enough time with my daughter and when my daughter says to me, "Nie papa ek verstaan, jy werk vandag"* [No dad I understand that you are working today]*, because when I get home she is already sleeping, that really bothers me.' And it was myself and the female from HR, we suggested that he work from home once a week, asking is that going to help and he said I think it can. I said well then make it happen and he came back after his first week and said that, you know what she wanted me to do was come to her sports* [events] *and I told her mother I can't because I'm still working from home. We then decided that I would go to the sports* [event] *and take my computer with me. He said I was literally sitting and working on my computer and every time she* [my daughter] *looked up to see if we were looking her way, my wife would nudge me and tell me to wave. So from his daughter's perspective he was there and he said it's the little things like that that make a difference. But I think it's those sorts of things that females bring into the workplace that men struggle with.*"

A participant also raised the effect that this would have from an entrepreneurial perspective. "*I think not so much in corporate South Africa, I think entrepreneurial, SMME's, starts-ups, I think in business in general, it's very important.*"

Cultural Variations in Emphasis on Women was also raised. "*But very, very strong, and* [with] *most of the leaders their wives are quite relevant and they're quite strong, Winnie Mandela and that kind of thing, and I didn't actually realise that. I think the*

white cultures, particularly the Afrikaans people come from the view where the woman is seen as inferior but not disrespected, you know what I mean?"

A participant also raised the impact of empowerment. "*I think it empowers women to look after their families, it empowers women to have a voice, and to have choices so they not victims of circumstances.*"

5.6.4 Greatest desire for the career women of tomorrow

The last interview question 10 was deliberately designed by the researcher to be open-ended to allow the respondents to provide general responses.

Table 12: What is your greatest desire for the career women of tomorrow?

Rank	Construct: Greatest desire for the career women of tomorrow	Frequency
1	Equals	2
1	Confidence and Assertiveness	2
2	Disseminate "Success"	1
2	Purposeful Living	1
2	Self-reflection	1
2	Absence of Guilt for Dual Roles	1
2	Appropriate Role Placement	1
2	Merit Placement	1
2	Life Balance	1
2	Superior Performance	1
2	Authenticity	1
2	Success Opportunities	1

The respondents were positive about their desires for future career women, suggesting that they would like women to have equal opportunities in terms of employment, pay, and the value that they seemingly bring to organisations. Remarks in support of this were, "*to not think of themselves as women, everything should be equal*" and "*knowing that we are different but that in a work environment, knowing that there is nothing that a women can't do that a man can in most areas, especially in leadership and from a corporate perspective*" and "*men are also rising up to the occasion. In my home there are no men/women roles, we just do what needs to be done. Involve your partner/spouse, make it work for you*" and "*that they don't have to work twice as hard as their male counterparts to be recognised and to achieve the same career developments as their male counterparts, they are seen as equals to their male counterparts and that they* [are] *going to be paid accordingly in terms of the value they add in the organisation.*"

Others indicated that women should develop their confidence and assertiveness to be more vocal and active in organisations, "*to see women in the workplace being confident and assertive, stand up for what you believe in and be comfortable with it and ultimately in whatever way that you define it, and ultimately be independent, financially and also in your way of thinking. When you analyse things you are confident that you have come to the right decision, and when it comes to implementation, you do not second guess yourself. Confidence is key. In order for others to believe in you and also for you to believe that you are capable, once you believe in yourself, everything else falls into place.*"

The respondents also highlighted the importance of purposeful living as follows, "*philosophically, they live purposefully. Don't be inhibited by the culture that you happen to be born into or that you find yourself in. Consciously make time for reflection, you need to know what you want, what you really want (be clear, this requires flexibility and also evolves over time)."* On a personal level, the respondents indicated that "*women should seek a work-life balance, fulfilment, and purposeful living, and, along the way, promote the success of others as well as disseminate the positive aspects of their success to other women for further career women development*", and "*the career women who are successful now must pass this on to other women in the industry so that the numbers do become more equal.*"

The desire for women to be able to be themselves is evidenced by one of the participants' responses, "*so the greatest desire for women of tomorrow is that they must really be comfortable in their skin, they must take themselves to work, be who they are, and they will grow a lot more if you are who you are. Because if you are very different at work, at home, with friends, then you are not yourself, then you limit your own growth. You'll never be able to fully develop into yourself.*"

Another desire was that women have equal opportunity to succeed. "*To have the opportunity to* [have] *success, like, do what she's wants to do, you know? I think the women, as with anybody else coming into the workforce, should be able to do whatever they want to do.*"

The importance of self-reflection was also highlighted. "*Regularly think about what you want, how you act, how you think about yourself, why you chose to do certain*

things in a certain way. And whilst you upskill your technical skills it is important to read about management and leadership skills."

Appropriate role placement also featured as a construct. "*I would like to see the right women in the right role in the right place, not to say we need women in management, we need the right women in management. I'd rather have five fantastic women in the right roles than a 50–50 split. So I think, yes, they do need to move up and feature more in government and corporates and all sorts, but I also think you need the right women for the job.*"

The desire for merit placement is seen in the following remark, "*So I think, on merit, I'd love to see women get there on merit because that inspires me. You know, how did you learn? How to do that sort of thing? To me that's inspirational. So I think that, yes, they need to be in those positions, but on merit. You know because then nobody can push them out of there because the papers are there, procurement, it's not because of you age, it's because you're good.*"

5.7   CONCLUSION OF THE RESULTS

Table 13 below sets out the major themes that emerged from the interviews conducted with the respondents. It contains the particular construct, the number of times that the construct was raised in response to the interview questions, and the specific interview questions that it was raised in respect of.

Table 13: Major Themes

Construct	Number of Times Raised	Interview Questions
Life Balance	5	1, 2, 3, 4, and 10
Genuineness/Authenticity	4	2, 3, 4, and 10
Self-promotion & Males More Confident	4	2, 3, and 4
Confidence	3	2, 4, and 10
Diversity	3	7, 8 and 9
Equality	3	4, 9 and 10
Knowledge/Intellect/Ability & Education/Skills	3	2, 3, and 4

This chapter showed the findings that arose from the interviews of 12 women within various organisations. The next chapter interprets and analyses the findings in relation to existing literature.

CHAPTER 6: DISCUSSION OF RESULTS

6.1   INTRODUCTION

In Chapter 5, the results from the research process were set out, where three research questions were positioned by means of the interviews that were carried out with the respondents from various organisations. In this chapter, the aforementioned findings are interpreted and analysed by the researcher in relation to the business problem in Chapter 1 and the literature review concluded in Chapter 2. The researcher provides insights into the findings as examined through interview questions used in this report.

The three research questions were answered by means of the data obtained in the interviews with the respondents. The data was processed and accumulated through coding and analysis, which provided an understanding of the success attributes of women. The relevance of the results and the existing literature in context within this study are discussed in the next section.

6.2   DISCUSSION OF RESULTS FOR QUESTION ONE: WHAT ARE THE ATTRIBUTES THAT LEAD TO THE SUCCESS OF WOMEN?

This research question enquired about discovering and defending attributes that enable women to achieve success in the workplace and naturally led to the relationship between the findings of Research Question 1 and the measurement of each as understood in the findings of Research Question 2. The interview questions that relate to Research Question 3 are questions 5, 6 and 9.

The results from interviews, data coding and the analysis process presented the results as set out below:

6.2.1   The Meaning of Success

The first interview question delved into what the interviewees perceive success mean to them.

The data from interviews described what success meant to the respondents. The constructs in Table 5 showed the varied perceptions. Success is about "*achieving*

your set of objectives" as stated by an interviewee. The individualistic nature of success is confirmed by the literature (Dyke et al., 2006), thus it is important to define the notion (Sturges, 1999).

Impact was ranked 1st, with five frequency counts. The literature confirms the theme of impact as a defining factor of success. This includes the fostering of relationships, and the concept of success on a collective basis. Dyke et al. (2006) also found that, for women, success involves the ability to make a contribution to society.

