



**FACTORS NEEDED TO REALISE AN INCLUSIVE CLIMATE WITHIN  
A DIVERSE WORKPLACE: A FOCUS ON BLACK FEMALE  
LEADERS**

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## **ABSTRACT**

This study examined the factors that are needed to achieve inclusion in a diverse workplace with specific focus on black female managers by considering how the theories of diversity and inclusion, critical mass theory and social roles interplay to explain the experiences of black female managers in the South African banking sector. Data collected through the semi-structured interviews from 15 research participants reveal that whilst diversity has been achieved in this sector, but more could be done and that inclusion is yet to be realised. The findings also reveal the barriers to inclusion and the theories of critical mass and social role theory also help to explain the barriers to inclusion. Overall, the barriers are lack of mentors, absence of climates that promote inclusion, expectations of conformity for black female employees. The recommendations for management include raising awareness of both the conscious and unconscious biases, leaders to be intentional in creating inclusive climates and the recognition that support from the immediate line manager is critical in aiding black female managers feel included.

## **KEYWORDS**

Diversity

Inclusion

Banking Sector

Black female managers

# DECLARATION

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

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

### **1.1. Background to the Research Problem**

It is 24 years since South Africa achieved a transition from an apartheid state into a fully democratic state and 20 years since the South African parliament passed into law, the Employment Equity Act. Soon after the first democratic election in 1994, which saw the African National Congress (ANC) win the national elections by a vast majority, the government began repealing the numerous discriminatory and segregative laws passed during apartheid. In its place, equity-based laws were passed and one of these was the Employment Equity Act, no 55 of 1998 (EEA). This Act (EEA) has as its primary objectives the promotion of equality, elimination of unfair discrimination in employment, ensure the implementation of employment equity to redress the effects of apartheid and achieve diverse workforce representatives of the country's demographics. The EEA is aimed at benefiting black people, women and people with disability and the term black people means Africans, Coloureds and Indians.

A statutory body, known as the Commission for Employment Equity (CEE) is established in terms of the EEA and one of its main functions is to report to the Minister of Labour on any matter relating to the application of the EEA. Accordingly, designated employers are required to furnish the Department of Labour with a report each year detailing their employment equity status and progress made in terms of the EEA.

In the 2016-2017 report, the CEE reports that the South African workforce still shows signs of under-representation of black people in top and senior management positions within the private sector. Further to this, black females are underrepresented at the top management level when compared to white females. Accordingly, South Africa has 44% of black women who are economically active (Statistics South Africa, 2017). This represents a significant human capital capability, which can be developed and trained in order that private sector can derive benefits as well as the country's economy and its people.

Literature review in this field in South Africa points to the fact that there are barriers to achieving the imperatives of the employment equity Act (Booyesen, 2007; Selby & Sutherland, 2006). To the extent that the EEA is intended to achieve the diversity in the workplace, for the successful implementation of the EEA, there is a need for human resource management strategies which drive inclusion within a diverse workplace (Booyesen, 2007). A study focusing exclusively on black female leaders in the United States of America, showed that black women carried the dual-subordinate identity because they are black and female (Rosette & Livingston, 2012).

Therefore, understanding specific diversity-related challenges faced by black, African female leaders is deemed beneficial for corporate South Africa and ultimately, the South Africa economy. Further to this, South Africa is an emerging economy and is in need of a skilled and



educated workforce in order to attract foreign direct investment into the country.

This study focused on the black, African female leader and probed the conditions needed in the workplace to ensure inclusion within a diverse workforce. A diverse workforce is deemed to result in organisational high performance. For instance, Sabharwal (2014) has found that employing people from diverse background results in competitive advantage for the firm as this increases organisational performance. Homan et al. (2008) states diverse team have the potential to add value as they typically have more skills and expertise as a result of diverse information and knowledge.

## **1.2. Research Problem**

### **1.2.1. Why has this problem been selected?**

The positive impact of the EEA on the elevation of women in the private and public sectors is evident. However, the pace of transformation is still slow and women, black to be more precise, continue to be underrepresented as a group in the decision-making roles in the private sector. Hofmeyer and Mzobe (2012) conducted a study investigating the reasons for the slow advancement of women into senior leadership positions. Their findings revealed that women continue to face barriers to career progression as a result of perceptions and social stereotypes. This research findings are in line with the studies conducted by Mathur-Helm (2005) and Booysen (2007) into barriers women faced when attempting to climb the corporate ladder. Daya (2014) stated that lack of demographic misrepresentation of organisations in South Africa is a concern for both business and society.

The phrase used commonly to refer to the challenges women face in reaching senior level of employment is called “the glass ceiling”. There are several factors that are barriers to the advancement of women to senior positions and some of them are: gender-based stereotypes, human capital, exclusion from informal networks, limited management support for work-life balance needs and lack of mentors or coaches (Sabharwal, 2015).

### **1.2.2. Evidence verifying the identification of the problem**

The 2016-2017 CEE report clearly showed that whilst black people constitute the majority of the economically active population, only a mere 14% of this population are in top and senior management positions in the private sector in South Africa. For instance, I am the only black African female in the executive committee and senior management of the organisation that I am employed in.

Research by Hofmeyer and Mzobe (2012), Selby and Sutherland (2006), Booysen (2007) point to the slow progress in achieving the objectives of the EEA. Further to this, Mathur-Helm (2005), highlights the fact that the lowest ranks of organisation continue to be occupied mainly by women and seemingly there are invisible barriers preventing women to rise to senior and

top management positions. Thus, women are not benefiting from the transformation agenda of government as detailed in the EEA.

### 1.2.3. What is the relevance of the topic

As mentioned above, South Africa has a history of racial discrimination and prejudice and one of the consequences of this, has been the exclusion of the black people from meaningful economic activity. Since the dawn of democracy in 1994, South Africa has achieved much in addressing the injustices of the past government and this has included the access to institutions of higher learning for black people and passed various pieces of legislation aimed at eradicating the effect of apartheid on the lives of many South Africans. According to Selby and Sutherland (2006) the transformation of South Africa is determined by the socioeconomic and political needs of its citizens.

The result of a democratised South Africa has been that the workforce is more diverse than it was before 1994, such that diversity has become a feature of organisational life (Homan, et al., 2008). Morley (2018) writes that as organisations are becoming more diverse, they are starting to use diversity as a strategic competitive advantage and thus able to have a grounded business case for diversity.

Furthermore, the success of the transformation efforts will require changes in the attitude and behaviours of senior and executive management in the organisation (Thomas & Ely, 1996). To build on this, the world is also experiencing rapid change from an economic, technological, social and demographic perspective, that diversity is increasing in the communities and workplaces (Mor Barak & Daya, 2014) and as such, management of diversity cannot be considered an unimportant factor.

The theory of diversity is deemed to be relevant in the present study as it explains the phenomena of heterogenous teams and the factors which influence diversity and inclusion in the workplace. The study will also consider into the theory of critical mass in order to ascertain how that theory explains the experiences of black female managers given their likely tokenism status and the conditions that play out when a person is a minority in the team.

Lastly, in this study, the social role theory is also visited with the hope that it may aid in understanding the views of the workplace members regarding women as leaders and the expectations that men, in general have about women leaders and their capabilities to be effective leaders.

## **1.3. Purpose Statement**

### 1.3.1. The business need for the study

To compete in today's business environment, business leaders are required to think differently and deeply about the challenges that are facing business. In South Africa, amongst the myriad

challenges facing business is the need to ensure that the workforce is representative of the country's demographic and clientele served by the business. Many businesses are recognizing that a diverse workforce has the potential to aid in realising better results.

As indicated above, academic research in South Africa points to the ever-present challenges of achieving diversity in the workplace. Selby and Sutherland (2006) and Booysen (2007) who provide reasons why the implementation of EEA has not been successful. Amongst these are the fact that black employees are expected to assimilate in the workplace, the absence of organisational culture which values diversity, black employees who feel that they are not employed on merit and therefore viewed as tokens and the lack of significant investment into developing the skills of black employees, thus leading to systematic failure to develop black talent pipeline, lack of leadership in promoting employment equity. In a study by Nzukuma & Bussin (2011), they found that black executives were expected to fit in into the organisations they worked for and further that job satisfaction was an important factor for the black executives in deciding whether to stay or leave an organisation.

On the other side, study by Chrobot-Mason and Aramovich (2013) shows that when employees who are in the minority feel that they are being marginalised, the likely of the intention to leave the current employer is high and are also less likely to contribute towards the organisation's success.

In recent years, the business world has seen a rise in shareholder activism and shareholders have acted to address a range of social issues such as labour issues, climate change. Also, shareholders yield significant power and through their ownership rights, have begun to influence corporate alongside the goals of business ethics and more essentially, the bottom line of environmental, economic and social sustainability (Crane & Matten, 2016). It is then reasonable to advance an argument that business has a need for guidelines on how to achieve diversity and inclusion.

This research aims to conclude with practical guidelines for the decision-makers in the banking sector, including human resource practitioners on the appropriate action to be taken to driving real inclusion in business. It is deemed necessary at this juncture to state that the success of diversity and inclusion management, is not the sole responsibility of human resources practitioners. Consequently, it should not be taken for granted that the success of diversity and inclusion rests solely on the shoulders of the human resource practitioners. Boekhorst (2015) opines that leadership and more specifically, authentic-type leadership is key in fostering workplace inclusion.

#### 1.4.2. The theoretical need for the study

To date, academic research in South Africa has focused on testing the progress made in implementing the Employment Equity legislation and diversity management (Mathur-Helm,

2005) and very little on the concept of inclusion (Daya, 2014). This was to be expected given the history of discrimination and prejudice. However, there is a need to now focus our research efforts on understanding the factors that lead to inclusion in the workplace.

## **CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **2.1. INTRODUCTION**

This chapter discusses the theories of diversity and inclusion, critical mass and social role and the extent to which these theories can explain the experiences of black female leaders in the private sector. This chapter further sets the theoretical underpinning of the study and forms the basis for the collection of data.

### **2.2. THEORIES**

#### **2.2.1 Diversity theory**

Per Thomas (1990) affirmative action was the catalyst for diversity management in the United States of America. Consequently, when we consider the origins of the theory of diversity and go back into American history, we find that it has its roots in the United States of America during the civil rights movements and principally began with efforts to prevent instances of discrimination based on race, ethnicity, gender, age and disability (Ferdman, 2014). The driving force behind the shift in legislative and judicial changes for anti-discriminatory laws where societal issues such as social and employment discrimination against women and black people (Bell, 2007). In this respect, the concept of diversity was borne out of anti-discriminatory legislation and affirmative action programs which were instrumental in establishing diverse workforces.

Dobbs (1996) stated that diversity is the real or perceived differences among people based on age, functional differences and sexual orientation etc. Thomas (2006) goes on to state that diversity, is the similarities, differences and the tensions that results from those realities.

Amongst the laws passed in America was the Equal Pay Act which required men and women to be paid equally for equal work, the Title VII of the Civil Rights Act and this act prohibited discrimination because of race, colour, religion, sex or national origin in employment related matters. These laws were instrumental in establishing the principles of diversity in organisations (Bell, 2007).

Accordingly, the concept of diversity has cultural and societal context (Mor Barak, 1999) and its application will differ. In this context, Thomas and Ely (1996) states that diversity should be understood as the different perspectives and approaches which different individuals bring into a team or work environment due to coming from diverse backgrounds. To further expand on this Roberson (2006) refers to the dimensions of diversity based on characteristics such as gender, race, ethnicity, etc. Like the United States of America, in South Africa, legislation was enacted to prevent unfair discrimination.

Thus, assumptions were made about people and the extent to which they are likely to judge each other based on surface-level characteristics such as gender and race as well as the

group memberships, which tended to focus on similarities or differences in turn creating in-groups and out-group distinctions (Shore et al., 2009). Surface-level diversity means the differences within a group of people that are observed with the naked eyes and these are physical characteristics such as gender, age, race and ethnicity, whilst deep-level diversity refers to characteristics such as education, skills set, values and opinions (Cho, Kim & Mor Barak, 2017). Consequently, research has been conducted to understand surface-level diversity versus deep-level diversity and how it impacts decision making in teams (Philips, Northcraft & Neale, 2006) as well as how recruitment policies might be helpful in attracting both surface-level and deep-level qualities (Casper, Wayne & Manegold, 2013).

Of equal importance to the discourse of diversity, is the recognition of minorities in relation to those who are in the dominant groups. Applied very strictly, the term “minority” would denote fewer in numbers. However, we observe, particularly in the South African corporates, women are normally in larger numbers than men and black people will outnumber white people. In this and the South African context, we also observe that the dominant group will be those with power, prestige and privilege (Bell, 2007). Accordingly, managing diversity requires the acknowledgement that the dominant through their power and control are likely to remain dominant, unless diversity management becomes the norm and is truly entrenched.

To this end, many organisations have implemented diversity management policies and practices, which at the heart have the desire to regulate social integration in the workplace. As the maturity in the thinking pertaining to the theory of diversity was beginning to be seen and organisations were becoming more and more diverse, it is observed that diversity has not resulted in the inclusion of the diverse individuals in the workplace. In this regard, a shift was needed from diversity to inclusion. Accordingly, in distinguishing diversity from inclusion, Winters (2014) stated that diversity is typically a legislated requirement and that inclusion normally resulted from voluntary actions of the organisations. Winters (2014) goes further to state that diversity and inclusion are closely related concepts, and that inclusion needs to be entrenched into the day to day operational activities of the business with leaders and all levels of employees practicing inclusion daily.

Mor Barak (2015) in arguing in favour of inclusionary practices, opined that notwithstanding the progress made in ensuring that the representation of diverse groups in organisation is increasing, the exclusion of the diverse group from the inner circles of influence prevented them from participating in, contributing to and benefiting from this participation in the workplace. That may perhaps explain why per Thomas (1990) organisations have become revolving doors for talented minorities, given the fact organisations are not able to retain the talent as the minorities are experiencing exclusion from many organisational activities. To this, Thomas and Ely (1996) opined that leadership in organisations needed to let go of the flawed perceptions about diversity and instead make efforts to learn and understand diversity in its

broader sense. Perhaps the root cause of this lack of understanding could be that to most people diversity is concerned with race, gender, sexual orientation, nationality (Thomas & Ely, 1996).

Furthermore, when looking at the South Africa context, Daya (2014) state that diversity is a result of employment equity targets, and that inclusion will be a result of the move towards representation of differences at all levels of the organisation. Also, Nishii (2013) makes a point that inclusive climate reduces conflict which may arise from diversity management practices. Therefore, inclusion is defined as the extent to which an employee feels that he or she is an accepted member of the team in the organisation and this is experienced through feeling that he or she belongs despite being different or unique. Mor Barak (2015) offers slightly different definition of inclusion, by stating that the term inclusion refers to the perceptions held by an employee that their unique contribution to the organisation is recognised and that they are encouraged to participate fully in the organisational activities. This definition by Mor Barak (2015), is similar to the one offered by Fredman (2017) wherein he states that inclusion in organisations and societies is about people who are unique and they are allowed to contribute to the larger collective as valued and full members.

The concept of inclusion is then both an individual and an organisational construct. At the individual level, it is the experience of belonging and sensing that the person is accepted with their uniqueness, without requiring the person to change and conform to the environment. However, at the organisational level, inclusion relates to the climate and practices which are either inclusionary or exclusionary and the leadership styles conducive to creating inclusionary work environments. Consequently, inclusion at work is focused on the leadership and members of the organisations and how they allow everyone to participate, contribute, have feelings of connectedness and belongs, whilst not losing the individual uniqueness (Ferdman,2014). Mor Barak and Cherin (1998) recognised that inclusion is indicated by the level to which an individual is included in organisational practices such as having accessing to information, the ability to influence decisions that impact that individual and these are closely linked to the quality of relationship the individual has built with the team members.

Nishii (2013) recognises the role of the organisation in establishing an inclusive climate. In truly inclusive organisations all employees experience the sense of belonging and have free access to the resources of the company. On the other hand, an organisation is considered exclusionary if only few of the employees experience belonging and can access the resources (Nishii & Rich, 2014).

Shore et al (2011), developed the Inclusion Framework, which identified belonging and uniqueness as key attributes. This inclusion framework (Shore et al., 2011) supposes that to achieve inclusion in organisations, individuals must be treated as insiders whilst encouraging that they retain their uniqueness. This is different to the position of assimilation, wherein

individuals are treated as insiders, but they are expected to conform to the dominant culture in the organisation. Assimilation requires, as a condition to being accepted, that a person must leave his or her prior identity and culture and adopt the characteristics of the new team or organisation (Fredman, 2017). In this way, assimilation does not recognise nor accept the person's individual and unique characteristics and it can have the effect of preventing authenticity, to the detriment of the organisation or group. Therefore, it is necessary that to encourage authenticity, that employees are not pressurised to assimilate to the dominant cultures. Amongst the consequences of conformance to the dominant culture is that employees do not display their true attitudes and behaviours, but only those which allow them to blend and fit in (Nishii & Rich, 2014).