Learning and Development/Growth ranked 2nd with three frequency counts.

Achievements ranked 3rd, with 3 frequency counts. The literature supports the recognition for career achievements (Dyke et al., 2006). Success is about "*achieving your set of objectives*". Women are more inclined to define success using internal measures, particularly realisation and accomplishment. "*I believe that when you die, nobody is going to stand around your grave saying, look at how much money he/she made, but rather what you have achieved as an individua*l." The subjective elements, such as how women feel, and authenticity are more important compared to how society ranks them. Whilst matters such as promotion and advancement are of interest, these are not viewed as fundamental to their achievement (Sturges, 1999). Women tend to weight more heavily the triumph from a team or group perspective as opposed to that of their own individual success. As pointed out by a respondent, success is about "*achieving growth for myself and seeing growth in the individuals in the business*" (sic). Dodd (2012) noted that female leaders are inclined to exhibit qualities of transformational leaders, offering support and praising those surrounding them.

Women still have to face the choice between family and career in a society where the traditional expectation is that men "win bread" and women raise children. Success means that women "*feel that I am addressing many aspects of my life*"*.* The realisation of Life Balance is a key theme that arose throughout the interviews, and it ranked 2nd as a construct, with three frequency counts. Herrbach & Mignonac, (2012) raise the significance of this construct to allow for women to succeed. Success "*I suppose, means a great balance between your personal, career, and spiritual life, for me that's success. So when I have my personal life, work life, and spiritual life – I'm in balance and successful*". Organisations should pay special attention to the work experiences of women who aspire to move up the corporate ladder and those seeking

a balance between their work life and their home life (Herrbach et al., 2012). Men fail to fully appreciate the restrictive effect placed on women's career development, by having to effectively balance these crucial roles, that of motherhood and in relation to their career (Schein, 2007). A societal shift in thinking would facilitate the achievement of this fundamental goal.

Whilst Profitability did arise, it ranked 4th, with a single frequency count. Objective criteria such as salary, increases and promotions, are the most commonly accepted signs of success, but these do not always result in associated feelings of triumph for women. It is more likely to ensue from considerations such as work-life balance, contribution and purpose (Laud et al., 2012), echoing the words set out above regarding the primary focus on the subjective qualities. The ability to make a difference is often cited as a consideration to women leaders when defining success (Barsh et al., 2008).

6.2.2 Attributes of Successful Leaders

Interview question 2 requested the respondents to provide the attributes understood to be associated with successful leaders. The interviewees seemed to associate leaders with a range of qualities, with many relating to the abilities, skills, and intellectual capability of leaders.

The ability of Leading by Example ranked 1st, with seven frequency counts. Leadership entails the ability set an example, to steer and direct your followers towards a common goal. "*Expect people to mirror you and do what you do.*" Leadership entails far more than simply being assigned a title. Effective leadership encompasses an essential shift of character. Studies show that, as with other skills, leadership must be taught and practiced, therefore the transitioning of effective leadership roles may require the development of new, more suitable identities (Ibarra et al., 2013). Certain vital skills facilitate the creation of a vision and an appropriate execution plan to ensure the implementation results in the realisation thereof (Kirkpatick & Locke, 1991).

Knowledge, Intellect and Ability ranked 2nd, with four frequency counts. "*People tend to like following people who look like they know what they* [are] *talking about because there is security in that*" and thus "*be knowledgeable in whatever area you* [are] *leading in*". Leadership is a skill, like any other, that must be taught and practiced.

However, skills alone will not necessarily translate into the achievement of success. Effective leaders stand out and "*obviously have a skills base and technical skills* [this] *is a given.*" They usually possess certain key qualities such as the ability to motivate, self-confidence (connected to emotional strength); intellectual competence and knowledge of the business (Kirkpatick et al., 1991).

Ibara et al., (2013) stresses that credibility requires authentic leadership. Knowing oneself and being true oneself is stressed in consideration of leadership (Eagly, 2005). This construct ranked 3rd, with 3 frequency counts, and features throughout many of the interview questions. This is shown in one of the respondents' comments that, "*I am seeing more and more that authenticity is still the number one contributor to success. You can't fake being as driven or as engaged as those who actually are.*" However, one participant introduced a more conservative thought, "*I still think we* [are] *not* [at] *a point where women can just be themselves.*" The literature also suggested that if female leaders conduct themselves like women, the leadership role is unsuitable (Appelbaum et al., 2013), indicating that we are not quite at a point where women can completely be themselves, yet there is progress towards this position. This creates a challenge for women to be true to themselves (Eagly, 2005), the very essence of authenticity.

Empowerment jointly ranked 4th, with two frequency counts. Empowering employees along with creating or fostering an employment context of support and enablement were identified by the respondents as critical leadership attributes. The custom of empowering work personnel is a principal element of executive and structural efficiency (Özaralli, 2003). According to the participants, "*leaders* [who] *tend to be empathetic, are able to positively influence others, and communicate and provide clarity to followers/employees*, supported by another remark that, "*empowerment, to me as a leader* [means], *I appoint people and I must let them get on with it, let them make mistakes and by the way I have no problem with people making mistakes, just don't make the same mistake twice, learn from it"*. It leads to "*Positive learning and sharing* [from] *experiences.*" Empowerment is a method for enabling productivity (Özaralli, 2003). This is supported by a further remark that you, "*need to allow people to grow and you need to give them responsibility and accountability so that they are able to grow and be there to support them rather than doing the things, so sometimes it takes a little bit longer to get them to that point but I think as a leader if you give them an opportunity to do that.* [Then] *my job becomes easier.*" By empowering people, the team become more effective as a whole (Özaralli, 2003).

Communication and Clarity jointly ranked 4th. Leadership also involves being "*clear of what the strategy is and how each of the people can contribute to that*", requiring clear communication and "*being able to communicate well, giving feedback and guiding the people in the right direction*". Dewan & Myatt (2008) indicated that leaders with a greater ability to provide clarity enjoy more authority than those with a strong direction.

Personal Confidence was another important attribute raised, and ranked 5th, with a single frequency count (as did the remaining constructs set out below). One of the comments made tied this construct to that of Empowerment. The importance of "*upskilling yourself, making yourself knowledgeable about any area that you undertake. If you do, you empower yourself, your confidence will come through – you know you have the ability to do certain things.*" The creation of a safe environment enables individuals to develop leadership identities and facilitates open discussion. This also strongly influences self-confidence (Bonebright et al., 2012), another key attribute of leadership.

Other constructs included Trust and Humility. As pointed out, trust "*works both ways"*, in management *"you need to earn the trust of your people, it is not gained by virtue of your title – it is how you perform as a leader*". This construct is also linked to that of Empowerment. *"As a leader you must be able to trust people and their abilities to succeed, grow and prosper, not micromanage."* Humility is about "*understanding that you don't know it all and that you are surrounded by people that may know a lot more than you. You are highly dependent on others to make a success of what you need to do, whilst you are doing the necessary to not step on others' toes.*" Passion was also considered to be highly valuable. "*For me it's about passion, this is most important.*" Another participant stating the need to have *"passion about your business. I personally believe you have to be passionate about your people.*" Another interesting point, was the appreciation of Tenacity, a characteristic that "*becomes quite important to ride a difficult part of an economy".* Confirmed by another remark, *"tenacity is what you need to make tough decisions and live with the consequences of those tough decisions. Tenacity is what you need to push when all fails, you have to be up front – that takes tenacity.*" These traits are all key to effective leadership (Billard, 2015).