		<b>Inclusion Framework</b>	
		Low Belonginess <b>Exclusion</b>	High Belonginess <b>Assimilation</b>
Value in Uniqueness	Low	Individual is not treated as an organisational insider with unique value in the work group but there are other employees or groups who are insiders.	Individual is treated as an insider in the work group when they conform to organization/dominant culture norms and downplay uniqueness.
	High	Individual is not treated as an organisational insider in the work group but their unique characteristics are valuable and required for group/organisation success.	Individual is treated as an insider and allowed encouraged to retain uniqueness within the work group.

Figure 1 – Inclusion Framework (Shore et al., 2011)

In many organisations, diversity is visible as one can physically see employees from different backgrounds. However, these employees will typically experience a low sense of belonging given the fact that they are not treated as insiders but their uniqueness is required for work purposes and yet there are others who are treated as insiders. In their study, Pelled, Ledford and Mohrman (1999) looked at, amongst others, the relationship between individual dissimilarity and three inclusion indicators, namely; decision-making influence; access to sensitive work information, which refers to the extent to which an employee is knowledgeable about the inner workings of the organisation; and job security. Regarding decision-making, they opine that friendships, can help facilitate the feeling of inclusion as friends are the source of information in the workplace. Shore, Cleveland and Sanchez (2018) seem to agree with Pelled, et al, that inclusion practices seek to create a platform where employees have access to decision-making and resources opportunities.

In the case of assimilation, employees will likely compromise the qualities or characteristics



which make them unique, such as their culture in favour of the qualities espoused by the organisation (Mor Barak, 1999). To further support this view, Sherbin and Rashid (2017) state that diversity equals representation and that without inclusion, the ability to attract and retain the best diverse talent, encourage participation and thereby lead to growth will not happen.

In recent years, academics have begun to shift their research focus and are looking at the way in which to integrate diverse individuals in organisations (Shore et al., 2011) and thereby ensure they achieve inclusion. In expanding further on the concept of inclusion, Shore et al. (2011) conceptualised inclusion as involving belongingness and uniqueness. Mitchell et al. (2015) tested the hypothesis that leader inclusiveness improves employees' sense of belonging and uniqueness. Boekhorst (2015) suggest that we need to start understanding how these concepts can help create the inclusive work climate in which employees began to sense belongingness and uniqueness.

In conceptualising inclusive leadership, Randel, Galvin, Shore, Ehrhart, Chung, Dean and Kedharnath (2018) identify that belong and uniqueness are essential attributes of inclusive leadership. Regarding the aspect of belonging, key considerations are the support given to group members, ensuring justice and equity and the ability to ensure that all group members are considered when decisions are made. About uniqueness, the key attribute is encouraging diverse contributions. In this way, other team members witness that the views of those who are different are valued and contribute towards the team's successes.

The concept of inclusion is not without conflicting paradoxes. In this regard, we witness, that whilst inclusion is about belong and having a perception that a person as being accepted with their unique characteristics, there are certain contradictions that play out. In this instance, we learn that the practice of inclusion, would mean that accepting others even though their views and even presence may be viewed by others as being offensive. This makes inclusion as a practice quite complex and multifaceted (Ferdman, 2017). Ferdman (2017) opines that inclusion values the ability to co-exist in an environment of multiple contexts, perspectives, styles and aiming to achieve goals in this climate.

The theory of diversity and inclusion are relevant for this study as they explain the circumstances under which employees will be meaningfully engaged to perform at maximum levels. This theory also explains the dynamics of human social interactions in relation to the people who are different from each other and how persistent differentiated treatment will contribute towards detrimental emotional consequences, which impact the overall organisation. On the other hand, critical mass theory posits that when women are few in numbers in a leadership team or any team setting, they face difficulties arising from being few in numbers and therefore lack critical mass to be influential. In addition, it is propositioned that they are faced with the pressure to perform over and above what they can do, as there is an expectation that they must prove themselves repeatedly.

## 2.2.2 Critical Mass Theory

Per Kanter (1977a) tokenism occurs when a person becomes a member of a group in which they will constitute a minority due to that person possessing a different set of salient external masters such as sex, gender or ethnicity from the rest of the group. Typically, tokens are distinguished by their higher visibility, their contrast to the entire group members and the distortion of their key different characteristics to effect assimilation. In developing this theory, four group types are identified by Kanter (1977a). These are: Uniform groups have only members who are like each other in respect of race, gender and culture and the ratio is 100:0. In the case of Skewed groups, there is a dominant group and the less dominant group. This less dominant group is referred to as the “tokens”. The ratio in the Skewed group is 85:15. As per Kanter (1977) the tokens, given fact that there is only a few of them, are unable to form a formidable force to become influential as a unit. Two more groups types are identified and they are: tilted and balanced groups. In the instance of the tilted group, the dominant is still in the majority and the other type is still in the minority.

We can then summarise Kanter’s work as focusing on the advantages and disadvantages that are associated with numerical ratio of women in group settings and their stark visibility of being the minority (Lewis & Simpson, 2012). As per Lewis and Simpson (2012), Kanter’s seminal work on tokenism has the following profound implications:

- The increased visibility that women are subjected to leads to performance measures which insists that women should work harder than their male counterparts;
- The women in these groups become isolated from the work team and the isolation is because of the token’s being different from the team;
- The tokens come to be associated with certain stereotypes and this leads to role entrapment of women

So, for women to exert influence, it is necessary that there is a shift from tokenism to critical mass. As per Torchia, Calabro and Huse (2011), critical mass theory “predicts that when a certain threshold is reached, the degree of the subgroup’s influence grows”. Joecks, Pull and Vetter (2013) tested the number or percentage of women required on company boards to achieve critical mass. Their study found that critical mass to be in the region of 30% female representation on company boards. Further, the presence of critical mass of women in boards and not just their presence, has been found to have a positive impact on the performance of companies (Arena, Cirillo, Mussolino, Pulcinelle, Saggese, & Sarto, 2015).

In a study to investigate the experiences of women on boards of the Fortune 1000 companies, Konrad, Kramer and Erkut (2008), found the experiences of women increased positively when more women joined the boards, such that they could gain critical mass and influenced decision-making process and the decisions themselves. The study also supported the view

of having a magical ratio or number of women of three (3) in the board when compared to the number of men on the board was required. The significance of the magic number of three is displayed when the three women board members strongly and unanimously agreed on a particular matter, the likelihood of the remaining boarding members conforming and therefore agreeing to the views of the women board members increased as well.

The study also offered support to Kanter's original work of women facing isolation and found that solo women board members experienced isolation and there was a downside to the solitary status. This solitary status contributed to the stereotyping of women on boards and normally, their skills, their experiences was always in question until they redeemed themselves and performed. In addition, the study found that solo women on board tend to be marginalised. So, having a second woman join the board, had the effect of easing the pressure on the solo woman (Konrad & Kramer, 2006). Accordingly, women on boards of companies must work harder to justify their presence at the boardroom tables and ensure that the mark of being viewed as a token is removed as soon as possible. It is within this context that when more and more women join corporate boards, the stigma of being women is likely to be removed as they would no longer be seen as women, but as people who are capable and can contribute towards the organisational success.

There are benefits which research has found that come with having women on boards of companies. In a study by Konrad et al, (2008). they found that when women join boards of directors, they tended to provide a diverse perspective on matters at hand, they are inclusive in their approach to issues and would consider all the stakeholders, the interpersonal skills of women will also aid positively in the board procedure, women can ask difficult questions. The same study by Konrad et al. (2008) also found the impact of more women joining the company board, was felt in the breaking down of stereotypes which minority women are normally subjected to.

The above-mentioned benefits of having women on boards of companies, seem to suggest that the presence of women on board does positively affect the performance of the firm. Campbell and Minguuez-Vera (2008), in a study investigating the link between gender diversity and the financial performance of the organisation, they found that the ratio of women to men in a board did have the positive impact on the financial performance of the firm and therefore was found to increase the value of the firm.

However, the minority in tilted teams are still able to exert influence on the rest of the team (Joecks, Pull & Vetter, 2013). This based largely on the fact that the tilted group can engage in discussions with the team and maybe able to influence the team's decision towards theirs.

Finally, when the group has equal representation, it is said to be balanced. In this case, the team will focus their energies on the skills and the expertise that each of the team member

bring to the team. Leaders in top management positions of any company play a critical role in the failure or success of it. In addition, they contribute to the well-being of the country and nation as they are in positions of trust and are responsible for the direction of the entire organisation.

Phenomena that is closely related to the lack of diversity in organisations, is that of tokenism. In the case of South Africa, a concern has been raised that appointments of black people in general is done as a “tick-box” exercise to the compliance requirements of the Employment Equity Act.

Drawing on the critical mass theory, the researcher intends to assess the ability of black female leaders to assert any positive influence at senior management level given that they are in the minority. Further and in support of the use of the Critical Mass Theory, statistics by the Commission for Employment Equity clearly shows that black people, specifically black women occupying senior management positions are in the minority and therefore likely to be regarded as tokens. In addition, South Africa black females have faced a two-fold blow in society. The first one is the racial blow and the second being the female gender blow. During apartheid, black women were the most oppressed and they only occupied the gendered and low paying roles.

Critical mass theory is deemed relevant to this research as it can explain the importance of being resilient as a woman leader who is in the minority whilst striving to be influential to contribute to organisational financial performance and success. The study by Torchia, Calabro and Huse (2011) demonstrated that the ability to be influential in impacting the organisational performance is reliant on the number of women who form critical mass.

### **2.2.3 Social Role Theory**

According to the social role theory, gender stereotypes reflect the observation of social roles that people play in their daily activities and this determines the distribution of roles according to gender (Eagly & Steffen, 1984). The observers, therefore infer that there is close relationship between the type of behaviours people display and their inner dispositions (Eagly, Robs & Karau, 2002). Social role theory holds that it is society through its division of labour that creates an environment for gendered roles between men and women. Furthermore, social role theory recognises that given the physical differences between the two sexes, such as reproductive capacities for women and physical strength for men, men and women have contributed significantly towards gendered roles (Eagly & Wood, 1999). In this way, gender roles and the generally held beliefs tend to influence behaviour through the accepted societal norms (Paludi, 2013).

Building from the above, social roles theory explains that the continued perception of certain roles as being reserved for women will lead to the gendered division of labour and the

development of gender stereotypes that are consistent with the positions that men and women occupy (Clow, Ricciardelli, Bartfay, 2014). These gender role beliefs help to reinforce the division of labour via gender socialisation and specialisation and then leads to adoption of gender identities (Grijalva, Tay, Harms, Newman, Donnellan & Robins, 2015). Equally worthy of mention is the notion that men carry the agentic characteristics such as competitiveness, dominance and assertiveness and that women are more communal, which are characteristics associated with friendliness, nurturance, tenderness and selflessness (Grijalva, Tay, Harms, Newman, Donnellan & Robins, 2015). These notions are seemingly reinforced by the fact that men were traditionally breadwinners, and as such, men were afforded the higher status than women and women since they were home-makers, were given lower status (Bosak & Sczesny, 2011). Thus, prejudice towards women emerged due to the incongruity between the agentic characteristics of men and the communal characteristics of women.

In a study to test the hypothesis that roles determine societal stereotypes, Eagly and Koenig (2014) found gender stereotypes were accurate in predicting the roles that men and women are likely to be in. In another study, to determine whether gender influences narcissistic behaviour, De Hoogh, Hartog and Nevicka (2015) stated that the display by female leaders of leadership behaviours that are attributable to men according to the social role theory, such as dominance and superiority, are held to be in violation of gender norms.

In a research by Bosak and Sczesny, (2011) conducted among German business students to test the attitudes of hiring men and women in managerial positions, the study found that decisions of hiring were influenced by the prior knowledge that the students had about gender of the applicant and this seemed to support the impact of the social role information on the hiring decisions. Thus, they seemed to apply similar standards for both genders. Furthermore, the study found that men were likely to favour hiring men when they knew of the gender of the applicants.

Applying the social role theory to explain the position of African Americans, Peters, Kinsey and Malloy (2004) explain that perhaps due to the history of segregation and the resultant limited access to opportunities, African American women may avoid leadership positions due to social stereotypes that comes along with being black.

The social role theory states that it is observed that women are to espouse the more communal characteristics such as nurturing, kindness and men are expected to display agentic behavioural characteristics, such as arrogance, egocentrism and even ruthlessness. When a woman does not display these communal qualities, she is viewed negatively by others, particularly men (De Hoogh, Hartog & Nevicka, 2015). Drawing on the social role theory, research by De Hoogh, Hartog and Nevicka (2015) sought to propose that the leader's gender influenced the extent to which narcissistic leader are perceived as being effective. The study found that female leaders, when judged by male subordinates, were regarded as being less

effective when they displayed narcissistic characteristics than male leaders. On the other hand, female subordinates did not show any gender bias against women leaders and the female subordinates seemed to evaluate female narcissistic leaders more favourably. Thus, this study seemed to suggest that female leaders are subjected to the stereotypes of the social role theory.

Due to the fact that society expects women not to display agentic characteristics, when women ascend to position of leadership in organisation, there is an expectation that they should display more communal qualities (Ingersoll, Glass, Cook & Olsen, 2017). So, the idea, that female leaders may display dominance, arrogance and assertiveness as leaders may not be viewed favourably by others. In their study, Ingersoll et al to analyse the rate of narcissism amongst female CEOs and as compared to male CEOs, and also borrowing from the Social Role Theory, they found that the rates of narcissism are lower in female CEOs when compared to the male CEOs. This was consistent with the social role theory, which suggest that women are communal. According to Ingersoll et al. women are expected to act according to the norms of femininity and warmth.

From the South African literature perspective on this topic, Booysen and Nkomo (2006) conducted a study into whether the phenomena of gender role stereotypes are prevalent in South Africa. They found that the perception that female leaders are perceived to possess leadership or manager characteristics associated with male leaders does not exist. Hence, we observe that traditionally, there are certain roles that are reserved for women. In the corporate environment, typically support and administrative roles have been the reserve of women. Africa, including South Africa, is a deeply patriarchal society with the result that subordinate roles are kept for women.

Borrowing from the Social Role Theory, the study will seek to understand whether in the South African context, the perceptions of feminine roles as opposed to masculine roles are not impacting negatively on the diversity and inclusion efforts within private sector. The social role theory is deemed relevant to test whether in the case of black female leaders, social roles explains the challenges that these set of leaders face in corporate South Africa.

### **2.3 LEGISLATION**

The South African affirmative action and equal opportunity legislation is premised on the fundamental need to redress the wrongs of apartheid. As a start, the South African constitution states in Section nine (9) subsection one (1) that everyone is equal before the law and has the right to equal treatment protection and benefit of the law. The section in subsection 3 proceeds to list the grounds under which discrimination is prohibited. Subsequently, South Africa's new democratic government passed outcome-based legislation for much of its population (Klarsfeld, 2014) namely: the Labour Relations Act, The Basic Conditions of

Employment Act, Employment Equity Act, Skills Development Act, Black Economic Empowerment Act. The primary objectives with these laws was to rectify the unjust laws and unfair discriminatory practices of apartheid, effect a change in the demographic view of the workplace and ensure that the previously disadvantaged groups such as the black people, women and the disabled are no longer discriminated against (Klarsfeld, 2014).

Focusing on the Employment Equity Act (EEA) and the Skills Development Act (SDA), the primary aim of EEA is to ensure that all South Africans enjoy equal opportunities in employment which may have been denied them in the past (Deane, 2006), whilst the SDA aims to promote equal opportunity and fair treatment in employment through the elimination of unfair discrimination. To the extent that discrimination during the years of apartheid was solely based on race, The EEA “contains ethnic and racially ascribed identities or even prescribed identities” (Op’t Hoog, Siebers & Linde, 2010) and such creates five designated groups, namely African Black, Coloured, Indians, Persons with Disabilities and Women. The designated employer is further required to report annually to the Director General on the progress made to implement the provisions of the Act.

In analyzing the EEA is to necessary to mention that designated employers are not expected to employ individuals from the designated groups who are not competent nor suitably qualified for their roles. It is a clear expectation from the EEA that suitably qualified individuals from the designated groups are considered for employment. Section twenty (20) subsection three (3) paragraph d (d) further requires that the designated employer consider the individual’s capacity to acquire, within a reasonable time the ability to do the job. However, this particular section could present challenges in respect of interpretation. An argument could be raised that designated employers are expected to employer individuals who are not suitably qualified given the mention of the “individual’s capacity to acquire” knowledge required to perform in the work. There is also the concern on the measurement of a reasonable time as this could be open to interpretation by implementers of the EEA. To this, Roman and Mason (2015) reiterates that the aim of the EEA is not to encourage the employment of individuals who are not suitably qualified, but rather to take the necessary measures and initiatives of ensuring that the competent individuals from the designated groups are employed and where needed, these individuals are retained. Furthermore, the study by Roman and Mason (2015) confirms the findings of Booysen (2007) concerning the barriers to achieving successful implementation of EEA.

Of relevance to the research topic is the section fifteen 15 subsection two (2) paragraph b (b) of the EEA which requires that the designated employer, must implement measures that are designed to achieve diversity within the work environment based on equal dignity and respect of all people. Arguing this issue further Deane (2006) opines that designated employers must recognize that employees or classes of employees are different from one another and that the

employer should seek to promote tolerance amongst employees. To this end designated employers in South Africa have designed and implemented Employment Equity Policies that are aimed at creating standards for the fair and equal treatment of employees in the workplace, whilst also prohibiting unfair discrimination and racism in the workplace.

Another peculiar feature of the South African Employment Equity legislation is section twenty (20), which requires that designated employers should have in place an employment equity plan. In terms of this section, the objective is to ensure that the employer has analyzed the workforce to identify and understand the gaps in ensuring representation of all the demographics in the organization and how any underrepresentation of certain demographics at different organizational levels will be met.

In a study to determine the interventions required to achieve the employment equity objectives in the Wholesale and Retail sector, it was found that employment equity is generally supported by employees and the organizations that formed part of the study. However, it was found that the issue lies in the implementation of the Act. This could be attributed to the main focus on complying with legislative requirements whilst still not ensuring that the employment equity initiatives are implemented in a holistic manner (Thomas, 2002).

## **2.4 COMPARISON TO OTHER COUNTRIES**

### **2.4.1 Australia**

#### **2.4.1.1 History**

Australia has an estimated population size of 24 million people as at September 2017 and the Australian Aboriginals account for approximately 3% of the total Australian population (ABS, 2017). Prior to European settlers arriving on the shores of Australia the country had been inhabited for many years by the Australian Aboriginal people. Because of racist ideologies, Australia put in place discriminatory laws and practice and these resulted in the Indigenous population of Australia marginalised and barred from enjoying equal rights.

#### **2.4.1.2 Legislation**

Following the Civil Rights movement in America in the 1960's and the subsequent spread of this movement to the rest of the world, Australia also followed the world and began to pass laws that ensured that all its citizens enjoyed equal rights. Starting in 1975 Australia passed the first series of its anti-discriminatory legislation, thus making it unlawful to discriminate because of race, sex, disability, age, religion and family status (Klarsfeld, 2014). Of importance and interest was the Racial Discrimination Act of 1975 and primary objective to ensure that persons who because of their skin colour, race, nationality and ethnicity did not enjoy equal rights including property rights which people of other races, colour, nationality and ethnicity enjoyed, will begin to enjoy the same rights as well.



However, it soon became apparent that passing legislation which prohibits discrimination will not be sufficient and that it was necessary to enable an environment where those who have been discriminated against can compete equally. Thus, equal employment opportunity legislation was enacted starting with the Affirmative Action Act of 1986 (Klarsfeld, 2014). This legislation has since been repealed and replaced by the Workplace Gender Equality Act of 2012, which focuses on promoting and improving gender equality in the workplace. A key feature of the Australian Equal Employment Opportunity makes it explicitly clear that individuals should be considered for employment on merit only.

### **2.4.1.3 Managing Diversity**

Diversity management in Australia has been gaining momentum and it is now regarded as familiar term and therefore used more often by the Australian managers (Kramar, 1998). In a study by Davis, Frolova and Callahan, 2016 to understand the attitudes of Australian organisations towards Diversity Management, it was found that it is not a priority for Australian organisations as few companies were actively promoting workplace diversity management. This was further evidenced by the fact that Human Resource Managers were not overwhelmingly knowledgeable about work diversity management issues as they are expected to be. Further, it was found that despite the good legislation that is in place in Australia, there appears to be a misalignment between legislation and policies which are aimed at supporting workplace diversity management in Australian organizations.

## **2.4.2. United States of America**

### **2.4.2.1. History**

Long before Christopher Columbus found North America, Native Americans had been calling this vast country home for thousands of years. Shortly after this, English and other European settlers starting to arrive in North America. It was in this time that America began to import black people from the African continent as slaves to work on the plantations, mainly in the South of the country. In addition, many immigrants began to arrive in America in search of the American dream. Thumma (2017) says that the United States of America is a country made, created and improved by immigrants

The United States has a population size estimated to be 325 719 178 as at July 2017 (United States Census Bureau, 2018). The population, classified per race is comprised as follows:

<b>Race</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
<b>White</b>	76.6%
<b>Black American/African</b>	13.4%
<b>American Indian or Alaska Native</b>	1.3%

<b>Asian</b>	5.8%
<b>Native Hawaiian</b>	0.2%
<b>Hispanic or Latin American</b>	18.1%
<b>Two or more race</b>	2.7%

Adapted from Source: United States Census Bureau

#### **2.4.2.2. Emergence of Diversity in the United States of America**

Thomas (2006) says that diversity is as American as the famous American pie. Considering the American history, the statement holds truth in it. To justify this view, Thomas (2006) states that diversity drivers were the American Revolutionary wars, the American constitution, the Civil wars and the Civil Rights movements. It was after the American Civil War, that change began to sweep through much of the United States of America for the black person and as such they were given full citizenship and slavery was ended.

However, it was the Civil Rights Movements of the 1960's which saw the emergence of diversity as an academic theory. The Civil Rights Movement began as a protest against the Jim Crows laws that segregated black and white people's lunch counters. This movement was soon joined by both white and black student from across the nation and formed the Student Nonviolent Co-ordinating Committee. The members of the movements, mainly students organized marches such as the 1961 Freedom Rides, Jobs and Freedom March in Washington in 1963 and many others. (Clayton, 2018). These efforts led to the promulgation of the Civil Rights Act of 1964. This Act prohibited racial, religious, sexual and nation of origin discrimination. Concerning employers, Title VII of the Civil Rights Act prohibits discrimination in the workplace.

#### **2.4.2.3 Legislation**

For the period after the ending of slavery and the subsequent attainment of full citizenship by black people, discrimination continued against black people, people with disabilities, people of other religions. The discrimination was observed in employment, income disparity between black and white people who performed the same job (Bell, 2007).

As mentioned above, following the successes of the Civil Rights Movements, the Civil Rights Act was passed. The primary aim of the Act was amongst others to guarantee black people the right to vote and give the district courts the power to issue orders to stop discriminatory practices in public spaces (United States Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, 2018).

Because of the Civil rights Acts, a number of federal acts pertaining to diversity and equality in the workplace were enacted by the United States government and amongst these were:

##### **1. The Equal Pay Act**

The Act makes it unlawful to pay different wages to men and women and requires equal pay

for equal work. Perhaps, a somewhat peculiar aspect of this Act, is that the equal pay for equal work requirement is only applicable to employees working for the same organization and this according to Bell (2007), severely limits the effectiveness of the Equal Pay Act.

## **2. Title VII of the Civil Rights Act**

Title VII of the Civil Rights Act is credited with enabling diversity in the workplace. This section of the Act prohibits discrimination on the basis of race, gender, religion and nation of origin (Bell, 2007). Title VII has a far-reaching impact as it covers employers from different sectors from private companies, public employment agencies, labor organization as well companies that are controlled by United States companies. Unlike the South African Employment Equity Act, which describes a designated employer subject to the Act, as an organization that employs 50 or more employees, the American Title VII of the Civil Rights Act, the threshold is much lower, being set at an employer of 15 or more employees (Thomas, 2002). This means that almost all employers in the United States are required to comply within law and thereby attempting to normalize diversity in the American workforce.

The Equal Employment Opportunity Commission is established by Title VII of the Civil Rights Act. The Commission has the authority to investigate allegations of discrimination against employers who are subject to this Act and so the primary role of the Commission is to enforce Title VII.

### **2.4.2.4 Managing Diversity in the United States of America**

Efforts to implement equality in employment has had its fair amount of challenges (Thomas, 2002). The Equal Employment Opportunity Commission records show that discrimination on the basis of race ranks high amongst the complaints received and this is a trend that has been observed over a period of 20 years (Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, 2017).

In this regards the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission has the mandate to enforce federal laws that prohibit discrimination in the workplace and so the emergence of diversity in the United States emanates from legislation and the requirement of equity in the workplace.

Because of the federal laws aimed at preventing and making discrimination illegal, the American workforce became diverse. In those early days in America, Affirmative Action focused on doing the correct thing to put right the imbalances and injustices of discrimination (Thomas,1990). However, according to Leslie, Mayer and Kravitz (2014), affirmative action has negative implications for both the beneficiaries and the non-beneficiaries.

The beneficiaries of these programs face the accusation that they are incompetent and could therefore be stigmatized. On the other hand, the non-beneficiaries could claim reverse racism and therefore unfair discrimination because of race.

Thomas, (1990) goes on to state that the American image of diversity was more about  
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assimilating and expecting people to conform to the typical American corporation. According to Thomas and Ely (1996), American corporations did not know how to handle the differences in the workplace and the evidence of this was the expectation that minorities will blend in or assign the minority employees in jobs that related specifically to the backgrounds. Adopting this approach, there was failure to realize the true potential benefits of diversity in the workplace.

The year 2018 marks the 54<sup>th</sup> anniversary since the historic passing of the Civil Rights Act, 1964. The United States of America has had a black president, Former President Barack Obama, black people have made great strides and achieved much, such that it is possible for some sections in the American society to argue that the Civil Rights Act has served its purpose and therefore not needed any longer (Warde, 2013). Back in 1990 Thomas (1990) argued that affirmative action will cease to be as the achievements made by black people in America had been great and that it was time to make the shift from affirmative action to affirming diversity. However, Warde (2013) in his comparative study of the quality of life enjoyed by both black and white people in America, comes to some striking differences. He found that white people compared to black people have a far superior quality of life when measured against the indicators that measure wealth and these are: economic standard of living, employment, home ownership, education, health, and civil and political rights. Warde (2013) makes an argument that this due to the structural and institutional racial discrimination that is still prevalent in the United States of America.

## **2.5 CONCLUSION**

The chapter focused on the review of the theory of diversity, critical mass theory and social role theory and how the three theories interact to explain the situation faced by a black female leader in gaining acceptance and experiencing belonging in the corporate environment.

We observed that whilst diversity theory is useful in explaining the strategies that organisation may employ in order to achieve demographic representation at all levels of the organisation, the theories of critical mass theory and social role theory are also useful in explaining the challenges faced by the black female leader.

Further, the chapter 2 considered the legislation in South Africa aimed at creating diverse workforce, eliminating the instances of unfair discrimination on one or more grounds, such as race, gender, sex, pregnancy, marital status and few others, and regulating the principles of fairness and justice in the workplace.

A comparative review was conducted between Australia and the United States of America in how these countries have managed diverse and inclusion, as well as the challenges, they are still faced with.

## **CHAPTER 3: DEVELOPMENT OF CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK**

### **3.3.1 Research Proposition 1.**

Shore, Randel, Chung, Dean, Ehrhart and Singh (2011) argued that uniqueness and belongingness work together to create the feeling of inclusion. In support of the importance of belongingness and uniqueness in creating the climate for inclusion, Mor Barak (2015) argues fostering a sense of belonging is an important requirement to ensuring that employees experience inclusion in the workplace.

When an organisation has exclusionary practices, employees experience detrimental economic, social and emotional consequences. It is deemed necessary for organisations to create work environments which accept the individual differences and encourages diverse thinking and practices (Mor Barak, 2000).

*Employees in Inclusive work environments have a higher sense of belonging and their uniqueness is accepted and valued.*

### **3.3.2 Research Proposition 2.**

Mor Barak (1999) stated the critical organizational processes which induce perceptions of employee inclusiveness are access to information and resources, connectedness to co-workers and decision-making influences.

Inclusion in a diverse workplace has much to do with the extent to which employees' experiences and perceives that they are part of the critical organizational processes (Roberson, 2006). In this regard, in a study by Pellad, Ledford and Mohrman, (1999) found that being racially dissimilar to others had a negative impact on the inclusion indicators than being dissimilar to others in respect of education and tenure in an organisation.

*Inclusion is indicated by the employee's access to information, the decision-making influences and the job security that an employee enjoys.*

### **3.3.3 Research Proposition 3**

Kanter, (1977) found that tokens stand out given the fact they are highly visible, contrasted to others and there is an expectation they must assimilate into the dominant culture. Kanter, (1977a), found that women faced with performance pressure because of their gender, will either overachieve or they will try to hide their femininity.

*As black female leaders are often to be the minority and therefore regarded as tokens, they are subjected to higher performance pressures which require that they overachieve.*

### **3.3.4 Research Proposition 4.**

According to De Hoogh, Hartog and Nevicka (2015) when women engage or display behaviour

that is typically attributed to male leaders, this is regarded as violation of gender norms.

*Display of dominance and sense of high self-esteem by black female leaders is at odds with the expectation of women as according to the social role theory*

## **CHAPTER 4: CHOICE OF METHODOLOGY**

### **4.1. Introduction**

This chapter discussed the choice of methodology and research design decisions as taken by the researcher. A qualitative and deductive research methodology was selected as it was deemed appropriate considering the research objectives at hand.

### **4.2. Research Philosophy**

The research philosophy took the form of interpretivism. This was informed by the researcher's interest in seeking to understand the underlying factors that will lead to or result in employee inclusiveness amongst black female leaders. Interpretivism is a form research philosophy, which upon using various interconnected interpretive tools, seeks to understand better the human experiences (Denzin & Lincoln, 2003). According to Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill (2009) interpretivism advocates that it is necessary for the researcher to understand differences between humans in our role as social actors. In addition, interpretivism in research philosophy is regarded as means of promoting plural perspectives and further that it is about contextualising meanings and holds the views that in all lived experiences, emotions are involved (Hurworth, 2011). Furthermore, the critical point concerning interpretivism is that what distinguishes human or social action from physical objects is that human action has meaning, whilst physical objects do not have meaning. Thus, to gain full appreciation of social action, the researcher must understand the meaning which the social action seeks to represent (Schwandt, 2003).

For this reason, the research was a qualitative research where a sample was selected from the population deemed suitable. According to Denzin and Lincoln (2003) qualitative research entails the collection of data, such as personal experiences, life stories, interviews that describes the day to day challenges and meanings in research subject's lives.

### **4.3 Research Approach**

The nature of the research was deductive and exploratory as there is little research that has been conducted in the field of black female leaders and particularly the elements that need to be in place to achieve inclusion. With deductive research approach, research or propositions are always derived from existing theory and the real-life data is collected, in order to test that the theory is proven true (O'Reilly, 2009). Therefore, it can be stated that amongst the advantages of the deductive approach is that it can support or contradict existing theory (Kennedy, 2018). A deductive approach is regarded as being suited to testing existing theory and not for developing new theory (O'Reilly, 2009).

In this present study, it was deemed appropriate that a deductive approach was adopted as we were testing whether when employers focuses on ensuring that employees have a sense

of belonging, whilst retaining their uniqueness, the results will be employees feeling included and accepted. In this regard, through the use of the deductive approach, we are testing whether the phenomena can be described using an existing framework of literature.

Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill, (2009) refers to this as testing for the causal relationship between the two variables.

#### **4.4. Methodological choice**

Qualitative research is premised on the belief that knowledge is shaped or created by people as they engage in and derive meaning from life activities and experiences (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). Qualitative research methodology is deemed suitable for the study at hand as it will facilitate the collection of rich data and in turn the researcher will gain deep understanding of the lived experiences of the sample selected. According to Corbin and Strauss (2008) qualitative research enables research study which is fluid, evolving and dynamic as the aim of the researcher is to determine how meanings are created and events are interpreted by the participants. The research was conducted following a qualitative research methodology.

As indicated above, it has been 24 years, since the end of apartheid and 20 years and since the Employment Equity Act was passed into law. With these changes, the demographic make-up of corporate South Africa has changed considerably to be reflective of the country's demographics. Corporate South Africa, persuaded by good intentions of complying with the law, began to implement measures aimed at achieving the objectives of the Act. These measures are mostly rooted in company policies that prohibit discriminatory practices in the workplace and seek to ensure that all employees are treated the same. In this way, managers in organisations are required to measure their actions and behaviours against the company policies and there is no space to seeking to understand the lived experienced of minority employees in the workplace. The unintended result of this "blanket application" of company policies is the expectation that employees must assimilate to the organisation's way of doing things. So, despite these well-intended efforts, the rise of women to more senior levels has been rather slow and disappointing (Mathur-Helm, 2005; Booysen,2007; Hofmeyer & Mzobe, 2012).