6.2.3   The Importance of these Attributes

Interestingly, the construct of Authenticity as an attribute of successful leadership ranked 3rd in the interview question above. However, within this context, it ranked 1st, with three frequency counts. When asked which types of attributes are considered more important for females, some respondents reported that, for females, authenticity is most important, along with related aspects such as emotional intelligence. "*I think passion is the most important thing*", EQ is "*one thing women are particularly good at and* [is] *what you need in order to run a big business, women due to* [their] *genetic makeup and* [also] *having to raise families*, [tend] *to have more EQ.*" Literature emphasises the importance of emotional intelligence concerning leadership (Goleman, 2003). Female leaders tend to exhibit qualities of transformational leaders, offering support and praising those surrounding them (Dodd, 2012). Increasing global competition requires additional social interaction and thus once again, transformational leadership is an imperative within the business environment (Barsh et al., 2008). Sheaffer (2011), also indicated that women exhibit a more people-oriented leadership style. Multitasking, social, management and other skills are strongly developed by means of the various female roles and responsibilities that women carry out and also enhance generality in decision making and firm performance (Krishnan & Park, 2005).

Other respondents reported the Applicability (of the attributes) to Both Genders and little distinction between the two genders. This construct also ranked 1st, with three frequency counts. "*I think it's the same, the attributes that I've outlined.*" Supported by another remark that when, "*I think* [of] *men and women in terms of success; I think it's the same*", confirmed by another remark, "*I don't think there is a gender split to tell you the truth. I think if you're running a services industry like we are, I don't think it makes any difference whether you're male or female,* [there is] *absolutely no difference at all*." There is no perfect definition of leadership. Having said this, there are some shared characteristics of successful leaders, consisting of attributes associated with both genders (Appelbaum, et al., 2013). Balancing these management styles will require the collective action of women and men. Otherwise individual leaders will have to be able to demonstrate qualities of both transactional leadership and transformational leadership. Fundamentally the movement away from these derogatory gender classifications, towards that of a combined style will facilitate progress (Dodd, 2012).

Women must Embrace (their) Female Qualities, as a construct ranked 2nd with two frequency counts. "*As a female, you should not want to behave as people*

traditionally see men." The stereotype that leadership is associated with masculinity is arguably the most important obstacle for women to overcome (O'Neill & O'Reilly III, 2011). This is confirmed by a further respondent remark, *"don't come across as aggressive/assertive simply because men are seen to exhibit more of these qualities. Women think this will earn respect"* and result in them being *"viewed as an equal"*. Women *"have the softer skills* [and this is] *to our advantage"*. Women should *"use what works to your advantage. Women generally are better with people, they do tend to have that ability. Use that, don't try to be all rough and tough like a man – that's not how you are built."* Trustworthiness is dependent on genuine leadership (Ibara et al., (2013) and so women must be true to their being and not attempt to replicate that of male colleagues.

In addition, the ability to Influence others was notable for females, and also ranked 2nd. "*Galvanising people around a shared vision*" and embracing female qualities as a leadership attribute was outlined as critical for females, particularly as some of the respondents indicated the necessity to avoid attempting to exhibit the qualities of males. Once again the importance of authenticity is raised. *"Remain a female – sometimes women, when they reach certain roles, behave like men and this can be disadvantageous. Being authentic allows you to differentiate yourself and bring something different to the table. It is positive to remain true to yourself, be real."* However, another participant qualified this when she stated, "*if you* [are] *authentic to yourself and you have certain character traits that are not necessarily going to lead to success, it might be better if you master them to get success.*" Sandberg (2014) suggested that women must identify when to act high versus acting low.

There is a suggestion that women have to work harder, as per a participant's comment, "*simply because as a female you sometimes have to work twice as hard as your male counterparts and have to prove yourself in order for people to have confidence in you.*" Knowledge, ranked 3rd, with a single frequency count (as did the constructs set out below). Increased knowledge and awareness would facilitate the overall position for women. "*I think its human nature to follow men, especially in business. It is easier to follow them.*" Human tendency is to gravitate towards people who share similar qualities to oneself, meaning that influential men are more likely to encourage and promote other men where opportunities occur (Ibarra et al., 2013). "*So, for that reason, women shouldn't go after the power but rather after the knowledge, because that will give them the power if they really know what they are doing.*" This is supported by a further statement, "*I think there's more tolerance for*

men whose personalities deviate from, not necessarily the norm, but what is kind of organisationally exceptional, but also people think it is the traditional organisational personality that gets ahead."

Women must develop the skill of Self-Promotion, and must become better at "*putting yourself out there*". This is particularly important for purposes of aspirational awareness. "*What women leaders don't realise, is that even if you're not impressed by your* [own] *status, for other people it's aspirational. So you have this additional burden that says, I've got to do what I've got to do in a way that could be a positive example, not because it's great to have people follow you, but because whether you like it or not people want you. So therefore, behave in a manner that is worthy of the fact that people want you. I might not like the fact that I'm aspirational, that it's an aspirational position for people, but I have a responsibility for that.*"

The above is linked to the construct of Males (are) More Confident. Men seem to have more confidence generally. "*Women seem to be struggling more with authenticity than men do. Men have more self-confidence than women. I experience this myself. If I compare the employees that report into me, I see that the men are more confident than the women.*"

6.2.4   Conclusive findings for Research Question One

The respondents viewed the ability to make an Impact as a crucial consideration in terms of their meaning of success, closely followed by Learning and Development/Growth, as evidenced by Table 3.

The respondents indicated that the ability to be a role model and to Lead by Example as the most important attributes that successful leaders must be able to demonstrate.

When asked about the importance of such attributes in respect of female leadership, authenticity has the highest ranking. Likewise, the respondents indicated that these attributes applied equally to both genders and there was no distinction between the applicability of these attributes specifically to women leadership only.

6.3   RESULTS FOR QUESTION TWO: HOW EACH ATTRIBUTE CONTRIBUTES TO THE SUCCESS OF WOMEN?

This research question enquired about the extent to which each attribute led to or facilitated the achievement of success and whether there were any significant attributes specifically, or whether a combination thereof was necessary. The interview questions that relate to Research Question 2 are questions 5, 6 and 9.

The results from the interview, data coding and analysis process presented the results as set out below:

6.3.1   Three Points of Advice

As with interview questions 2 and 3 above, in this interview question, the construct of Authenticity, ranked 1st, with five frequency counts. It featured yet again and the respondents' primary points of advice centered on authenticity and being true to oneself, despite being susceptible to the male dominance. "*Don't try to be a man*". Furthermore, "*I think women have tried to be tough and hard and I don't think that is required. There is a degree of toughness but I don't think you should try to be a man, there's a reason why you're not.*" This was echoed in, "*be true to yourself, I think that's important. You only have you, don't try and change and be something you're not – you don't want to change who you are as a leader because that's what makes leaders successful.*" Ibara et al., (2013) noted that credibility requires genuine leadership. Incorporating leadership with one's core identity is a challenge for women as most cultures associate leadership with masculine traits and so women find themselves in a double bind (Appelbaum et al., 2013).

Ranking 2nd, with four frequency counts, the construct of Mentor, Promoter (and) Advocate was highlighted, and was suggested to be a high priority for women. With the provision of emotional support, feedback and advice, and focus on professional and personal development (Ibarra et al., 2013, Carter et al., 2010), mentors are concerned with the upward movement and support of their protegee's career (Linehan et al., 2008). With the right mentor, women can overcome many of the barriers faced in business (Orser et al., 2012) and provide support for women (Energy Workforce, 2009). Formal programs have proven to be effective in the career development of women (Ibarra et al., 2010). *"Men do this* [mentorship] *so well. Women tend to be less good at this.*" Ibarra et al. (2013) found that many women shy away from networking. Women must *"mentor other women in terms of taking their place as well.*" Sandberg (2014) advocated that women must swear by and advocate for the competency of other women. Role models also play an important role,

providing inspiration to other women (Ibarra et al., 2013). Women must *"promote the success of others as well as disseminate the positive aspects of their success to other women for further career development"*, and "*the career women who are successful now must pass this on to other women in the industry so that the numbers do become more equal.*"

With three frequency counts, Self-Promotion ranks 3rd. The literature corroborates this, emphasising that women tend to be modest regarding their achievements (Lewis-Enright et al., 2009; Grant Thornton, 2015). "*Promote yourself." Again, "men tend to get paid ahead of their achieving, partly because the men are out there being more aggressive and creating the impression that they are ready for the role, even if they are not."* Women tend *"to wait until they are 100% ready and they can tick every box".* This effects their career development (Appelbaum et al., 2013).