A qualitative research methodology has as its primary objective the investigation of the lived experiences of a group of individuals in a particular social or cultural context (Mills & Birks, 2017). According to Given (2012) qualitative research places focus on people's words and interactions and the duty of the researcher is to locate the patterns in the words used and offer new interpretation and meaning. As Corbin and Strauss (2008) writes qualitative research "is an intuitive sense of what is going in the data, trusts in the self and the research process and the ability to remain creative, flexible and true to the data all at the same time". Qualitative research has the added benefit to the researcher in that he or she gets observe the inner



experiences of the research participants and to also determine how meanings are informed through influences such as culture (Corbin & Strauss, 2008).

#### **4.5. Purpose of Research Design**

The research was explanatory as the research aims to establish a causal relationship between two variables. Whilst academic research in the fields of diversity and inclusion, critical mass theory and social roles theory is in abundance, the specific focus on black female leaders in the African context is limited, if not lacking. The body of scholarship produced on women as leaders and managers has been dominated by scholarship from the West, primarily on women in the United States and to a lesser degree women in Europe (Nkomo & Ngambi, 2009).

Also, Nzukuma and Bussin (2011) found that academic research into the African female leader is scarce in South Africa. For black female leaders in South Africa the racially discriminatory policies of the previous regime, meant that black female leaders did not have the equal opportunities as white women. Therefore, one can conclude that there was no interest in undertaking research on black female leaders. In addition, South Africa only has a lived experience of 2 decades of democracy as well the anti-discriminatory laws, so there is a need to build a body of research in this field.

#### **4.6. Strategy**

For the research design already settled on the purpose thereof, semi-structured interviews were conducted. The semi-structured interview is the method of data collection in which the interviewer asks a set of questions. Per Gill, Stewart, Treasure and Chadwick (2008) semi-structured interviews must have key questions that help to define the areas to be explored. As mentioned in paragraph 2.3 above, a qualitative research methodology offers the key insights required for an explanatory study and the data collection method of semi-structured interviews is flexible for allowing the unearthing of information that was may not have otherwise discovered.

#### **4.7 Cross-sectional**

Saunders and Lewis (2012) said that a cross-sectional study enables the collection of data at a time and this is referred to as a “snap-shot”. The analysis of the data within the cross-sectional study typically looks for the differences in the data collected and not the changes. This is since the research data is collected at a single point in time (Menard, 2011). A cross-sectional study is considered appropriate for the study at hand given the time constraints in which the research must be concluded.

Additionally, aside from the time constraints, the cross-sectional study is beneficial for the study at hand, to gauge sentiments amongst black female leaders pertaining to efforts of diversity and inclusion in their workplace.

## **4.8 Research Methodology and Design**

### **4.8.1 Population**

The population selected was black females who are in positions of leadership or are aspiring to such positions employed in the South African Banking Sector. Black in this regard excludes the definition of black people as defined in the Employment Equity Act No.55 of 1998 and considers only black females of African descent. Black females, despite having been also subjected to the discriminatory laws of the apartheid governments, still continue to be subjected to prejudice on the basis of gender. According to the (Commission for Employment Equity, 2016-2017) the trend for black people, in particular black females continues to be under-representation at Senior Management levels within the private sector in South Africa. This despite, the evidence which exists that there are black females who are suitably qualified.

According to the Banking Association South Africa Submission on the Transformation in the Banking Sector, the number of black women in management has reportedly declined over the period of 2012 to 2015. The industry had plans of reaching the 10% of black women in senior management, and they currently show only the achievement of 8.4% to date. This indicates the need to further understand the experiences of black females in the banking sector. For instance, in a study by Nzukuma and Bussin (2011), to understand the reasons for job-hopping amongst African black senior management in South Africa, it was found that the factor that mostly drives mobility amongst black professionals is the desire to manage their career direction and the least amongst these is the extent to which the culture of diversity is being managed.

Furthermore, in a paper that studied the veracity of the claim that black people job-hop for no reason other than financial gain, Ndzwayiba, Ukpere and Steyn (2018) found these claims to lack empirical evidence and that there is a need for corporates to understand the real reasons the job-tenure of black professionals is low. By narrowing the focus of my study on black females, the researcher aimed to contribute towards the body of knowledge on the factors that lead to inclusion of this population group and thereby aid in retention policies of the organisations in the banking sector.

### **4.8.2. Unit of Analysis**

It is important that the unit of analysis is carefully selected so as to ensure that results are not biased and or invalid (Adams, 2012). The unit of analysis was black female leaders in senior management positions, employed in the South African Banking Sector and given the unique position that they occupy. Per the Statistics South Africa report on the Gross Domestic Product for the first quarter of 2018, The Finance Industry, which includes the Banking Sector contributed 21% towards the Gross Domestic Products of South Africa. The Finance Industry,

forming part of the Tertiary Industries is essentially knowledge intensive and women are becoming significantly important (Chengadu & Scheepers, 2017), as South African economy is a largely a service economy. The Banking sector is necessary for the financial stability of the country as it acts as a deposit taker and lender for South Africa's consumers.

It was therefore, deemed necessary that the banking sector is seen to be transforming and demonstrate that people who manage these firms, with respect to investments and lending, are reflective of the country's demographics (Momoniat, Havemann, & Masoga, 2017).

This selection was further informed by the ease of access to the population and the anticipated similarity of experiences shared by this population.

#### **4.8.3. Sampling Method and Size**

It was essential that prior to settling on sampling method, a clear understanding of the field of research needed to be undertaken. This helped to ensure that the sampling method selected was not at odds with field of study. The correct sampling techniques will help ensure that the range of methods allows for the reduction of data to be collected by considering only data from the appropriate unit of analysis as opposed to the whole population (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill, 2009). Therefore, the selection of sampling method to be adopted should follow a careful consideration and not be a product of ad-hoc selection (Rapley, 2013).

The focus of the study was on black, female managers employed within the South African Banking Sector. A purposive, non-probability sampling method was considered appropriate for the research that was undertaken. According to Merriam and Tisdell, (2016), with purposive sampling the researcher desires to understand and gain insights, therefore the sample selection will be conducted with "from which the most can be learned" angle. This choice was informed by the fact that there are only a handful of black female leaders, the homogeneous sample, within the South Africa Banking sector who were deemed suitable to help answer the research questions and meet the research objectives. Furthermore, the researcher used judgement to select the sample members based on a range of possible reasons and premises (Saunders & Lewis, 2012).

Accordingly, in using judgement the researcher relied on the extensive networks that she had established within the Banking Sector to select the potential and likely research candidates, based on the above mentioned narrow focus of the study. It is also noteworthy to mention that no specific people were targeted but rather black female leaders who match the criteria of being female, black, employed at managerial level within the banking sector in South Africa. Furthermore, and in order to ensure fair representation of the targeted population across the banking sector, the researcher targeted potential participants employed in the big five banks, being First National Bank, Absa Bank, Standard Bank, Nedbank and Capitec Bank. This helped to reduce any bias in selection. In addition, the underlying premises was that the

experiences of the target population were similar and this specific focus could enable the deep exploration of these lived experiences.

In the considering the appropriate sampling method and size, the researcher took into account the time constraints and the collection of qualitative data, impracticality of a large population size and the choice of methodology, which must match the size.

For this reason, the researcher deemed it reasonable and appropriate that the sampling size of 15 participants be targeted. As the data collection was progressing, the richness of the data collected was assessed and analysed. The test for determining the level of saturation will when important themes or trends emerge from the analysis of data collected.

#### **4.8.4. Measurement Instrument**

As the research methodology was qualitative and data collected through the semi-structured interview, an appropriate measurement instrument for the qualitative data was content analysis, which means to refer to text for meaning and identity recurring themes and used that are used by the research participants (Patton, 2002). This measurement instrument was informed by the fact that the data to be collected will be “impossible to define the category numerically or to rank it” (Saunders, Lewis, & Thornhill, 2009). Further, that content analysis is utilised in qualitative research and is an attempt to find the logic in the qualitative data so collected and identify themes or categories (Patton, 2002). It is also important to note that content analysis in a deductive study, data is analysed in line with the existing literature framework (Patton, 2002).

#### **4.8.5. Data gathering process**

Since this study is qualitative, semi-structured interviews were used for collecting data. Interviews as a means of collecting data is regarded as suitable when the type of information required for the research at hand, can be best obtained in this way (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). The researcher had a list of specific questions to ask and allowed the participants to also provide additional information pertaining to their experiences. The questions elicited the participants' views of diversity and inclusion in the workplace. According to Gill (2008) the flexibility of this approach, particularly compared to structured interviews, also allows for the discovery or elaboration of information that is important to participants but may not have previously been thought of as pertinent by the research team. One of the benefits of semi-structured interviews is that the presence of follow-up questions which, the researcher has the opportunity of asking the participants and the conversation-flow like of the interview.

The arrangement of the semi- structured interview questions enabled the researcher to be flexible in responding to the situation at hand and the new insights gained from the participant's answers to the questions as well additional information volunteered (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016).

During the interviews, the researcher was taking notes, whilst the interview was being recorded. The taking of the notes, was necessary as it helped the researcher to concentrate on the information and experiences shared by the research participants (Seidman, 2006).

This approach was also helpful with regard to the follow up questions which the researcher was able to pose to the participants.

#### **4.8.6 Analysis approach**

The main purpose of data analysis in a qualitative study is to construct concepts out of the data that has been collected (Corbin & Strauss, 2008).

Given the fact that the few characteristics of qualitative data are meanings of data based on the words used, data collection requires classification and analysis is conducted through conceptualising of the data so collected. In order to prepare the collected data for through analysis, the researcher used an audio recorder to record the interviews and this was later transcribed into written form. This ensured that meanings contained the words used by the research participants were fully captured.

Data collected was analysed using the coding method. In order to do this the researcher was required to get acquainted with the data collected and identify key trends from the responses received. According to Corbin and Strauss (2012) coding involves interacting with data (analysis) using techniques such as asking questions about the data, making comparisons between the data, and so on, and in doing so, deriving concepts to stand for those data, then developing those concepts in terms of their properties and dimensions. A coding method was used as labels to assign meaning to the descriptive information collected during the research period (Corbin & Strauss, 2008)

For the purpose of analysing the collected data, the researcher used Microsoft Excel worksheet.

#### **4.8.7 Limitations**

The purposive sampling method might question the reliability and objectivity of the research given that the research participants will be selected by the researcher. However, consideration must be given to the fact that there are only so many black female leaders in South African corporates.

For the reason that the research was exploratory, “which is about discovering new information about the topic” (Saunders & Lewis, 2012) that in itself is a limitation to the research. This research will need to follow up by quantitative research, in order to validate the results.

Another limitation that was anticipated was the extent to which the research participants are familiar with the concepts of diversity and inclusion and are able to express themselves in a

way that aids the research in being able to analyse the data in relation to the study at hand.

Finally, it is worth mentioning that South Africa is a highly-racialized country and that this research could unearth some of the racial biases issues that are experienced by the research participants and those fall outside of the scope of this research.

## **CHAPTER 5: DATA ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS**

### **5.1. Introduction**

This chapter discusses in the detail the data collected and the analysis of the collected data. In this chapter, the findings will also be presented.

### **5.2. Description of the sample**

The data was collected from 15 semi-structured interviews. The research sample consisted of black professional woman employed in the banking sector in South Africa. The research participants were either managers and those who were aspiring to becoming managers.

### **5.3. Analysis of in-depth Interview Data**

The data was analysed following the process of content analysis. The interviews ran for the duration of approximately 60 minutes. During the interview, the researcher was taking notes whilst also recording the interview on an audio recorder. The research participants were informed at the start of the interview that the interviews will be recorded and that their names and the names of the organisations that they worked for, will be kept confidential at all times. After the conclusion of the interview, the researcher transcribed the data.

The content analysis was completed using the Microsoft Excel worksheet. As the study was deductive in nature, the theoretical framework was existing literature. From the existing literature, a conceptual framework was developed into a set of research propositions. The interview questions were derived from the literature. In preparation for the data analysis, themes were developed from the research propositions and on this basis, coding was carried out.

The codes were derived from the responses of the research participants and all the codes were classified into the corresponding themes. A total of 130 codes were derived and later these codes and the quotations from the transcribed interviews, were analysed to identify similarities, meaning and interpretations. The main codes and the sub-codes were then identified and grouped on the basis of close relationship and close proximity in respect of either, supporting and confirming the theory. The codes, which did not seem to support the data, were grouped separately.

The data which did not seem to support neither dispute the theory was also coded and this was grouped under emerging themes. For example, the codes so derived, came from data or information which the research participants shared when prompted by the researcher. This additional information, assisted to provide further understanding of the personal experiences of the participants and provided insights into how diversity and inclusion efforts are viewed and experienced in the South African banking sector.

The findings are presented according to the research propositions and the themes as identified.

#### **5.4. Results for Research proposition 1: Employees in Inclusive work environments have a higher sense of belonging and their uniqueness is accepted and valued.**

Research proposition 1 deals with an inclusive climate in which individual differences are accepted. In addition, the employees who are in the minority have the feelings of belonging and experiencing that their uniqueness is accepted and celebrated.

Three themes were constructed from this research proposition and these are: Diversity in the South African context, inclusive workplace & accepting environments, belongingness and uniqueness.

##### **5.4.1 Diversity in the South African context**

Under this theme, the presence of diversity as observed by the research participants and the description thereof. Whilst, the focus of the study is on uncovering the factors that contribute to inclusion, it is necessary to test for diversity as a point of departure.

These are the findings:

- Diversity in the workplace

The study revealed that all of the research participants felt that whilst there were black female managers in middle and senior management level in the respective banks, there was room for improvement. All of the research participants responded that whilst their organisations were diverse, there was a lot more that needed to be done to ensure that in all levels of employment there was sufficient representation of all the demographics of South Africa. The understanding of the participants' understanding of diversity was tested with the research question: How would you describe diversity in your workplace? From the responses of the research participants, the researcher could gauge how well the meaning of diversity is understood in general, by the participants.

Table 1 below shows the responses of the research participants, particularly on the description and observation of diversity in the workplace.



<i>Research Participant</i>	<i>Description of diversity</i>	<i>Research Participant</i>	<i>Observations of diversity</i>
<i>Research Participant 4</i>	<i>Diversity is the ability to express an opinion, diversity of gender, colour and a true representation of the demographics in South Africa.</i>	<i>Research Participant 3</i>	<i>Diversity exists more in junior than senior level. The higher you go, the less you will find senior black women and men.</i>
<i>Research Participant 7</i>	<i>Diversity as comprising of the normal construct of diversity, i.e. ages, gender, race and sexual orientation. There is also the diversity in respect of vocation, skill set and the ability to professionalise the banking environment a lot quicker.</i>	<i>Research Participant 8</i>	<i>There is a Lack of diversity at senior level in the organisation. This is a concern and it is being addressed by the senior leadership and the aim is to retain black females.</i>
<i>Research Participant 11</i>	<i>It depends on what you are looking at. If you look at Diversity from a South African perspective, you cannot divorce diversity from an EEA and BBBEE angle. Further when one considers the economically active population group, 75 % African, 10% white , 10% Coloured and 3% Indian. So diversity must mirror this. It depends on how you look at diversity.</i>	<i>Research Participant 9</i>	<i>you would find mostly junior and middle management occupied by mainly black people(mainly female). Moving up in the organisation, you then start to see black men, but at the top it is mainly white men. The trophy positions normally given to white females.</i>

It was also found that the participants observed that in ensuring that organisations are diverse, that this exercise was a compliance tick-box approach and that there was not enough emphasis placed on ensuring that the black professionals who are hired by the banks are suitably qualified and supported to ensure that they succeeded in their roles. One of the participants stated the following:

*“Nobody wants to change. So far legal compliance has been the only motivator for diversity and it is not about anything else. Unless, it is included in the scorecards and KPI it is not done for real change”.*

Another participant in the research stated the following:

*"The leadership needs to forgets about the numbers, but focus on changing the environment"*

The findings reveal that there is a need to ensure that black female managers are supported in terms of mentoring to ensure that they succeed in their roles. This is supported by the fact that most almost all the participants indicated that at junior and middle management level, there were enough black females and black people in general and that in senior positions, the number of black female senior leaders was very small.

The general feeling amongst the participants was that in senior and executive positions, they were dominated by white males, who at the best of times created the impression that it is still a “boys-club”. This leads to the view that whilst the policies of the organisations may seek to create work environments which not only comply with EEA, but sought to ensure that these work environments are accepting of everyone, the issue remains with the implementation of the EEA and the organisational policies that are in place.

The fact that one of the organisations, in recent years had a total of six top executives resigning and ultimately left the organisation, is perhaps an indication that implementation of EEA and diversity and inclusion efforts remains a challenge in the South African Banking sector.

The study further found that concept of diversity was understood by the research participants as extending to sexual orientation, disability, diversity of thought, skills and vocation and that the workplace needed to be accepting of all these different aspects of humanity.

Some of the participants indicated that they were aware of employees who identified as being homosexuals, but had not disclosed this to their co-workers as they feared rejection and possibly even discrimination on this ground.

Finally, under this theme, the study sought to understand the value placed on diversity and inclusion efforts in the organisation as observed by the research participants. In this regard, the study found that most the research participants felt that their respective organisations placed significant value on diversity and inclusion efforts. These views were supported by the statements made by CEOs in formal communication to the entire organisations and the actions that had been taken, to prove that diversity and inclusion is an important organisational goal. However, all the research participants indicated that there was more work that still needed to be carried out to achieve higher levels of diversity. One research participants remarked that:

*"There is a lot of education that must go to the leadership".*

This statement implies that if leaders in an organisation understand the imperatives of diversity and are not seemingly doing it as a compliance tick-box exercise or increase the brand values of their organisation, a lot more could be achieved. In support of this, one research participant remarked as follows, in a follow up question: What have you observed from leaders that they are taking transformation seriously?

*The response: "They take it seriously to the extent that it looks good for them. They don't drive transformation from a purely altruistic perspective. They do it from a "tick-box" approach".*

Table 2 below shows the remarks made by the research participants in responding to this question:

<i>Research Participant</i>	<i>What value is placed on diversity and inclusion efforts in the workplace</i>
<i>Research Participant 2</i>	<i>I think there is value is placed.</i>
<i>Research Participant 3</i>	<i>The value is aligned to the need to comply with EEA, but not looking at creating value for the company. We are measuring up to government, but not how this benefits the company. Banks in South Africa primarily service black people. Some bank executive tend to look at other western countries for examples of excellence. Companies are not appreciating the value that diversity can bring.</i>
<i>Research Participant 10</i>	<i>The leadership puts importance on diversity and inclusion. I was at a meeting where it was said that hiring practice/decision must demonstrate diversity and commitment to EE factors.</i>

#### **5.4.2 Inclusive workplace and accepting environments**

In an inclusive workplace employees feel included and are an integral part of the organisation's everyday life. In addition, inclusive work environments are typically accepting of everyone and embrace the differences. To this extent, inclusion is indicated by the extent to which individual employees are accepted for their uniqueness and they feel like they belong. In responding to the question: describing the climate of inclusion, one of the participants stated:

*“It depends. The Organisation has no policy for discrimination, but the application of the policy is quite problematic. There is a disconnect when what the CEO of the bank says and what the junior leadership does. There are differences in implementation and this what hinders the success of diversity and inclusion efforts”.*

Some of the research participants related their experiences of not feeling included due to the fact that the environment is not accepting of black, assertive professional women and that in order to feel included, they have to downplay their uniqueness.

In some instances, the research participants when asked to describe the climate of inclusion in the workplace, indicated that inclusion is dependent on the individual and that you have to force your way in, thereby ensuring that you are included. The other research participants alluded to the fact that as the South African banking environment is still largely white and male dominated, inclusion for black females was dependent on the confidence levels of these women.

In responding to a prompting question on how in the organisation that she works she is made to feel included, the research participant responded as follows:

*“I honestly and how I view things is umm, if you don’t stand up, for starters if you don’t know what you want, it is not gonna, you gonna feel a sense of not being included. I Look at it from a reflection of what do I want in this organisation and what do I want. But I find that in most cases, you need to step up and raise your hand for you to be given opportunities and for you to be included in most decisions that are being made. I find that if you don’t say, there is always this assumption that maybe she is not ready or may be, when they look at it, they say this role is not for females. I think from my own, you need to stand up as a woman and for what you want and raise your hand”.*

However, as can be anticipated, there are certain barriers to achieving inclusion. The study also sought to understand what are the barriers, which in the opinions of the research participants, to achieving inclusion in the workplace. The findings pointed to the lack of roles models for black managers, being other black senior leaders and this represented the need for leaders which these black managers or aspiring managers could look up to.

Another finding was the fact that the recruitment and subsequent practices of socialising new employees needed to change to ensure that job seekers from diverse background have an equal opportunity to job opportunities. Another barrier, which at least three (3) research participants highlighted was the language barrier. One of the research participants related an incident where she had identified a suitable candidate for a vacancy in her department, but one of the colleagues was opposed to this appointment. The reason provided was *“that the co-worker did not like how the candidate sounded, as he did not go to the best private school”*.

These were the findings:

Table 3 below shows the remarks made by the research participants on the Description of an inclusive workplace and barriers to establishing an inclusive work climate.

Research participants	Description of inclusion	Research Participant	Barriers to inclusion
Research Participant 2	Inclusion is in the form of being included, being part of something. In a team or an organisation, as a black person, what are you included in	Research Participant 2	Perception about the black person in the workplace us the main barrier. Perception is that black people do not know anything and therefore they need to always follow and learn from others.
Research Participant 5	Inclusion depends on individual interaction's ability and perspective	Research Participant 5	Black people are not able to identify in the workplace and this requires corporate to be purposeful.
Research Participant 8	Inclusion is very subjective and depends, on the one person to the next.	Research Participant 11	Bias- both conscious and unconscious. Some bias people are aware of and some are not aware of these. Example: white people being used to black as domestic workers. Black women can't win with black and white men. With black men, there is the culture of patriarchy. The trust deficit with black people and especially with black women and organisations cannot trust black people with key roles.

Finally, the research participants were asked to identify initiatives, which will most likely result in an inclusive climate in the workplace. Almost all of the participants indicate that their organisation had policies and frameworks in place, which sought to ensure that the workplace practices are fair and eliminate unfair discrimination. The study found that the organisations where the participants worked had diversity and inclusion efforts that had been implemented and that some of the organisations were seeking to make significant changes to those existing programmes. There was constant communication from the senior leadership on the issues of diversity and these leaders have been heard in saying that diversity and inclusion for all demographics is valued in the organisation.

However, the research participants seemed to all agree that there was much more that could be done to ensure an increased diversity in the organisation, particularly at senior executive levels of the organisation. With regard to the scarcity of black female leaders at senior leadership roles in the banking sector, the study found that the absence of black female leaders resulted in the lack of role models that many young black females aspiring to be leaders and managers could identify with.

The main change that is needed, as the study found was that the culture needed to change to accommodate black women and that in order to get started, the organisations needed to deal with both conscious and unconscious bias that existed. According to one of the research participants the conscious bias was the most difficult to deal with and the following remarks were made:

*“There is a need to deal with conscious and unconscious bias by raising awareness. Conscious is difficult to deal with. An example: we did an analysis of performance appraisal and they found that black people mainly received ratings of 3 and this was regardless of whether the manager were black and white”.*

Table 4 below shows some of the remarks made by the participants on the questions of which initiatives will be likely to results in an inclusive environment.

Table 4: Initiatives that may result in an inclusive environment:

Research Participant	Initiatives likely to result in an Inclusive Workplace
Research Participant 3	Corporate should ask black people what needs to happen. The initiatives have to be driven by people who understand what it is to be black. Sustainability of transformation is important. Leaders must learn to lesson to the people.
Research Participant 8	These initiatives must be deliberate to include others and the people need to be open-minded
Research Participant 12	Make men uncomfortable with the status quo.

### 5.4.3 Belonging and Uniqueness

With this theme, the objective was to test whether black female managers have a sense that they belonged in the environments they are employed in and further that their unique identity is accepted. The findings reveal that in general, black female employees do not feel that they belong in their respective workplaces and that there is an expectation that they must downplay their uniqueness in order to fit in.

The study found that of the research participants who did not downplay their uniqueness, their confidence level had increased and they were of the view that if they are expected, to downplay their uniqueness, they would be losing their authenticity.

In one instance, a research participant indicated that she had a feeling of belonging in her work environment and with her team because the team’s diverse nature and the leadership style displayed by the department head, enabled her to identify with the team and the workplace.

Table 5 below shows the remarks made by the research participants in responding to this question:

Research Participant	Belonging	Research Participant	Uniqueness
Research Participant 3	But I have never felt like I belongs. A churn of black people us high in the banks, since they never feel like they are included.	Research Participant 3	Yes, there is an expectation to downplay your strength and uniqueness. Black women have to downplay their strength and it comes in variation, there is quite strength, medium strength.
Research Participant 2	I am in individual and I am comfortable with the culture that was already there.I resonate with the culture that was already there and I am jut growing in it .	Research Participant 5	Yeah, if you come across as being over confident, it is frowned upon. It suggest that you need a quite confident. Reducing yourself to greatness
		Research Participant 8	The emphasis is uniqueness and authenticity. If these are missing, the person is not being themselves and you will not be your best. This has been her own personal experiences. She experienced challenges when she was not being authentic. The more authentic you are the more experiences you have and the more you get to progress in the organisation.

**5.5 Results for Research Proposition 2: Inclusion is indicated by the employee’s access to information, the decision-making influences and the job security that an employee enjoys.**

Research proposition 2 deals with the indications that are in place, which demonstrate that employees have a feeling of inclusion. These indications are reflected in the relationships that the employees from diverse backgrounds have or enjoy with each other, the access to information which allows them to make decisions, the feelings that employees have regarding how their work contributed to the organisational goals as well as any intentions to leave the current employer, due to job security being regarded as not be strong enough.

With this proposition, the aim of the study was to establish whether because of diversity black female managers, felt like they belonged. Within the context of diversity efforts in South Africa, this proposition was necessary to be tested. The historical lenses of discrimination on the basis of race and gender necessitated this focus on the research.

The study found that the some of the research participants had access to information in the workplace and that within their roles, they had been empowered to make decisions. This was helped by the actions that the immediate manager took to ensure that all the other co-workers knew that the black female manager’s contribution and opinions mattered. The study found that the results of inclusion being indicated by access to information and decision-making influence, was due to the efforts on the part of the black female leaders.

The leaders had made efforts to ensure that they are included and in some cases, included themselves in the work initiatives.

### 5.5.1 Relationships across employees from diverse backgrounds.

In this instance, the study found the research participants indicated that relationships are important in the workplace. The value of work relationships is seen in the support that employees give each other. In addition, research participants indicated that relationships with co-workers are formed via social engagements and further that they acknowledged the need to attend these social gatherings.

Given that the sample pulled comprised mainly of black female managers, those research participants who were in management roles indicated that sometime socialising with White, and Indian peers, seemed to result in negative backlash from some of the junior and non-managerial black employees. This indicated the need to be mindful and aware of the unintended consequences for black female managers when they decide to build relationships across the racial line in the workplace.

Table 6 below shows the findings under this theme:

Research Participant	Relationships
Research Participant 1	I realise that I also need to reach out to people. We also have to realise that life is not only about us, yes there are challenges, but to get to a point where we are diverse enough, we also have to reach out as black females. We need to learn about other people. We don't have to have to do what they are saying, but at least get to know them better. Having to reach out and understand the people that I work with. Take the chance to get to know people that really helps.
Research Participant 4	The relationships are very important and act as a communication tool.
Research Participant 8	Easy for those who are not trying to be who they are not. If you comfortable in your own skin, you are able to make friends across the racial lines. If you are constantly looking for likeness, it will be difficult. Not viewing others as competition.

### 5.5.2 Meaningful contribution to the organisation's goals

Under this sub-theme, the main objective is to determine whether black female employees see the value that their work and input is contributing towards the organisational goals. It is anticipated that when employees feel included, they tend to feel that they are valued and they contribute meaningfully to the organisation's goals.

The study found that inclusion can be measured by how much an employee views that their work is contributing to the overall success of the organisation. To this extend, the black female managers and aspiring managers indicated that they measure inclusion by the sense that they



get from the immediate managers and co-workers that they play an important role in achieving the organisation’s goal.

However, one research participants shared during the semi-structured interview that there was trust deficit towards black employees in general and the implication of this was that the black female managers might be made to feel that their work is not contributing meaningfully towards the organisation’s goals. This was her remark in this regard:

*“Trust deficit when it comes to black people, that is trusting them with work. The trust deficit with black people and especially with black women and organisations cannot trust black people with key roles”.*

To add to this, another research participant shared her views on what it means that you are contributing meaningfully to the organisation’s goals:

*“It is the extent to which you are able to influence your job and workplace”.*

Table 7 below, shows the findings from the study pertaining to the extent to which black female managers felt that their work is contributing meaningfully:

	Meaningful contribution to the organisation’s goals
Research Participant 1	You go to meetings and you are the only black females in a meeting with white males. That thing of raising a point and they just ignore, yet when someone says something similar, and you think but I just said that.
Research Participant 6	As professional are you included in the right conversations and do you have access to certain information.
Research Participant 10	Because of the amount of work that I do and how it fits into the strategic direction of the business, I do think that I contribute. Inclusion is measured by the extent to which I understand my role to be contributing to the bigger picture. I may not always be included in the decision-making, but I can see how my work contributes to the decision-making.

In conclusion, the study found that the immediate manager can play a role in ensuring that black female managers are trusted by their co-workers. In this regard, one research participant stated that her manager ensures that her peers and co-workers refers meaningful work to her for resolution. The result of this, is that the black female manager feels trusted by her manager to make the right decisions.

### 5.5.3 Intentions to leave current employer

In an environment where an employee does not feel like he or she belongs, does not feel like part of the organisation, the intention to leave is far higher than when an employee is engaged and sees career growth with the current employer. Inclusion may be measured by the extent to which an employee has no intention to seek employment elsewhere.

This study found that the black female managers' intentions of leaving the current organisation found their reasons in the lack of inclusion that these employees had experienced. The study found that the research participants indicated that there was a high number of black employees and black female managers in the banking sector. As one research participant indicated:

*“Women feel the need to step in all the time, males don't have that. Meetings are being scheduled for early in the morning or late afternoon. Overtime, you start to assess what is important you and decide that family is important and you decide to step away to find something else”.*

Another research participant had this to say on this same issue:

*“But if you only just leave those one to keep on leading, then what are you doing about the fresh blood that you have. That will mean you and I are going to get out and go and formulate our Fintech Company, because I understand how the world is going and how is going to include and where I want it to go”.*

Table 8 shows the findings of the sub-theme: Intentions to leave current employer:

Research Participant	Desire to leave current employer
Research Participant 3	A churn of black people is high in the banks, since they never feel like they are included.
Research Participant 4	They are leaving because of being unhappy at work. There is a high churn of black people in the organisation.
Research Participant 15	If you do not retain your people, you do not look after them and upskill them, motivate, groom them to become your next leaders, they will just leave for the next best thing.

The findings reveal that lack of inclusion leads to increased intentions to leave the current employer and find employment elsewhere.

## **5.6 Results for Research Proposition 3: As black female leaders are often in the minority and therefore regarded as tokens, they are subjected to higher performance pressures which require that they overachieve.**

Considering the history of South Africa, black female managers constitute the minority in the private sector and this despite the fact that black people in South Africa are the majority from a total population stand point. The aim of including this research proposition in the study was to determine whether the theory of critical mass can explain the experiences of black female managers in the South African banking sector.

The following themes were identified:

- Being regarded as a token by fellow co-workers
- The presence of dominant culture in environments where tokens are working.
- Tokens are expected to conform
- Tokens are expected to work harder to prove their competency

In the sections below, the findings of the above-mentioned themes are revealed.

### **5.6.1. Being regarded as a token by fellow co-workers**

Under this theme, the research participants were asked whether they had ever experienced that they were regarded as tokens. The study found that most of the research participants had experienced being viewed by their mainly, white colleagues as tokens.

Although some of the responses that were received when the question was posed indicated that the black female managers had come to understand and appreciate their contribution to the workplace and that they were not concerned with others viewing them as token, they acknowledge that there was a negative perception held about them.