Ibarra et al., (2013) pointed out that affirmation and recognition enable a person to take risks that they may not necessarily take otherwise. Without affirmation, self-confidence reduces and deters an individual from pursuing developmental opportunities. The potential to develop individual leadership identities and open discussion is enhanced by suitable circumstances and also strongly influences self-confidence (Bonebright et al., 2012).

The ability or necessity to Demonstrate Value in one form or another was also outlined as an important area of advice. "*Be able to demonstrate where you will be able to add value. Be able to say I should get this promotion, this is how I will add value." "Be good at what you do."* There is a need to work hard and obtain the desirable skills for attaining success. "*It is important as an individual to know where you want to go. Many are not clear where they want to go and this makes it difficult to provide support.*" Confidence is key, as well as the establishment of clear goals and objectives, by discovering individual interest and areas of excellence (Barsh et al., 2008). Women should "*get to know more about the organisation, know and understand the environment and industry in which the business operates and also the business itself. Don't be limited to the role that you are currently in.*"

Attributes that are likely to lead to success include a strong Work Ethic (Barsh et al., 2012; George, 2008).

"*The world is changing in terms of what is happening around you*, and therefore '*continuous improvement of yourself*' is imperative, "*because you're never perfect and therefore be open to constructive criticism. Ask for it, and that then will enable you to grow and become a better leader.*" Feedback will allow for an individual to "*grow to become a better person and a better leader.*" Constructive criticism facilitates growth and development (Ibarra et al., 2013), and so women should seek this either within their firms or externally from a trusted person.

"*Communication and the ability to lead people, especially as you become more senior*", is key. The ability to motivate is enhanced by clear communication. Followers will assign greater attention to articulate communicators (Dewan et al., 2008). "*Similarly with leadership, the more you climb, the more you need to be able to lead people who are experts in a particular area and be comfortable that you know less about a particular area than they do* [technical expertise], *your contribution is no longer within the expertise, but rather within the leadership domain.*" Your focal "*skills become about leading people*". "*When you lead, it is not just about yourself but also a team, and in doing so you have to consider others, appreciate that they are different.*" Sheaffer (2011) indicated that women are inclined to practice a more people-oriented leadership style. Women typically exhibit qualities that are associated with transformational leadership, providing support and praise to others (Dodd, 2012).

6.3.2   Ownership of Development

This interview question 7 requested that participants describe who owns the development of women within organisations and why they gave their response to the former.

The participants indicated that the primary drivers or owners of development in organisations are those in positions of leadership, such as CEOs. *"Leadership owns it"* and *"you need to have the buy-in crowd from the top."* Leadership ranked 1st, with seven frequency counts. A strong message is communicated when business, particularly senior management, demonstrate a genuine dedication to diversity and inclusion, beyond that of mere oratory (Groysberg et al., 2013; Energy Workforce, 2009). The allocation of this responsibility to the right person/s is of fundamental importance. Rice (2012) noted that the success of these initiatives requires the: correct assignment of responsibility/ies, effective measurement thereof, and

identifying suitable individuals for diverse departmental roles (Grant Thornton, 2015). Organisations require top-down leadership at all levels, including CEO, chairman and all senior management positions (Barsh et al., 2013). "*The attitude of the leader influences the behavior of the team and the organisation.*" Furthermore, "*real value comes from the top*". Gender diversity must become a top strategic priority for firms (Devillard et al., 2012).

The construct of Line Manager/ExCo is supported by the literature. A lack of support and adequate consideration is likely to result in the failure of such initiatives (Energy Workforce, 2009 Groysberg et al., 2013; Grant Thornton, 2015). To retain talent, companies must develop and implement meaningful policies, practices and programs that, inter alia, enable women to effectively balance the multiple roles they carry out, including caregiver and that of their career (Hewlett, 2008; Herrbach et al., 2012).

Human Resources (HR), ranked 3rd, with two frequency counts. The ownership of female development will differ and largely depend on the environment. Some respondents expressed concern regarding HR's involvement in owning the process, as it appears to be less effective in such instances. It is necessary for females themselves to take personal responsibility for their development first, which is likely assisted by organisational bodies such as HR. Women too, "*must take ownership*" and this applies to any "*women or anyone who wants to grow*". There was, however, concern by the respondents regarding HR's involvement in owning the process, as it appears to be less effective in such instances.

Interestingly, there was a sense that the consideration and emphasis on female development obtained an increased Attraction of Female employee candidates. At the same time "*you don't want to push women into roles which they are too inexperienced to handle, this can break a person's confidence. You need to nurture, grow and develop individuals.*" Supportive line-management and flexible working arrangements facilitate the attraction and retention of women in organisations (Dodd, 2012).

The Diversity that emanates from an increased female presence provides organisations with a competitive advantage "*in that it is critical to have members of different races, genders etc. on a board because of the diverse thinking that they bring*". A diverse board enhances the ability to effectively examine opportunities and threats as well as the ability to tackle problem solving and decision making is thought

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to be more efficient (Hambrick et al., 1996; Devillard et al., 2012). This is supported by "*the diverse thinking and viewpoint and* [an] *alternative perspective should be a criteria for promotion and development of the company and this is also in the company's best interests*". Informational and societal diversity increase from female representation, and also encourage other women throughout the firm (Dezso et al., 2012; Fiorina, 2013).

The construct of the Individual/Woman, (and the two constructs below) ranked 2nd, with three frequency counts. Whilst the literature recognises that organisations play a vital role in female development, there is also an appreciation that they alone cannot own this responsibility and that a combined effort will be far more fruitful. Assertion is necessary when motivating for career progression (Hofmeyr & Mzobe, 2012). This also speaks to the construct of the Entire Organisation, including women themselves. An inclusive environment is one in which individuals are able to further their success by being true to themselves, whilst the organisation respects and compliments their capabilities and offers a sense of connectedness (Groysberg et al., 2013). Gender diversity must become embedded as a primary consideration in strategic thinking and viewed as a moral and business necessity (Ivancevich & Gilbert, 2000; Hewlett, 2008; Pitts & Wise, 2010).

On the other hand, there should also be an effort to Avoid Magnifying the Issue of Development. "*I'm not a big fan of this idea that women have to be treated differently.*" I believe women should be developed, however, this should be implemented in a way that brings about meaningful results, to ensure that *"the reverse effect of what you're"* trying to achieve is avoided. A more subtle approach can sometimes be more effective, by being implemented "*on the quiet".* More action is required. However, *"I don't like the idea of* [it] *being a big expert discussion every time they have a meeting about women.*" The approach to gender diversity must be a constructive one (Pitts et al., 2010; Samuel et al., 2011; Duflo, 2011; Chant et al., 2012).

6.3.3 Success Obstacles

This interview question 8 sought to establish the reasons why women believe that some women are not as successful as others in similar circumstances, and whether they felt that these obstacles were institutional or of a personal nature.

The creation of safe working environments, allowing learning, experimentation, and community is essential for women's leadership development programs (Ibarra et al., 2013). This supports the constructs of this interview question set out below.

There were mixed responses as to whether variations in promotions and success depend on personal or organisational factors. Some reported a Combination of personal and organisational factors, as one participant stated, "*There are still countries and cultures that do not allow women to succeed*" but there "*are also women that prohibit themselves from succeeding.*" "*There certainly are institutional barriers, particularly in large organisations*", and "*I imagine it's always a combination of both. It's a combination of things*". The careers of women are disrupted as they continue to take more leave and work on a part-time basis, compared to men. As a consequence, they have less job experience and less hours over an annual period, slowing down their career advancement and thus their compensation (Eagly et al., 2007). Often the assumption that women have external work obligations means that they are not promoted to roles with additional responsibilities (Eagly et al., 2007).