When posing the same question, to participants who held senior position, the following responses were given:

*“No, I am too self-assured as a person and that if they ever did, they quickly realized how self-assured I am is. I do not doubt myself at all and hence perhaps others do not doubt me”.*

Another response given was this:

*“First engagement they may think that you are token. Second time around, they know better than to think that I am a token”.*

Table 9 shows the results of this theme:

Research Participant	Being regarded as a token
Research Participant 1	There are instances when I feel that others may think that I'm a token. To be honest, I have taken the decision that this will not bother me.
Research Participant 15	Right now, I am. Look its a, we have a mixed ummm, Blacks, White, Indians, it's very diverse and the higher you go, the lesser the diversity. So similarly, in my kind of role, I am the only black female. At the level, that I am at, then you have Indians and then have two or three black females. I am the only black female at the operational level.

### 5.6.2 The presence of dominant culture in the environments where tokens are working

In work climate where you find tokens, by its very nature, there is always the group that is large enough to form the culture for the organization. The intention was to establish if black females being the tokens in these environment, had the sense that there is a dominant culture.

The findings reveal that in general the bank sector has a culture, which for the most part is not welcoming to black female managers. This culture is described in general terms, such as the culture is white and male dominated. One of the research participant, went as far as to describe the culture as:

*"I think in general that corporate is westernized. There is a lot of things that corporate does not accept from black females, because you are expected to be in certain way and if you don't, people get annoyed with you. This is because that it is very westernized. I don't agree with this it. I don't agree how you are in African context, we celebrate westernized corporates. For me we should have corporate that are more willing to create inclusive culture through organizational culture and through action. I am very strong black African in very white culture and I struggle with it".*

It was interesting to note that there is some shift in this area as some of the participants indicated that they are witnessing a change because of the presence of black people in the banking work environment. Here is an example:

*The bank had a certain culture and that is changing. There were not many professionals in the business. This informed by the extent to which the environment is being professionalized.*

In responding to this question some of the participants revealed that given the increasing number of black people hired into their organization, the culture was changing, albeit at a slow pace. This change in dominant culture, could be an indication that with increased diversity and inclusion, the ability of dominant cultures to be established and sustained over a period of time, will be under threat.

Table 9 highlights some of the responses obtained from the research participants in responding to this question:

Research participant	The presence of dominant culture in the environment token are working
Research Participant 3	Dominant culture is still white male
Research Participant 11	There is a dominant culture.it is not written but you can feel it. It is also a subjective element. If you want to figure out the culture, you need to observe who is progressing in the workplace. There is also the saying that there is no elephant in the room, but when you say things that people do not like you will likely be punished and you will not progress in your career.

### 5.6.3 Tokens are expected to conform

In an environment where tokens are working, there is an expectation that they must downplay their true identity or characteristics so that they can be accepted by the dominant groups. In the context of this study, the objective with this theme was to determine whether the theory is confirmed that black female managers do indeed need to conform to the dominant culture in the organization.

The responses indicate that in general there is an expectation that black female managers must conform. However, some of the respondent indicated that they have taken the view that they will not conform and that they will retain their unique identify. In one response, a participant indicated that conforming to the dominant culture is to be expected as organizations have rules and standards and by accepting employment offer from an institution, conforming is to be expected. This is what she had to say:

*“When you choose an entity, you have already bought it and this is in the positive, you choose to conform by default. By just natural dispersion people go where they want to go”.*

Another research participants stated that conforming must be done with an understanding as to why you will need to conform. This what she had to say:

*“Yes and No. You need to influence. Conforming may be necessary if you want to gain entry. One has to conform with an end goal. Conform to a certain extent, where you are able to get to know their psyche”.*

Table 10 below highlights some of the responses from the participants when asked about the expectation to conform in the workplace:

Research Participant	Tokens are expected to conform
Research participant 3	I do very little conformation. I am made to feel like I am included if I conform. By conforming, I means I don't challenge or I don't ask difficult questions.
REsearch participant 11	Yes, unfortunately and the system does not take kindly to assertive black people. An example of the research participant's friend who spoke English with a fancy accent and was able to blend in with the white people and she could progress in her career.
Research participant 12	Yes, definitely. My manager told me that I may need to change my approach when dealing with certain individuals in the workplace.

#### 5.6.4 Tokens are expected to work harder to prove their competency

Due to the increased visibility of tokens within dominant groups, tokens are subjected to increased performance measure. This is because fact tokens need to prove that they are qualified and competent to hold their roles. In this study, the objective was also to test whether the theory holds true that in the South African context, wherein the EEA mandates that individuals from designated groups be considered for employment taking into the account their qualification and experience, that black female managers are still held to higher standards of performance than their white counterparts in the workplace.

The findings reveal that black females see the need to worker harder than their white counterpart. In one instance, the research participant indicated that the hard work that she puts in, comes from the desire to overachieve. This what she had to say:

*"The pressure to work hard also comes from within as I have the desire to prove myself".*

Table 11 below shows the responses from the research participants when asked whether black female managers must work harder.

Research Participant	Tokens are expected to work harder to prove their competency
Research Participant 3	Yes, every day I has to work much harder and has to know more. Working harder is a cross that black female bears.
Research Participant 6	Generally, women and black people have to work harder to get the respect they deserve.
Research Participant 15	Yes, you have to work 10 times harder and it goes back to lack of support

### **5.7 Result for Research Proposition 4: Display of dominance and sense of high self-esteem by black female leaders is at odds with the expectation of women as according to the social role theory.**

Society plays an important part concerning the role of women in life and it is no different in the workplace. The aim for including this proposition in the study was to determine whether it is indeed true that women are expected to hold certain roles in the workplace.

In so doing, two themes were identified and these were:

- Behaviour of dominance displayed by women is not accepted;
- Women are not regarded as natural leaders and as result they are deemed suitable for certain roles and not suitable for certain roles.

In the sections below, the findings of the above-mentioned themes are revealed.

#### **5.7.1 Behaviour of dominance displayed by women is not accepted**

According to theory, women are to display communal characteristics that are associated with the nurturing nature of women, in their natural roles as mothers. The question that was posed to the research participants was whether it is frowned up when women engage in self-promoting behaviour or they are being aggressive.

The findings in this study reveal that the workplace is not accepting of women when they are being assertive and that in most cases, this behaviour is labelled as being aggressive.

Table 12 below, shows the responses received from the research participant in response to the question as posed.

Research Participant	Behaviour of dominance displayed by women is not accepted
Research participant 9	Yes. The response is who do you think you are and why must you do that?
Research participant 10	I have observed that when women are assertive they are viewed as being aggressive. There is also the perception that for you to fit in the “boys club” the females are more aggressive. This is more at the Exco level where females must display the aggressive tendencies to fit in.
Research participant 11	It is frowned upon and it is not accepted. There is an expectation that women must be humble. Even other black women do not seem to accept women who are very confident.

### 5.7.2 Women are not regarded as natural leaders and as result they are deemed suitable for certain roles

Social Role Theory would suggest that women are not leaders and that men have the qualities of leaders, by being male and as such in the corporate business environment, women are restricted to certain roles. In this regard to test that the theory holds true, it was deemed necessary to establish the attitudes and experiences of black female managers pertaining to whether women are regarded as competent leaders.

The findings reveal that there is a perception that women do not make excellent leaders and because of this, they are confined to occupying supporting roles such Human Resources, Risk and Compliance, Marketing. Two of the participant expressed their views that these issues start at childhood when young boys and girls are taught certain things about the other gender, which means that this is indeed a societal construct. Here is what one participant shared:

*“Chores done by women, gives the impression that women are never leaders, but to be in support roles. Boys are given the platform to lead others and girls are raised to think that they must always take instructions”.*

The participants expressed their views that women are restricted to these roles because of the belief that there is no room to make mistakes, as these roles are rules-based. Here is an example of what one research participant, shared during the interview:

*“Yes, to be in roles that you can’t mess it up too much. Example: Client Experience. Roles with rules and boundaries”.*

Another research participant shared the following:

*“Yes, women are in HR, Marketing, Risk and Compliance. They are not in roles which make money for the organisation”.*



Table 13 shows the responses from the research participant on this theme:

Research Participant	Women are not regarded as natural leaders	Research Participant	Women are restricted deemed suitable for certain roles
Research Participant 1	The structure of the family and how we group in SA is that the boy child is treated very differently from girls. Growing up I was playing with dolls while the boy children would be playing with cars, and they are more confident. You get raised with boys can't do that and only girls can do. Those kind of things end up contributing to instance where you grow with that kind of mentality that this is for boys and that is for females.	Research Participant 1	Also, looking at the types of roles that they have, most females are the support roles or in enabling roles. So, support roles I am talking about, you find a lot of women in Finance, Audit, and there is less women in the cash generating businesses.
Research Participant 2	Chores done by women, gives the impression that women are never leaders, but to be in support roles. Boys are given the platform to lead others and girls are raised to think that	Research Participant 5	Yes, I think so. If you think about it Marketing, HR and the role that profits and loss position, they are mainly filled by men. In these roles, there are fewer

## 5.8 Conclusion

Results of the research seemingly support the three academic theories that were tested in this study. The interview questions were accurate in being able to draw the responses from the research participants and also to highlight the experiences of black female managers and black females in general in the banking sector. In chapter 6, the research propositions, themes and the findings are compared to the literature.

## **CHAPTER 6: RESULTS DISCUSSION**

### **6.1. Introduction**

In this chapter, the findings from chapter 5 are discussed comprehensively and a relationship is drawn between the insights gained from the data collected and the literature review in chapter 2. As previously mentioned in chapter 4, the data was collected via the semi-structured interviews data collection method across black female managers and those aspiring to management positions.

Whilst existing literature explains in details the concepts of diversity and inclusion in the workplace, there is a gap in terms of how the experiences of black female managers in the South African Banking environment are experiencing diversity and by extension, inclusion. It was also necessary that in the context of discussing diversity and inclusion in the South Africa, we consider how the theories of Critical Mass and Social Role interact to shed light on the experiences of black female managers and black females at large in the workplace.

### **6.2. Discussion Results for Research proposition 1: Employees in Inclusive work environments have a higher sense of belonging and their uniqueness is accepted and valued.**

The main aim with this research proposition was to test if in fact black female employees sense and experience inclusion within a diverse workplace. In order to determine this, it was necessary to first establish how diversity is observed by the sample population. Thereafter, the next determination was to test for the understanding of inclusion and whether the data supports the theory.

#### **6.2.1. Analysis of research proposition 1**

Diversity is the precursor for inclusion. An inclusive workplace is also a diverse workplace. Per Winters (2014) diversity and inclusion are interconnected concepts and further stating that many organisations have put efforts into diversity efforts and much less on creating the climate of inclusion. In the South African context, diversity is examined from the representation of South Africa's demographics in the workplace.

Following from this point, the presence of inclusion is then examined and the examination follows the premise that inclusion is determined by the sense of belonging and having their uniqueness accepted. The existing literature framework posits that employees in inclusive environments have a higher sense of belonging and their uniqueness is accepted and valued. Consequently, in order to have a successful diverse workplace, a key ingredient is inclusion and more importantly, is that a diverse and inclusive workplace, acknowledges the differences and accepts them. In addition, a diverse and inclusive environment does not seek to blend the different identities into one, that is assimilate everyone, but rather that individuals are to

be authentic in the workplace. Therefore, a simple measure of a truly diverse workplace is that all employees regardless of the race, language spoken, gender and other differentiating characteristics, feel that they are accepted and therefore they belong in the environment.

A critical feature of this research proposition is that belonging and acceptance of a person's uniqueness must both be present. It is not belonging or acceptance of uniqueness. For example, it is possible that an environment might not accept an individual's uniqueness but may seek to ensure that they belong. Therefore, indicators of inclusion, which as per literature are: belonging and acceptance of uniqueness can be determined from the perspective of the employee, but the organisations and its leaders are required to create this environment. It is in this context that the unit of analysis is black female managers and those aspiring to management positions.

The opposite of inclusion is exclusion and it could be a simple matter of being excluded from certain social networks, being made to feel that your exclusion is due to being different from others. Therefore, from an employee's point of view exclusion is once again a function of perception and it is experienced on a continuing basis by the employee.

### **6.2.2. Summary of Literature review**

The literature reviewed as it pertains to theory of Diversity and Inclusion suggests that diversity is the real and perceived differences among people based on age, sexual orientation etc. (Dobbs, 1996). Seemingly in support of the view expressed by Dobbs (1996), Thomas and Ely (1996) have stated that diversity should be understood as the different perspectives and approaches which different individuals bring into a team or work environment because of coming from diverse backgrounds. However, it was observed by Winters (2014) and Mor Barak (2015), that diversity had not resulted in inclusion for the minorities or women in the workplace.

Further, that as diversity resulted from the need to comply with legislative requirements, the focus from organisations was primarily on ensuring representation of all the diverse groups in the workplace. In this sense, despite the presence of diverse groups in the organisation, employees in the diverse groups still faced exclusion from the inner circles of influence, thus preventing full participation and ability to benefit as a contributing member of the organisation (Mor Barak, 2015). Winters (2014), stated that diversity and inclusion are interrelated concepts.

Accordingly, inclusion would be focused on fostering the feeling of belonging in the workplace and that one is accepted by the co-workers, regardless of the unique characteristics of the employees from different background. In this regard, Shore, et al (2011) in their Inclusion Framework, identified belonging and uniqueness as key attributes.

To add further, the Inclusion Framework realises that in attempting to accommodate diverse employees in the workplace, some of the practices may have the effect of promoting assimilation rather than inclusion. Mor Barak (2015) noted that in environments with low inclusion levels, employees from diverse backgrounds were expected to conform to the organisation's dominant cultures and that they are typically not accepted for their uniqueness.

Therefore, to build and foster the culture of inclusion in the workplace, key components as identified by Pelled, Ledford and Morhman (1999) are decision-making influence, access to sensitive work information and job security. Perhaps of significance from the work of Pelled et al. (1999) is the identification of friendships amongst employees in facilitating the inclusion. This premised on the fact that when an employee has good relationships with co-workers, easy access to sensitive information is made possible.

Shore, Cleveland and Sanchez (2018) agree with Pelled et al. (1999) that inclusionary work practices result in employees being able to make decisions on matters which affect them and also have access to resources.

Looking at the concept of diversity with a South African specific lens, we draw parallels between the earlier views expressed on diversity and find that in the South African case, diversity is perceived to relate to the differences in race, gender, sexual orientation, religious beliefs and physical abilities. To this end the South African legislation encourages designated employers to build diverse workforces. To provide aid in the diversity workforce creation in the South Africa, the legislator passes into law an Act (EEA) which seemingly seeks to provide framework and guidance to the designated employers regarding the implementation of EEA.

An important feature of the EEA is that it does not advocate for the employment of the designate individuals without the appropriate qualifications and skills. This was to have a positive impact on the business as it ensured that employers could still employ suitably qualified individuals from the designated groups without compromising on quality of business services. However, despite these provisions, it was observed that organisations were meeting with challenges in implementing the provisions of EEA and thus failing in their efforts to achieve diverse workforces which represented the demographics of South Africa (Mathur-Helm (2006), Selby & Sutherland (2006), Booyesen (2007)).

Roman and Mason (2015) observed in their study that organisations continued to face challenges pertaining to the implementation of EEA and notably that there were barriers to achieving employment equity in the workplace. It is important to note that the study by Roman and Mason (2015) was conducted six years after the study by Booyesen (2007) and that it corroborated the findings by Booyesen (2007). Accordingly, these provide indication that the implementation of EEA and thus the creation of diverse workforce in South African organisations continues to be a challenge.

Furthermore, South African-specific literature on Diversity, Daya (2014) has stated diversity in South Africa has been a direct result of the need to comply with the EEA and therefore diversity has so far been driven from target-focused goals and not so much to drive inclusion alongside with it. It was probably in this context that Hofmeyer and Mzobe (2012) conducted a study into the reasons why women were not progressing into senior leadership position in the corporate sector.

Hofmeyer and Mzobe (2012) reported their findings, which highlighted the social stereotypes and perceptions as apparent barriers for women in progressing to senior leadership in the workplace. The study and the findings by Hofmeyer and Mzobe (2012), appears to have in line with the earlier studies and findings of Mathur-Helm (2005) and Booysen (2007).

Finally, a study by Nzukuma and Bussin (2011) found that black managers appeared to change employment primarily motivated by financial gains and not the fact that the work environment was not inclusive and therefore accepting of black employees.

However, the study and their findings by Ndzwayiba, Ukpere and Steyn (2018) did not lend support to the Nzukuma and Bussin (2011) study and that South African corporates needed to invest considerable time and resources to understand the motivations behind the high turnover of black professionals.

### **6.2.3. Interpretation of findings for research proposition 1**

The findings for research proposition 1 indicate that the South African Banking Sector deemed compliance to the EEA as of paramount importance and therefore placed value on diversity. However, from the perspective of the black female managers, this was driven by the need to meet the regulatory requirements. It would also appear that the Banking Sector had succeeded in establishing organisational policies and frameworks, that ensured that all employees are treated with fairness, however, these have not been successful in moving the organisations from being compliance focused to creating truly diverse workforce. Accordingly, it can be argued that the presence of minority-friendly and diversity friendly policies are not sufficient to create the climate of inclusion. To this end, black female managers do not feel that they belong and that their uniqueness is accepted. Below are is a statement made by the research participants in this regard:

*“But I have never felt like I belong. A churn of black people us high in the banks, since they never feel like they are included”.*

This could be attributed to a misaligned approach in implementing organizational policies, suggesting that whilst senior leadership in organisations are committed to the compliance of EEA and therefore diversity, the message may fail to reach all level of management and the entire workforce. The consequences of the misaligned approach, are ultimately that a diverse and inclusive work environment is not realised. To support this, the findings indicate that whilst

in the junior and middle management layer of employment there are many black female managers, this number reduces in senior management levels.

The research revealed that there are barriers to achieving inclusion in the workplace. The barriers as per the research findings are the lack of mentors, lack of support provided to black female managers and those aspiring to management positions to enable them to reach those levels, the lack of both formal and informal networks, the recruitment and hiring practices. In a few instances, the inability of many black female employees to speak eloquent English was mentioned as a barrier. Below are some of the statements made by the research participants when asked to share their views on the barriers to inclusion:

*"We don't have a lot of black females that confirm that we are competent. We don't have sounding board, no role models".*

*"Disability is also a barrier" "HR is also a barrier through the recruitment companies".*

*"Ability to speak English in a certain way for black people can sometimes be a barrier. However, for Afrikaans speaking, their inability to speak English well is not an issue"*

Therefore, the barriers identified by the research participants are indicative of both conscious and unconscious bias that is prevalent in the workplace.

For a start, designated employers as defined in EEA are required to take steps to eliminate unfair discrimination in the workplace and for most designated employers, the practices of eliminating and prohibiting unfair discrimination has been reduced in writing in the organizational policies. Therefore, from an evidence perspective, employers subject to EEA have put measures in place to eliminate unfair discrimination.

However, it is difficult, if not impossible to eliminate bias reflected in attitudes. Some of the barriers that have been identified, such as exclusion from social networks will fall into the unconscious bias category and are likely the most difficult to identify and eliminate. This would suggest that in order to deal effectively with those biases, the organisation will need to engage in an awareness drive on the issues of conscious and unconscious bias and the impact on this on the employees against whom it is directed.

Another barrier to inclusion have been identified as lack of mentors in the workplace for black female managers.

*"We don't have a lot of black females that confirm that we are competent. We don't have sounding board, no role models".*

In this regard, an argument may be advanced that the absence of mentors to the black female managers may possibly be attributed to the fact that at senior management level, there are few black male or female managers. Therefore, there pool for potential mentors to black

managers is not large enough, that is supply is limited in relation to the demand.

An interesting insight was gained from the research and this was the confidence levels of the black female managers. This finding suggests that despite the structural barriers that may exist, when a black woman is confident in her abilities, the lack of trust displayed by others against her will not have any effect on her and how she shows up in the workplace.

As explained by theory, the workplace, which is not fully transformed and therefore not representative of the demographics, will not be inclusive. In this regard, the findings indicate that black female managers are expected to conform to the dominant culture in the workplace. The findings also reveal that the dominant culture is conducive to mainly white men and to some extent Indian people. Below is a statement made by one of the research participants:

*“I do very little conformation. I am made to feel like I am included if I conform. By conforming, I means I don’t challenge or I don’t ask difficult questions”.*

This explains why the research participants indicated that they don’t feel included, do not feel like they belong and that the individual uniqueness is not accepted. Accordingly, black female managers feel that they have to assimilate into the organizational culture and that little effort is made to ensure that the organisations are accommodating of them.

These findings support the inclusion framework (Shore et al. (2011) in that black female managers and black female employees are expected to assimilate in the workplace and further that the workplace and senior leaders have not succeeded in their inclusion efforts.

The absence of the climate of inclusion is indicated by the fact there is an expectation that black female managers must conform to the organizational culture and that if they do not conform, they are not made to feel accepted by the dominant groups.

This would suggest that to a considerable degree black females are expected to assimilate to the work environments that were not designed to accommodate them from the beginning.

The primary focus on the banking sector was on complying with legislation and accordingly, the from diverse backgrounds. South African Banking Sector has not achieved inclusive work environments, that are accepting of the employees

### **6.3. Discussion results for Research Proposition 2: Inclusion is indicated by the employee’s access to information, the decision-making influences and the job security that an employee enjoys.**

With this research proposition, the intention was to determine whether the transformation and diversity efforts mandated by the EEA in South Africa had resulted in the inclusion amongst the employees coming from the diverse background and also, referred to as the designated groups in the EEA, as indicated by access to sensitive information, decision-making influences

and the offer of a secure job by the employer.

This research proposition has much to do with organisational processes which are indicative of inclusion and the individual with diversity characteristics and his or her involvement in the operational activities.

### **6.3.1 Analysis of Research Proposition 2**

In the workplace, employees are expected to use their skills and knowledge for the benefit of the employer and in this way, the organisation benefits in terms of improved quality of operations, enhanced client experience, increased revenue and profits made. Naturally the employee receives a salary and in some cases, performance bonus or other incentives, in exchange.

Accordingly, it is acknowledged that when an individual with diverse characteristics feels included in the organisation's life, he or she begins to act in an authentic manner, and the positive behavioural outcomes associated with employee inclusion, increases job satisfaction and improves quality of the work outputs. This then leads to work-related performance that exceeds normal expectations. An included individual has an incentive to engage in activities or efforts beyond those that are strictly in the employment and performance contract.

The workplace is also a place where employees interact with each other and can therefore be referred to as a social environment, albeit for business purposes and goals. This suggest that inclusionary practices would be experienced both in formal and informal settings. In this manner, inclusionary practices are felt from the relationships that employees can form with each other and with their leaders and managers. So, it is expected that leaders and managers will be playing a significant role in this aspect of employee inclusion.

Therefore, the proposition through looking to determine the presence of the three indicators of inclusion, that ability to influence decisions that affects him or her, the presence of relationships through which the individual access sensitive information and the presence of job security as made available by the employer, is considering that the organisational processes that result in these three indicators. Although, it not the objective of this research proposition to test or determine the benefits of inclusion on the organisation, it is expected that as included employees are willing deliver more than is expected, that the inclusive workplace has positive attributes which add to the bottom-line of the organisation and thereby increasing the organisational competitiveness. It can be expected that the output for inclusion in the workplace is expected to be improved quality of work out-put.

Accordingly, an inclusive workplace is satisfying to the employee and the result is expected to be reduced employee turn-over. In turn, this will have organisational benefits, in the form of financial benefits. Also, as the indicators of inclusion are found in organisational processes,



the organisation will also offer the individual with diverse characteristics a secure employment as the individual is accepted.

### **6.3.2. Summary of the literature review**

Mor Barak and Cherin (1998) defined inclusion and exclusion paradigm as the extent to which an individual has access to information and resources, which is indicated by close relationships with co-workers, ability to make decision or contribute meaningfully to important discussions, can give an impression that employees feel included.

From this, an impression is gained that inclusion is an antecedent for full employee participation in the day to day life of the organisation. Further, Mor Barak (1999) continues to state that the sense that an employee is included or excluded is expressed on a continuing basis that he or she is a part of the organisational processes.

For this reason, the organisational processes in which an employee senses inclusion or exclusion may be informal or formal (Mor Barak, 1999). Support is found for Mor Barak (1999) from the study by Pellad, Ledford and Morhman (1999), who found that inclusion is indicated by decision-making influences, access to information and job-security. Roberson (2006) also finds that inclusion seemingly has more to do with how an employee feels that they are part of and considered in critical operational processes.

As Sherbin and Rashid (2017) opined without inclusion the ability to attract and retain talented employees will be reduced, when an organisation does not make a concerted effort to achieving diversity and inclusion. In the age where there is a war for talented employees, it is expected that employers ought to make effort in creating the climate for inclusion to cater for candidates from diverse backgrounds.

In this sense, to have employees who experience inclusion at the dimensions mentioned above or as indicated by the factors mentioned, above, the employees will need to be treated like insiders, whilst encouraging that they must retain their individual uniqueness (Shore et al., 2011). The inclusion framework conceptualised by Shore et al (2011) distinguishes between Low Value in Uniqueness and High Value in Uniqueness as well as Low and High Belonginess. The quadrant of High value in uniqueness and high belonginess is characterised by the stage on inclusion, in which an employee is made to feel and treated like an insider.

The Inclusion Framework in the High belonginess and low value in uniqueness quadrant, has the assimilation component. According to Mor Barak (1999), when there is an expectation for employees to assimilate, the organisation does not put effort in recognising the uniqueness of the different employees and thereby accept their differences. Instead, there is an expectation that the employees must conform.

### 6.3.3. Interpretation of findings for research proposition 2

The context of diversity management in South Africa is the racially discriminative laws of the Apartheid regime. Against the background, the findings reveal that inclusion is at the start, a manager or leader-driven initiative within the organisation.

This interpretation is supported by the data collected, wherein some of the research participants acknowledged the role that their immediate managers and leader played in their ability of having access to information, influence key decisions made and ultimately the job security that they enjoyed. Below are the statements made by some of the research participants:

*“Me as a token, no. I haven’t felt that way. I guess, also what plays a role – your boss plays a role. If for example, they ask for X and he directs them to you, then there is more confidence from the people asking or requesting information on you. So you are not viewed as a token”.*

The theory backing up research proposition 2, alludes to the importance and presence of social relationships amongst employees as a precursor to the access to information and being able to influence important work related decisions. With this, leading from theory and considering South Africa’s racially segregated history, the matter of relationships and friendships amongst employees from diverse backgrounds comes up. The study found that the research participants were aware that relationships in the workplace are important and particularly, the ability to form those relationships with their white counterparts. Below is the statements made by the research participants in this regard:

*“Easy for those who are not trying to be who they are not. If you comfortable in your own skin, you are able to make friends across the racial lines. If you are constantly looking for likeness, it will be difficult. Not viewing others as competition”.*

*“I realise that I also need to reach out to people. We also have to realise that life is not only about us, yes there are challenges, but to get to a point where we are diverse enough, we also have to reach out as black females. We need to learn about other people. We don’t have to have to do what they are saying, but at least get to know them better. Having to reach out and understand the people that I work with. Take the chance to get to know people that really helps”.*

In this regard, two insights were gained from the research. The first being that that black female employees or managers must also make the effort to build relationships in the workplace. The ability to build social networks, whether formally or informally is critical given that social networks serve as support structures in the workplace. Thus, black female managers must make effort and take initiative to include themselves. The second insight gained is that black

females need to be confident in their abilities and not assume that others are questioning their presence in the workplace.

This research proposition also aimed to establish whether black female managers viewed that their work was meaningful and that it contributed to the overall organisation's successes. In this regard, the study found that black female managers had the desire to have meaning attributed to their work and that this meaning is provided by the co-workers and immediate managers. Immediate managers provided performance feedback to the employees and if the feedback is positive, this will tend to increase the view that the employee's contribution is meaningful and that she is valued. Feeling valued will then increase the sense of inclusion.

An emerging theme was identified in this study and this had to do with the lack of trust that is shown towards black managers in general and in particular, the black female managers. Although this view was expressed by one research participant, it is still worthy to mention as this could help explain the reasons for the slow pace of achieving the desired level of diversity within the banking sector in South Africa. If one considers, the trust deficit towards black manager, and particularly black female managers and the role that immediate managers play in ensuring that the rest of the organisations can have faith in the quality of work of the black female managers, the two are interrelated.

Accordingly, inclusion could be facilitated by the actions of the immediate managers and leaders, in so far as they influence the respect and acknowledgement which black female managers will have with their peers in the work place.

Finally, research proposition 2 also sought to determine whether in the absence of feeling valued, holding the perception that your work is meaningful and held in high regard by the immediate manager and leader as well as the co-workers, this increased the desire to resign from the current employer in the near future.

As mentioned in chapter 5, the study found that the lack of inclusion leads to increased intentions to leave the current employer. This is seemingly inconsistent with the findings of the study done by Nzukuma Bussin (2011) that black managers had the tendency to job-hop due desires to manage their careers and less to do with the manner in which diversity is managed.

At the same time, the finding under this research proposition's intentions to leave the current employer, backs up the conclusions reached by the study of Ndzwayiba, Ukpere and Steyn (2018), that there is a need to for South African corporates to understand the real the job-tenure of black professionals is low.

#### **6.4. Discussion for research proposition 3: As black female leaders are often in the minority and therefore regarded as tokens, they are subjected to higher performance pressures which require that they overachieve.**

The starting point with the research proposition came from the status of tokenism that black female managers are currently in, as supported by the reports which the banking industry submits to the Commission for Employment Equity each year as required in terms of the EEA. In addition, the Banking Association of South Africa has also acknowledged that the number of black women in management has declined in the period between 2012 and 2015.

##### **6.4.1. Analysis of research proposition 3**

The significance of this research proposition resulted from the status of tokenism in which black female managers find themselves in. As mentioned in paragraph 6.4 above black female managers are in the minority in middle and senior management structures in the banking sector and to this end, they will face challenges that are likely to be peculiar to them. Amongst these challenges is that they are on their own, with no support from their peers and immediate line managers.

The presence of diversity in the workplace as has been established in the previous section, does not mean that the acceptance and therefore inclusion of the black female managers will be easy. The theory of diversity informs us that diversity has much to do with ensuring that all of society's demographic groups are represented in the workplace and that discrimination on the basis of race, gender, sexual orientation and religious belief is eliminated. We also learnt from the theory, that diversity is for the most part a legislated requirement and therefore may suggest that it is forced upon organisations and individuals in these organisations.

Accordingly, research proposition 3 was premised upon the theory of Critical Mass Theory and how it explains the experiences of individuals who are in the minority in relation to the individuals who form part of the dominant group. In addition, the present study is premised upon the historical background of South Africa, as looked at through the racial discrimination and how it still permeates the democratized South African society to this day. Therefore, Critical Mass theory is looked upon to explain in academic terms the day to day experiences of lone black female managers in the South African Banking Sector.

##### **6.4.2 Summary of literature review**

The theory of critical mass theory says that when individuals are in the minority status viewed from a numerical perspective in relation to the rest of the group, they are classified as tokens. Viewed from this angle, tokens are highly visible as they are different from the group that they are a part of. The result is that tokens to minimise the effect of these visibility, they would attempt to distinguish the different characteristics to fit in with the group.

Kanter (1977a) identified four group types and these are based on the numbers of those who are different from the rest of group. These groups are: uniform groups, which have only members who are like each other, the skewed group, where the number of the tokens is still much smaller when compared to the members who are like each other, the tilted group, in which the number of the tokens increased but not enough to be balanced and the balanced group, whereas the word suggest there is dominant group or minority groups.

Kanter's work sought to explain the balance of power when a group is made up of team members who are different from each other and the way those who are in the minority will be expected to conform to assimilate, how they will be held to higher standards of performance and the fact that their ability to influence group decisions will be highly limited. In this sense, there are advantages and disadvantages which come with being a token in a group.

Seemingly supporting Kanter's work, Lewis and Simpson (2012) stated that women in tokenism status were subjected to performance measure and therefore women needed to work much harder than men, the women belonging to groups in which they are tokens, become isolated from the work team because of being different from the group and that the tokens are subjected to stereotypes which further isolates women and entraps them into certain positions.

A significant aspect of being a token is that the individual token or tokens do not have enough support to be influential in the group. It then becomes necessary that individuals with tokenism status must strive to reach critical mass, in order to shift discussions and decisions in the team. The study by Torchia, Calabro and Huse (2011) found that when the number of tokens increase to a significant number in relation to the dominant group, the tokens' ability to be influential increases as well. Torchia et al. (2011) found that when there are three or more women on boards, the firm innovativeness is likely to be higher than when the number of women is less than three.

Taking the matter further and testing the appropriate numerical number required for critical mass, Joecks, Pull and Vetter (2013) found that the critical threshold was in the region of 30% of female representation at company board was needed.

The study by Konrad, Kramer and Erkut (2008) found that women's experiences as board member changed positively when other women joined the boards and so the magical ratio or number of three women at company was boards was established. Konrad et al. (2008) also found that when more women join the company board, the immediate effect was this helped to break the stereotypes that minority women are subjected to and this will impact on the all-male communication focus.