In some organisations a "*masculine leadership culture*" prevails and there are "*expectations and stereotypes of women*". These "*stereotypes and institutional cultures*" limit growth. Literature suggests that the assessment of corporate women is regularly largely subjective and often leads to the unequal promotional opportunities between female and male managers (Jogulu & Wood, 2011). Furthermore, evidence suggests that the absence of methical measures and well-structured procedures for assessments in organisations provide a probable reason for continued discriminatory decision making, influencing the advancement of women. Similar views are expressed by Snyder, who reported that, ''women were significantly better performers than men in many of the foundation skills required for effective leadership'' (Appelbaum et al., 2013).

On a Personal basis, some indicated that females sometimes have greater freedom to choose their career trajectory, so they may not emphasise promotions and hierarchical movement as much as males. So their lack of "success" may be a personal choice as opposed to an organisational impediment. The non-achievement of success may be "*because of your own thinking – this may create barriers to your own success.*" The stereotype that leadership is associated with masculinity is arguably the most important obstacle for women to overcome (Eagly et al., 2001) and if they are able to do so the probability is career advancement is enhanced.

Although many suggested that these obstacles were Dependent on the Context and Environmental Constraints, such as the organisation one is employed within. A participant providing, "*within my environment, the constraint is more personal,*" but then "*there are institutions which are just bitter difficult, sometimes one doesn't have the opportunity to change in an institution, that isn't failure*".

6.3.4 Conclusive findings for Research Question Two

The results of this research question once again highlighted the significance of authenticity, ranked as the most important piece of advice for women. The role of a mentor, promoter, or some of type of advocate was also rated highly for women.

When enquiring about the ownership responsibility of the development of women, leadership was emphasised as playing a primary role. There was an appreciation that the organisation as a whole carries this duty, but at the same time, women themselves have an obligation.

In relation to the nature of success obstacles for women, most respondents found that there was a combination of both personal and institutional factors, with personal factors ranking above that of institutional considerations.

6.4 RESULTS FOR QUESTION THREE: WHY DOES A PARTICULAR ATTRIBUTE CONTRIBUTE TO THE SUCCESS OF WOMEN?

This research question enquired about the reason why a specific attribute impacted the success of women. The interview questions that relate to Research Question 3 are questions 5, 6, 9 and 10.

The results from the interview, data coding and analysis processes presented the results as set out below:

6.4.1 Reasons for Prioritisation

Dodd (2012) & Eagly (2005) supported the notion that the mere presence of women certainly does not mean that this will translate into high levels of female leadership. "*Once you're in a position which others may describe as success, that's the start, it's not the end.*" Professional networking is arguably the most important element for the

fast-tracking of management, compared to more traditional responsibilities (Eagly et al., 2007).

From a young age, men are groomed for leadership positions. The same is not true for women (Ibarra et al., (2013). *"Be a leader and role model, you will then build successful teams that will help achieve the goals of the organisation*", as stated by a respondent. Many talented, skilful women regarded as competent managers commonly fail the likability test. This is confirmed by the following respondent comment, "*there is a degree of, yes you've got to be good at your job, but* [then] *also nobody follows a leader loyally that they don't like*." The opposite is true for men, where competence and likability are closely connected for equivalently accomplished men (Ibarra et al., 2013). This is confirmed by Sandberg (2014) arguing that there is an indirect correlation between female success and likeability. In other words, the more successful a woman is, the less likeable she is. This dynamic can be addressed by identifying when to act high versus acting low. After all, leadership is "*about growing people".* This supports the construct of likeability, which ranked 2nd, with 2 frequency counts. This also makes the challenge of authentic leadership more difficult for women.

Continuous focus on the Attainment of Organisational Goals was stressed by a participant. "*I never lose sight of the strategy, goals, etc. because I am accountable ultimately, but if people make mistakes whilst genuinely trying to execute their roles, this is different.*" Women must be able to Demonstrate Value and have "*the ability to be able to articulate what you are able to bring to the table".* Show "*what you can bring and being able to align that* [to] *you own vision and objectives, this is also important."*

Real leaders are able to acquire meaning by following goals and objectives that support their own beliefs as well as that of the organisation, thereby achieving a dual progression (Ibarra et al., 2013). "*Be able to show what you want to do and show the company how this will also benefit the company, to grow and be more successful*."

Cultural impediments can also create issues. "*Culture for me is a key hindrance."* Provided that women want to get married and have children, they must ensure that their partner understands that they want a career too (Sandberg, 2014), otherwise "*you're not going to have a career, or you're going to have to take a subservient role or you're not going to have a happy marriage*". Guidance, Female Options and

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Choice all ranked 3rd, with a single frequency count. "*It is still, in many fields, a male world*" and so "*if you don't have a mentor and some help, it could be difficult to navigate.*" This is repeated in another participant's response, "*I think if you look at the steps, the reality is that more males rise to the top than females*". The literature confirms this (Wood, 2008; Carter et al., 2010; Alimo-Metcalfe, 2010). Role models provide inspiration to other women (Ibarra et al., 2013) and can facilitate overcoming some of these career hurdles.

6.4.2 Results from Implementation

The interviewees stated that if these suggestions are implemented, females are likely to develop and grow and enhance themselves in terms of personal and career facets, providing that this would result in a "*very good chance at success*" and the "*achievement of your own objectives*". The construct of Development/Growth ranked 1st, with four frequency counts. The literature confirms that development or growth takes time. And whilst the number of women in top leadership roles today has grown (Latu, Mast, Lammers & Bombari, 2013), transformation and social change require time, effort and persistence, and thus female leadership access, option and availability will likely grow with time (Deloitte & Touche, 2014).

The construct of Increase in Senior/Leadership Positions ranked 2nd with three frequency counts. Informational and societal diversity arise from female representation and encourage other women throughout the firm (Dezso et al., 2012). "*We empower people and give them the opportunity to learn and grow. People come up with all these new ideas.*" Female representation on boards act as drivers of change (Barsh et al., 2013). "*Women need to be very conscious of, when you climb, you have to make sure that you don't bring up the draw bridge behind you … I'm conscious of the fact that … for women like me, to make sure that the world in which you leave your trail, is more enabling of women and others to be their authentic selves.*" Others denoted that females are more inclined to achieve success and that organisations will acquire an increase in the number of females in senior management and high leadership positions. This construct also ranked 2nd.

The construct of Change ranked 3rd, and the thinking is confirmed by the following comment, "*at a macro level, this will go a long way to change perceptions and the environment. The more women that are authentically feminine within the workplace, the more normal it will become over time, and this will make it easy for those women*

who follow to be themselves and be comfortable within themselves." Innovative organisations strive towards a more advanced type of leadership that depicts qualities that are more feminine in nature (Lehobo, 2011; Ntim, 2015).

The construct of Garner Respect and Designated Plan, ranked 3rd. Traditionally, more masculine characteristics were associated with leadership and these insinuate that women are not built for leadership. The stereotype that leadership is associated with masculinity is arguably the most important obstacle for women to overcome (Ibarra et al., 2013). Women must pursue personal goals that support their values and promote the overall good. This allows leaders to be more forward looking, providing them a compelling objective, regardless of any concern and uncertainty (Ibarra et al., 2013). A respondent echoed this thinking by stating that a women "*needs to decide up front what she wants out of life, you need some sort of game plan."* This becomes more critical as *"you start progressing through your career".* Establishing credibility and integrating leadership into one's core identity is challenging, specifically for women (Ibarra et al., 2013).

The Removal of Bias construct ranked 3rd, with a single frequency count. The literature validates the existence of bias, providing that there is a human tendency to lean towards people like oneself, and this means that when leadership opportunities arise there is a tendency for influential men to sponsor and advocate for other men. (Ibarra et al., 2013) A deeper understanding of bias, safe spaces for leadership identity development, and encouraging women to anchor in their leadership purpose, will attract greater results than the paths most organisations currently pursue (Ibarra et al., 2013). This is confirmed by the following respondent comment, "*you will get rid of some of the biases that exist. In a sense, if you had that lots of women be like men, when it comes to speaking up or taking on work when they* [will] *not* [be] *100% sure that they can do it.*"

Another advantage that would arise from the implementation thereof would be Diversity. As pointed out, "*females lead differently to men and they create a better environment for cultural diversity, for racial diversity, for gender diversity*". Diversity as a construct also ranked 3rd. Feminine competencies include conflict resolution, adapting to change, producing high-quality work, developing one's capabilities, and motivating and inspiring others (Eagly & Johnson,1990; Barsh et al., 2008). Furthermore, a wide gamut of skills, competencies and abilities is offered by the existence of a gender-diverse senior management team (Appelbaum et al., 2013).

Additional diversity benefits include more effective examination of opportunities and threats as well as the ability to tackle problem solving and decision making (Hambrick et al., 1996; Sheaffer 2011).

6.4.3 Why is the success of women in corporate South Africa important for nation building?

There are a host of reasons as to the importance of the success of women towards building the South African nation.

Existing literature indicates that firms with more female representation financially outperform those that do not (Samuel et al., 2011; Duflo, 2011; Chant et al., 2012; Dezsö & Ross, 2012) and bring about many other advantages (Lehobo, 2011; Ntim, 2015), including more efficient decision-making (Krishnan & Park, 2005). This supports the constructs of Economic Impact, ranked 1st, with three frequency counts; Organisational Benefits, ranked 2nd with three frequency counts; and Financial, ranked 3rd, with one frequency count. GDP can be increased though the augmentation of female commercial input. As indicated by the World Economic Forum (Grant Thornton, 2015), the parallel between an economy's gender gap and its national competitiveness, productivity and growth are solid. This "*has an impact on the economy*"; and influences "*building an economy*". Women earning will translate into spending through the "*use of disposable income*" and therefore "*productive use into the economy*".

Human Capital Use and Underutilisation ranked 2nd. The 2015 Census shows that of the total population, women constitute 52%, making up 45.8% of the employed population and a mere 29.3% of executive management, 21.8% of directorships, 9.2% of board chairmanships and 2.4% of CEO positions. By only using this "*you* [are] *not using all your human resources for the development of your country*" and "*why choose to use only 50% of what you have?*" By doing so "*you are not fully utilising the resources of the country for development*". By not employing efficient utilisation we "*limit the ability of the country to develop itself further, both economically and socially*", and "*you want to get maximum use of your talent pool*". Human capital must be developed as far as possible (Lehobo, 2011; Samuel et al., 2011). Gross domestic product (GDP) can be increased though the augmentation of female commercial input (Fiorina, 2013).

The Social Benefits construct ranked 2nd, with 2 frequency counts. An interviewee provided, *"these women interact differently with their children – you provide your child with a different perspective and prepare them for the life that they will one day be leading. Your role as a mother is not restricted to that of playing a nurturing role, you can also show your child responsibility, earning of money and contributing to society, also how to be independent. Show them how to run a household whilst also running a home, these are important life skills."* The various roles and responsibilities that women carry out augment their skills, including multitasking, social and management skills, also enhancing generality in decision making and firm performance (Krishnan & Park, 2005).

The approach to gender Diversity must be meaningful (Energy Workforce, 2009; Rice, 2012; Groysberg et al., 2013). As indicated above, women will inevitably bring benefit to organisations because of the diverse ideas and abilities that they bring with them, which can only contribute positively to organisational functioning, performance, and outcomes. Diversity is echoed in the remarks of the respondents' remarks as follows: "*the success of women is very important for purposes of diversity, we* [all] *have different strengths that we bring"; "women bring a different perspective, we have different attributes and can bring different values."* Another interesting perspective added by a respondent, *"it is important not only to represent the demographics of your population but it is also about understanding the consumer. Having diversity also ensures that you have different ideas and perspectives, everyone can add value."*

The reality of skills shortages enhance the demand for more leaders holistically (Barsh et al., 2008; Kearney et al., 2009). Through the development of women a creation of a Greater Breadth of Skills would ensue. It is a "*numbers game, how many men there are versus how many women there are within the country, and an average intelligence across both genders. The pool of people to draw leaders from is limited and thus you have to pool from the female pool, otherwise you simply will not be able to fill these positions with the caliber of leadership required.*" In addition, women possess the requisite skills to handle ambiguous projects acquired through the various challenges encountered as they progress within their careers. Multitasking, social, management and other skills are augmented through the various female roles and responsibilities of women and enhance generality in decision making and firm performance (Krishnan & Park, 2005).

In addition, another benefit that would likely arise is that of Equality, as enshrined in the Constitution, signifying the new South Africa (South African History Online, 2011). "*The other reasons to me are just so obvious, why should one's sex mean that someone should be treated differently*?" "*We have gone through immense hardship with the apartheid regime, any form of discrimination is a part of apartheid, we shouldn't have any of this at any level*."

Entrepreneurial Importance as a construct ranked 3rd, with a single frequency count. A participant commented on the effect that this would have from an entrepreneurial perspective. It is important "*not so much in corporate South Africa, I think entrepreneurial, SMME's, starts-ups, I think in business in general*." More and more women are setting up new businesses as opposed to participating in corporate activities (Weiler et al., 2001).

6.4.4   What is your greatest desire for the career women of tomorrow?

"In the future, there will be no female leaders. There will just be leaders" (Sandberg, 2013). Again, **Equality** was raised, and ranked 1st, with two frequency counts. The respondents were positive about their desires for future career women, suggesting that they would like women to have equal opportunities in terms of employment, pay, and the value that they bring to organisations (Kulich, Ryan & Haslam, 2007). A small fraction of women in the workforce are high income earners (Kark et al., 2010; Trafimow et al., 2010). In the future women should "*not think of themselves as women, everything should be equal,*" Sandburg (2014) supports the notion of leadership without reference to gender. "*Knowing that we are different but that in a work environment there is nothing that a women can't do that a man can in most areas, especially in leadership and from a corporate perspective*" and "*men are also rising up to the occasion*" so that women *"don't have to work twice as hard as their male counterparts to be recognised and to achieve the same career developments".* Once again, highlighting the importance of a societal shift of thinking holistically will fast-track the achievement of this objective.

Equality is closely linked to the construct of Success Opportunities, which ranked 2nd, with a single frequency count. The ability for women to have the freedom to choose whatever they wish to do, "*to have the opportunity to succeed".* An environment where *"women, coming into the workforce"* are *"able to do whatever they want to do*".

The literature reinforces the construct of Confidence and Assertiveness, which also ranked 1st, with a two frequency counts. In relation to leadership, it is argued that confidence is key (Barsh et al., 2008). Hofmeyr & Mzobe (2012) indicated that assertion is required when motivating career progression. The respondents indicated that women must develop these skills. Women, "*stand up for what you believe in and be comfortable with it and ultimately in whatever way that you define it, and ultimately be independent, financially and also in your way of thinking."* Confidence is key for the realisation of the same. "*In order for others to believe in you and also for you to believe that you are capable",* you must exert confidence. *"Once you believe in yourself, everything else falls into place."* "*Women should develop their confidence and assertiveness to be more vocal and active in organisations.*"

Purposeful Living ranked 2nd, with a single frequency count. The respondents stated "*philosophically, they live purposefully".* Women should not be *"inhibited by the culture that you happen to be born into or that you find yourself in".* Substandard viewpoints around female management continue to arise and these persist through out many cultures (Jonsen et al., 2010).

The importance of deliberation was emphasised by the respondents. *"Consciously make time for reflection, you need to know what you want, what you really want,"* once again stressing the need to be clear about goals and objectives. "*This requires flexibility and also evolves over time".* On a personal level, the respondents indicated that "*women should seek a work-life balance, fulfilment, and purposeful living."* This also tied into the construct of Life Balance, which likewise ranked 2nd. Women still have to face the choice between family and career in a society where the traditional expectation is that men are the primary income earners and women are responsible for the home. Work-life balance issues such as these continue to block women from progressing. As such, in order to support the development of female leadership, it is important that women have the option to work flexibly and have supportive line management (Dodd, 2012). As pointed out by a respondent, "*women shouldn't feel guilty that they want to have a family and a career, women bear the children but this doesn't mean you cannot have a career too. You can do both today, women are making the change, women are rising to the occasion.*" This also supports the construct – Absence of Guilt for Dual Roles, which also ranked 2nd, with a single frequency count.

Authenticity ranked 2nd, with a single frequency count. The ability to "*really be comfortable in their* [own] *skin"* and *"be who they are".* If you do not do so you *"limit your own growth". You'll never be able to fully develop into yourself.*" The literature emphasises that credibility requires genuine leadership (Ibarra et al, 2013).

6.4.5   Conclusive findings for Research Question Three

The results for this research question indicated the reasons for prioritising the advice provided for women to take in order to succeed were primarily important for the achievement of success. Likeability, facilitates this objective and was also raised as an important purpose.

The respondents indicated that the most significant results from the implementation of such advice would be the Development/Growth of women and would naturally lead to an increase in Senior/Leadership roles, increasing the success of women in the workplace.

The findings in terms of the importance of the success of women in relation to nation building principally centred around the consideration of the Economic Impact for South Africa, closely followed by: Organisational Benefits, Human Capital Use linked to the construct of Underutilisation, Social Benefits, and finally Diversity.

The greatest desire for the career women of tomorrow was for women to be seen as Equals and to have the Confidence and Assertiveness to drive success.

6.5   Summary of Discussion of Results

Chapter 6 sets out the analysis and interpretation of the results contained in Chapter 5, connecting the problem statement, as contained in Chapter 1, to the exiting literature covered in Chapter 2.

As seen in Table 13 in response to the interview questions, the construct of Life Balance was raised most often by the respondents. It was highlighted in relation to: how women define success and what this means to them, the attributes of successful leaders, and particularly, as an attribute that is important in order for women to succeed. It was offered as a key point of advice further to attaining success within an organisation and, lastly, it was one of the greatest desires for the career women of

tomorrow. Existing literature supports the view that flexibility is important and significantly contributes to the retention of women within organisations (Lewis-Enright et al., 2009). Whilst research has shown flexi-time leads to increased productivity and longer working hours (Dodd, 2012), the implementation in developing countries, such as South Africa, is still lagging (Hewlett, 2008).

Genuineness or Authenticity was another major theme, and as a key finding featured 2nd, cited in four of the interview questions. It was raised in response to the interview questions, enquiring about the attributes of successful leaders, and which of these attributes are more important for females to gain success. Once again it was offered as a key point of advice further to attaining success within an organisation and was one of the greatest desires for the career women of tomorrow. Yet as indicated by one of the respondents and supported by the literature, it is unclear whether we have progressed to a point where women are fully able to embrace the concept of authenticity. The notion of gender equality is in itself complex and so the journey in fulfilling it is slow and turbulent (Jonsen et al., 2010). However, a greater understanding and awareness will accelerate the overall process.

The construct, Males [are] More Confident, was mentioned. Male board members engage in more acquisition activity and issue debt more regularly than female board members (Huang & Kisgen, 2013) indicating a higher degree of confidence. Furthermore, Ibarra et al., (2013) pointed out that men are groomed for the business environment from an early age, while the same is not true for women. The equal treatment of both genders must become embedded culturally to bring about transformation (Jonsen et al., 2010).

This creates a challenge for women entering the typically male-dominated environment of many firms (Ibarra et al., 2013). Closely related to this is the construct of Self-promotion highlighted in three of the interview questions, a trait that women are not particularly good at (Budworth et al., 2010). Women are more modest and conservative in relation to their achievements and simply ensure that the task gets done (Lewis-Enright et al., 2009). Though a Mentor/Promoter/Advocate, women are able to overcome many of the obstacles that women face in business. Furthermore, role models also play an important part, and provide inspiration to other women (Ibarra et al., 2013).

Equality was raised in three interview questions, namely: 4, 9 and 10. Women constitute 52% of the South African population, make up 45.8% of the employed population and a mere 29.3% of executive management, 21.8% of directorships, 9.2% of board chairmanships and 2.4% of CEO positions. And so this theme as a major finding is not surprising. Related to this is the construct of Diversity, raised in three interview questions, namely: 7, 8 and 9. The existence of skills shortages is real and there is demand for more leaders holistically (Barsh et al., 2008). Economic considerations also drive the need for increased workplace diversity (Erhardt et al., 2003; Saenger & Foster, 2012). This is particularly important within South Africa, an emerging economy where it is essential to develop human capital as far as possible (Lehobo, 2011; Samuel et al., 2011). The expansion of GDP can be realised though the augmentation of female commercial input (Fiorina, 2013).

CHAPTER 7: CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

7.1   INTRODUCTION

In Chapter 1 a business problem was set out. Furthermore the problem was framed by gaining an understanding of the attributes that lead to the advancement of women in the workplace, particularly how these attributes could be replicated. In Chapter 6 the research findings were discussed, analysed and interpreted in relation to exiting literature.

In this chapter, a concise background to the research problem is set out together with the objectives that were established at the commencement of this research. The chapter then sets a condensed version of the main findings, the recommendations to business, followed by the limitations of the research and the implications to any future research, and finally, a conclusion to the research report.

7.2   RESEARCH BACKGROUND AND OBJECTIVES

As set out in Chapter 1, the foundation of this research is of significant importance to South Africa. This research sought to provide answers to the research questions contained herein. The researcher aimed to structure the discoveries in such a way as to enable women to either gain and/or improve their career success as well as to provide overall insight and awareness in this regard (Barsh et al., 2008).

The aim of this study was primarily to identify the attributes of corporate women that drive success and to develop a framework to trigger the expansion thereof. Moreover, the researcher endeavoured to facilitate a broader understanding for business and South Africa generally, thereby demonstrating the benefit of meaningful female representation at all levels, including C-suite and senior management.

By means of a qualitative research methodology, the researcher gained a more profound understanding of the attributes facilitating and enhancing the corporate success of women. The research established the primary factors that advance female success, considering the broader environmental, organisational and individual aspects (Clark, 2006b).

Senior female management within various South African organisations provided their insights regarding the attributes of successful women and how the country, organisations and women themselves can develop and/or advance the career progression of women.

7.3 PRINCIPAL FINDINGS

The positive response from the respondents and the willingness to be a part of this research was overwhelming, clearly indicating the enthusiasm of the respondents towards this topic and the relevance thereof. Overall, the respondents provided comprehensive responses to the interview questions. There was agreement that the research is pertinent and that the development of women should be a top strategic priority for organisations.

Further to the results of Chapter 5 and the discussion of the findings in Chapter 6, in summary, the research determined that:

Firstly, life balance was the most significant theme that emerged from the findings. When defining success, women deem balance to be a crucial consideration (Laud et al., 2012). The retention of women will mean that companies must take action to develop and implement meaningful policies, practices and programmes that enable women to develop their careers and effectively balance the multiple roles they carry out, including caregiver and relating to their career (Hewlett, 2008). Organisations should pay special attention not only to the work experiences of women who aspire to move up the corporate ladder, but also to the women who aspire to achieve a high level of competency at their job, and enable them to seek a balance between their work and their home life (Herrbach et al., 2012).

Secondly, the attribute of authenticity is of paramount importance, particularly for female leadership. In the male dominated environment of business, women commonly replicate the behaviours of their male counterparts (Barsh et al., 2012). However, credibility and trustworthiness dictate that leaders must demonstrate authenticity (Ibara et al., 2013) and be true to themselves (Eagly, 2005). The double bind that women experience must be broken (Emery, 2012; Ibarra et al., 2013). By dissolving the cultural viewpoints around leadership and masculinity, women will be able to fully embrace this concept.

Thirdly, diversity was another key theme. The existence of skills shortages is widely known and heightens the demand for more leaders (Barsh et al., 2008). Economic considerations also drive the need for enhanced workplace diversity. This is particularly important within South Africa, an emerging economy where it is essential to develop human capital as far as possible (Samuel et al., 2011). The expansion of GDP can be realised though the augmentation of female commercial input (Fiorina, 2013). The achievement of equality, as enshrined in our Constitution, remains largely idealistic. Women constitute 52% of the South African population, and only represent 29.3% of executive management, 21.8% of directorships, 9.2% of board chairmanships and 2.4% of CEO positions (Department of Labour, 2009; Ntim, 2015). And so again, this theme as a major finding is unsurprising.

Fourthly, women do not excel at promoting themselves (Budworth et al., 2010). This effect their career development (Appelbaum et al., 2013). The opposite is true for men, who exude confidence (Lewis-Enright et al., 2009; Budworth et al., 2010). And thus a key consideration for the development of women is that of networking (Baumgartner et al., 2010). Additionally, women must be proactive in seeking a mentor or promoter. In other words they must seek to find an individual who will advocate for their success (Ibarra et al., 2013). With the right mentor, women can overcome many of the barriers women face in business (Orser et al., 2012) and they also provide support for women (Energy Workforce, 2009).

7.4   RECOMMENDATIONS TO STAKEHOLDERS

The aim of this research was to evaluate the success attributes of women.

In order to facilitate the advancement of women, society needs to: treat women equally and no longer hold female leaders to a greater standard; do away with the stigmatisation of men who participate in the role of childcare responsibilities; and review the traditional, antiquated leadership stereotypes.

Government must facilitate the apportionment of parental leave, consider obligatory female quotas at C-suite and senior management levels, and provide the infrastructure and promulgate legislation to support this purpose (Grant Thornton, 2015)

From an organisational perspective, the following recommendations are suggested:

As pointed out in Chapter 2, the allocation of this responsibility to the right person/s is essential. This is evidenced by the fact that corporate are making considerable investments into the development of women but not achieving the expected results (Alimo-Metcalfe, 2010). There are multiple reasons to explain this, including: the possibilities to advance are not as probable for women as they are for men; the playing field is not equal, with the likelihood of advancement is less probable at all levels; there is a continued leadership break in the most senior roles; gender diversity is not materially regarded; and whilst organisations are implementing programs to facilitate the balance of work-life responsibilities, they are not always viewed in a constructive manner (Eagly et al., 2007). Unless the initiatives are given careful consideration and are implemented in a meaningful way, starting at the top (Energy Workforce, 2009), they will not result in the successful development of corporate women and ultimately advancing their career progess (Alimo-Metcalfe, 2010). Success of these initiatives requires: correctly assigning these responsibilities; the effective measurement thereof; and identifying suitable individuals for diverse organisational roles (Rice, 2012).

Firms that are seeing improvement exhibited the following: female representation at senior levels, including executive and board representation, a high probability of advancing from management to executive positions, and meaningful implementation of strategies to address these (Barsh, 2013). To achieve this purpose, gender diversity must become embedded as a primary consideration in strategic thinking and viewed as a moral and business necessity (Grant Thornton International 2015; Devillard, et al., 2012; Hewlett, 2008). Appealing leadership positions is another consideration. Appropriate strategies, including effective mentorship and sponsorship are an imperative (Grant Thornton International 2015), however, implementation of such programmes in itself is insufficient, requiring a culture of female advancement (Barsh, 2013).

If organisations wish to derive the extensive value proven to ensue from having female representation within business, the above recommendations will facilitate and expedite the achievement thereof.

Lastly, it is also important for women themselves to be proactive (barra et al., 2010). They must participate and volunteer for stretched assignments, be resilient and determined, and be brave enough to challenge stereotypes and gender bias (Grant

Thornton International 2015). Men should not be threatened by the organisational presence of women, but rather leverage the many advantages of having a feminine perspective and the positive impact this brings.

7.5   LIMITATIONS OF THE RESEARCH

Exploratory research can be biased due to the personal nature thereof (Saunders et al., 2012) and thus it is important that the understanding of the respondents is reflected and not diluted or affected by that of the researcher (Denzin, 2009). Furthermore, exploratory research has more of an initial-type focus and thus a more comprehensive study should be carried out.

The respondents' data, as collected by the researcher, is crucial to the research outcome. Subjective aspects were omitted from the research and the data supports that of existing theory (Sekhukhune, 2013). Efforts were made not to infer the researcher's own understanding, the data analysis was carried further to the researcher's observations and interpretation. The procedure followed by the researcher may influence the respondents towards the provision of a more optimistic perspective and providing answers that the respondent believes the researcher wants to hear, as a consequence distorting the responses, affecting the validity of the research. Further, this may be enhanced by the time limitation and the inability of the researchers to adequately disclose their experiences, which could deter effective input, which may cause incomplete data provision and/or may result in inadequate or incomplete data being provided and possibly a non-response bias (Gremler, 2004).

Lastly, the sample is limited to South African women, more specifically, Johannesburg, considered to be the economic hub of South Africa (Rogerson et al., 2006) and therefore the findings may not necessarily extend to a broader context. Furthermore the sample was not industry specific.

7.6   SUGGESTIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

The following research is suggested for future studies:

- Undertake a similar study:

- But extend the same across more industries, levels within an organisation, and different age groups, as this may reveal different findings;

- To test whether this dimension holds true for other minority groups;

- Across different geographic locations to compare and contrast the findings of this research; and

- Within a single organisation to gain a deeper understanding of how organisations can further develop the advancement of women.

- A quantitative study could be undertaken to empirically test the extent to which each attribute contributes towards success.

7.7   CONCLUDING STATEMENT

The notion of gender inequality is engrained and is multifaceted (Barton et al., 2015). And so it is expected that the failure of business to fully utilise women will continue for some time. Those organisations that recognise and embrace gender parity will gain a competitive advantage over those that fail to do so (Adams at al., 2009; Fiorina, 2013), resulting in a lost opportunity.

This research shed some light on the attributes that lead to the success of women in business. Through the unstructured interview process, the research identified the attributes of successful leaders, how these contribute to the achievement of success and the reasons why. This dissertation offers a framework for the career progression of women and will be useful for women, organisations and society as a whole to facilitate this achievement.

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APPENDIX 1: INTERVIEW SCHEDULE - CONSENT FORM

The purpose of the research is to conduct research on the attributes of successful women, in an attempt to find out more about how women have been successful in the corporate environment. The interview is expected to last about an hour, and will help to understand how women achieve success. *Your participation is voluntary and you can withdraw at any time without penalty. All data will be kept confidential.*

The contents of the interview may be made publicly available, in the form of an MBA thesis, without your name or any other personal details except gender and age being referred to.

If you have any concerns, please contact me or my supervisor. Our details are provided below.

	Researcher:	**Research Supervisor:**
Name	Tracey Byron	Shireen Chengadu
Telephone	083 604 4275	(011) 771 4135
Email	byrontracey@gmail.com	chengadus@gibs.co.za

Signature of participant: _____

Date: _____

Signature of researcher: _____

Date: _____

INTERVIEWER'S GUIDE	
Respondent number *:	
Date	
Time	
Location (of interview)	

* *Numbers will be used to identify respondents, the identity of respondents will remain anonymous*

APPENDIX 2: WOMEN IN LEADERSHIP – INTERVIEW GUIDE

1.	What does success mean to you?
2.	What are the attributes of successful leaders?
3.	Which of these attributes do you think are more important for females to succeed?
4.	If asked how to gain success as a female within an organisation, what three key points of advice would you provide?
5.	Why are these points ranked as priority?
6.	What do you think would be the results of a women doing one or more of the suggested points?
7.	What are your views for developing women within organisations? Who owns this, (ie HR/ExCo/Leaders), and why?
8.	For women who are not as successful as other women in similar circumstances, would you say the obstacles are more of a personal nature rather than institutional? Please elaborate in your response.
9.	Why is the success of women in corporate South Africa important for nation building?
10.	What is your greatest desire for the career women of tomorrow?

APPENDIX 3: ETHICAL CLEARANCE LETTER

**Gordon Institute
of Business Science**
University of Pretoria

Dear Tracey Byron

Protocol Number: **Temp2015-01432**

Title: **Attributes of successful women**

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