Arena, Cirilio, Mussolino, Pulcinelle, Saggese and Sarto (2015) said that it is the presence of women at boards and committees, and not just their number which must be the focus and also

which will drive the change needed through the power of influence. However, Konrad and Kramer (2006) had found that the increasing number of women at corporate boards had the effect of lifting the burden on being the solo women and subjected to higher performance measures. So, in the sense, it both the numerical ratio that must be balanced as well as the presence of women, to support each other that is important. It is also not about women on boards and their ability to be influential that is important. A study by Konrad et al (2008) found that women also bring the diversity of thoughts and ideas into corporate board debates and that given their inclusive approach, women are likely to consider other stakeholders when making decisions.

This leads to the hypothesis that having women on boards will positively affect the firm's performance. A study by Campbell and Minguez-Vera (2008) found that the increased ratio of women on board did have the positive impact on the financial performance of the firm.

Finally, when the group has an equal representation and it is therefore balanced, it is expected that the undue influence by the dominant group, on the less dominant group will be minimised and that the negative effect of being in the minority will also be minimised. Joecks et al. (2013) also found that women in tilted groups had critical mass and that the supervisory boards in which there were titled groups outperformed the skewed group significantly.

#### **6.4.3 Interpretation of research findings**

The minority status of black female managers in the banking sectors has had the consequences that they are regarded as tokens by their white co-workers, both as a result of the business environment, the view that black female managers are not employed on merit number in relation to the white workers and also in terms of the perceptions that they had not been appointed on merit. In the present study, almost all the research participants acknowledged that at some point in their careers they had been regarded as affirmative action appointments. This finding supports the existing literature on critical mass theory, that tokens are highly visibly given the reasons of their physical characteristics. Below are the statements made by the research participants in this regard:

*"At point of hiring, I was a regarded as a token. But with time, you start to create value and they see your value. I don't think I have felt like I am part of the team".*

*"Right now I am. We have a mixed, umm, what can I say, we have mixed, we have blacks, whites, Indians and it is very diverse. But like I said the higher you go, the lesser the diversity, so I could say, similarly in my kind of role I am the only black female".*

The finding has the implication that because the diversity is still viewed from a legislative compliance perspective and not normalised in and merely as affirmative action candidates will not go away and therefore persist for the foreseeable future.

In Paragraph 6.4.2 above, it is mentioned that tokens are expected to work harder in order to prove that they are competent. The result of this on the tokens is that they tend to work harder to also prove that they are competent. The study found that the black female managers were subjected to higher performance standards in order to prove that they are qualified and competent for their roles. However, some of the research participant revealed that they work hard simply as a result of their own work ethic and that they refused to be pressurised to work harder due to the colour of their skin and their gender. Below are the statements made by the research participants in this regard:

*“Yes, I makes no apology about who I am and where I am. But despite that, I have to maintain, which means that I have to work that much harder, because if you come across as confident you can’t let the ball drop. The room for error is therefore much more limited versus than when came across as a lower base”.*

Thus, revealing that the confidence levels of black female employees is a factor that could minimise the negative effects of tokenism status.

In interpreting this finding, it is established that the black female managers, who are at the stage where they have learnt their worth and they understand clearly that they bring value to their organisations, they will not conform to the unnecessarily higher standards. So seemingly, despite the negative perceptions that white workers may have about black female managers and their competency levels, it is the confident levels of the black female managers that has the positive countering effect on the overall experiences of black female managers and those aspiring to be managers.

The literature reviewed under research proposition 3 suggested that in environments where tokens work, there is always a dominant culture enforced by the dominant group. Further, in work climate where there is dominant culture, tokens are expected to conform to the dominant culture or they risk being excluded and treated as outsiders.

The findings for this theme under the research proposition 3 conform the presence of the dominant culture and that in order to feel included, there is an expectation of conformance. The research participants when asked to describe the dominant culture in their respect work climates, responded with answers such as:

*“I think in general corporate is westernised”*

*or*

*“the dominant culture is still white and male”*

This suggests that despite the diversity efforts that the banking sectors has been driving since the coming into law of EEA, the diversity efforts have resulted only in superficial change as the banking sector can boast about the number of black employees it has and how many are

in junior, middle and senior management.

However, the real change that needs to be seen is the inclusion of black female managers and black employees into the organisation's day to day life. This interpretation of the research finding is supported by the research finding that there is an expectation on black female managers to have to conform to the dominant culture. Below are the statements made by the research participants in this regard:

*"I do very little conformation. I am made to feel like I am included if I conform. By conforming, I means I don't challenge or I don't ask difficult questions".*

Accordingly, the suggest the presence of the culture of assimilation, where you are only included and made to feel like an insider if you downplay your own uniqueness to fit in.

It is important to mention also that not all the research participants expressed the need to conform even when they were aware that there was an expectation to conform. Some of the research participants indicated that conformance is not necessarily a negative issue and this was on the premise that when you join an organisation, there will always be a need to conform to the organisational standards. Below are some of the comments made by the research participant in this regard:

*"Yes and No. You need to influence. Conforming may be necessary if you want to gain entry. One has to conform with an end goal. Conform to a certain extent, where you are able to get to know their psyche".*

*"I am not sure about conforming, but walking into an environment that is the way it is and must learn how to play in that environment. So, I suppose it is matter of learning how play in that environment learning, rather than conforming. Maybe what differentiates people is that. Conformists will be okay and everything will go well. Whereas if you are not conformists and you are a person who is the individual, coming in with whatever you are coming in with, then it becomes a problem because the individuals inside the inside circles will find it hard to accept that you do not want play according to the rules of his game, which are not even written. But you observe that this is how things are being done here. You then wonder do I tell them that I don't play according to those rules or will I just wait for the right opportunity to show them how I deal with things".*

These findings revealed an emerging theme, which is the confidence of the black female managers and their understanding and appreciation of corporate life.

In particular, this emerging theme revealed that the understanding of corporate life and manner of approaching challenges, may aid black female managers in being to contextualise the events that occur and still be able to thrive in these environments. Finally, whilst the findings for this research proposition confirm to a large degree the characteristics of critical



mass theory, in particular the aspects of tokenism, it would appear that there are factors which act as moderating effect on the status tokenism. These factors have been identified as being:

- the confidence level of the black female employee or leader
- the confidence that the black female employee or leader has in their own abilities
- the support that the immediate manager provides to the black female employee or leader.
- The inclusive organisational culture created to ensure that all employees, regardless of their race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation etc. feels accepted and have the sense of belonging in their organisation.

### **6.5 Discussion results for research proposition 4: Display of dominance and sense of high self-esteem by black female leaders is at odds with the expectation of women according to the social role theory**

The history of South Africa teaches us that black women were at the periphery of this society during the apartheid years. In the African cultural and traditional context, black women were treated and continues to be treated as being inferior to men. Therefore, viewed from this perspective, black women as leaders is likely to be at odd with the expectations held about them.

#### **6.5.1 Analysis of Research Proposition 4**

This research proposition aimed to establish whether women in the roles of leaders was accepted in the workplace. In the workplace, most of the leadership positions are held by men and women are mostly seen in the supporting roles.

The rationale for this is the fact black women do not have a long service period in the banking sector in South Africa as a result of the employment discriminatory laws which had prevented black women from obtaining professional roles.

This, in addition to the fact that during the apartheid years, the opportunities for further education at tertiary institutions were limited for black women, and this resulted in only a significant few being in positions to obtain employment in the banking sector. In instances where black women could obtain employment in the banking sector, it was mainly as back-office administrators or as cleaning staff.

However, since 1994 and with the educational opportunities that have been opened and made available to black women, they have obtained educational qualifications that have made them eligible for consideration into key and decision-making roles in the banking sector.

This research proposition sought to establish whether despite the educational qualifications and experience of black female leaders, there were any female behavioural attributes which

may contribute to the limitations or oppositions that they may encounter in the workplace.

### **6.5.2 Summary of literature review**

Social role theory states that society has created gender-based roles and functions and this is premised on the both men and women have capabilities based on their physical attributes. Social role theory is then applied to test the attitude of both men and women in the workplace pertaining to the capabilities either as leaders and as being suited to fulfilling certain functions in the workplace.

Then Eagly and Steffen (1984) stated that gender stereotypes are based on the observation of the roles which men and women act out in their daily activities and this has been utilised to determine the distribution of roles according to gender. As a start, social role acknowledges that the physical attributes of men and women has contributed towards the proliferation of gendered roles in society (Eagly & Wood, 1999).

As a result of this view, the perception of certain roles being reserved for women will continue to contribute to the gendered division of labour as well as the existence of gender stereotypes (Clow, Ricciardelli & Bartfay, 2014).

This in turn will constantly lead to the reinforcement of the division of labour through the gender socialisation and adoption of gender identities (Grijalva, Tay, Harms, Newman, Donnellan & Robins, 2015).

Perhaps of significance, is the view that men have the agentic characteristics and women have the communal characteristics (Grijalva, Tay, Harms, et al. (2015). For that reason, there are certain behaviours that would be accepted when displayed by a male employee and at the same time, the same behaviours, when displayed a female employee are deemed unacceptable.

De Hoogh, Hartog and Nevicka, (2015) had observed in their research that when a woman does not display the communal qualities, she is perceived in a negative light by others, in particular men and their research suggested that the gender of the leader influenced the perception on whether narcissistic leaders are effective

### **6.5.3 Interpretation of findings**

The findings reveal that the workplace is still not accepting of women in leaderships positions and key decision making roles. Women are still seen to be belong in the support and administrative roles in the banking sector. As evidence, ten (10) out of fifteen (15) research participants mentioned that women in the banking sectors are seen to occupy roles in Human Resources, Risk and Compliance, Learning and Development and Marketing departments and further that the women leaders are rarely found in revenue generating roles. Below are

some of the statements made by the research participant in this regard:

*“Definitely, in the bank, women are meant to be administrators”.*

*“Yes, in HR, Compliance, Marketing roles. The core functions, such as Profit and Loss functions/roles are given to men”.*

*“Certain roles are looked at as being softer roles, such as Marketing, HR. Profit and Loss roles are held mainly by men”.*

This suggests that the belief that women are only suitable for the support roles in this sector is deeply entrenched. An insight because of this finding is suggestive of the presence of institutional level bias against women. This bias is not written down and contained in a policy or guideline, but it is one which can be observed when looking at the organisation and the appointments that are made.

This research proposition finding may well be linked with the finding established in research proposition 2, regarding the trust deficit with black managers and black female leaders, specifically as well the barriers to inclusion in the workplace.

Research proposition 4 also tested whether the display by women of agentic behaviours as opposed to the communal behaviours was acceptable in the workplace. The findings as shown in chapter 5 revealed that when women display dominance behaviours, it was frowned upon and not accepted. Accordingly, when women displayed assertive behaviours and attitude, they were labelled as being aggressive. Therefore, there is need for a better understanding of effects on gender bias against women in the workplace and measure to combat this.

This finding reveals the deep-seated and lack of understanding about black women in the workplace and may be contributing to the exclusionary practices that women are subjected to. It may be that strong and confident black women are regarded as being the rare exception and not the norm. It may also suggest that for black female leaders to be accepted in the workplace, there may need to hide their true and individual characteristics in order to fit in.

The findings under this research proposition also suggest that organisations are facing a myriad of cultural biases against women and unless swift action is taken to address them, organisations will not reap the benefits of having women as employees.

## **6.6. Conclusion**

The findings from the research leads to the conclusion that the factors that result in inclusion in a diverse workforce from the perspective of the individual are belonging and acceptance of the individual's uniqueness. Furthermore, the factors that are indicative of inclusion in the critical organisational processes and activities are access to information, ability to influence

important decisions that affect the individual as well as job security.

In addition, the status of tokenism as defined in the theory of critical mass and the impact of society's division of labour on the role that women play as leaders, are the factors that could lead to exclusion of women in the workplace. Therefore, the research data support existing theory as postulated in the conceptual framework. Accordingly, the research propositions have been met.

## **CHAPTER 7 – RECOMMENDATIONS**

### **7.1 Introduction**

In this chapter, the main research question is answered, which is: factors that are needed to realise an inclusive climate within a diverse workforce, based on the findings presented in chapter 5 and discussed in chapter 6. The implications for management and the suggestions for future research are also outlined and discussed. Finally, the chapter also highlights the limitations of this research.

### **7.2. Principal findings**

In this research, the objective was to determine the factors that are needed to realise an inclusive climate within a diverse workplace. To achieve this objective the theories of diversity and inclusion, critical mass and social role were explored to determine these factors. Accordingly, the factors have been determined are discussed and outlined under each research proposition below.

#### **7.2.1 Research Proposition 1: Employees in inclusive work environments have a higher sense of belonging and their uniqueness is accepted and valued.**

The findings presented in chapter 5 confirm and support the existing literature that when employees feel accepted and have their uniqueness appreciated and valued, this increases the perception that they belong in the workplace (Shore et al, (2011)). The key finding is that the banking sector is still dominated by Western or Europeans culture and that when black females come into this work environment are expected to adopt this culture. This means that the unique characteristics of being a black female is not valued and accepted.

A further significant finding gained from the research has been that the focus by the South African banking sector have been comply with the EEA, and no focus into how to make the workplace inclusive for all races and genders. On the presence of diversity in the workplace, it was established that the banking sector has shown commitment to ensure that there is representation of the all races and gender in the workplace, albeit still lacking at senior management and executive level positions. Accordingly, it can be concluded that there is representative diversity, which is the outcome of diversity management programmes (Daya, 2014). However, there is a need for a fundamental shift from merely ensuring workplace representations of all to a more inclusive workplace, which embraces the differences (Daya, 2014).

The findings under the research proposition 1, further lend support to the Inclusion Framework as developed by Shore et al. (2011). In this case, in the absence of the culture of inclusion, where individuals are treated as insiders and are encouraged to retain their uniqueness, there is effort in assimilating everyone, without recognising the differences and ensuring that they

are acknowledged. This approach limits the organisation's ability to realise the advantages that comes with being different from others, given the fact a person who is different from others may have special, unique perspective and the expertise (Pelled et al. 1999).

Thus, the first factor needed to realise a climate of inclusion is belonging and acceptance of unique characteristics. Therefore, organisations need to be aware of the practices or organisational cultural practices that are excluding others. As the research findings, have revealed it is not sufficient to have a diverse workforce. The awareness of the culture of exclusion needs to result in a fundamental shift from purely focusing on diversity to inclusionary efforts and practices.

We learn from the theory of critical mass that when groups move from uniform and tilted to being balanced, the effect is that no one group is large enough to be dominant. Accordingly, in the context of the study, diversity efforts need to move from being a legal compliance imperative to being a business imperative. In this way, diversity and the presence of black females in the organisation become the norm and not the exception.

### **7.2.2 Research Proposition 2: Inclusion is indicated by the employee's access to information, decision-making influences and the job security that an employee enjoys.**

A study by Pelled et al. (1999) stipulated that there are three indicators for inclusion in the organisation: decision-making influence, access to sensitive information and job security. This research confirmed and supported these three indicators for inclusion.

In this regard, a key insight gained from this research proposition is that black female managers and leaders should embrace opportunities to build relationships with their White, Indian and Coloured co-workers, as good relationship enables access to information.

The study also found that immediate line managers have an important role to play in ensuring that black female managers are trusted by their co-workers, that their contributions are valued and they therefore have decision-making influences.

The presence of these two indicators will positively influence the employee's intention to remain with the organisation and thereby lead to job security.

Thus, a factor that will lead to inclusion, the immediate line manager must offer open support to the black female manager. This may be in the form of providing mentoring, openly inviting the views and opinions of the black female manager, thus sending the message that the black female manager is a valued member of the team. It is expected that as the leader sets the tone, this will influence the perceptions and behaviours of others in relation to their black female colleague.

Thus, creating a space where the black female manager has access to information and enjoys decision-making influences, will reduce the employee's intention to leave.

### **7.2.3 Research Proposition 3: As black female leaders are often in the minority and therefore regarded as tokens, they are subjected to higher performance pressures which require that they overachieve.**

This research proposition had the following principal findings, which confirm and support the theory on critical mass:

- black females and black female managers experience the status of tokenism. Per Joecks et al. (2013) the few are called tokens.
- there is a dominant culture in the workplace, which is primarily described as being white, male and westernised. As stated by Kanter (1977) the dominant group is the group that is numerically large and it is typical that due to their large number, that they exert control on the group and the culture.
- there is an expectation that black female managers will conform to the culture in order to be regarded as an insider
- given imposed tokenism status, there are pressures on the black female managers and employees to prove their competency. In this regard, Rosette and Livingston (2012) point out that because black women are subject to two subordinate identities, that is being black and a woman, their failure is considered in harsher and negative terms that when a black man or white women fails. In addition, the desire to achieve will be perhaps driven from the realisation that failure by a black female manager may result in stereotyping and generalising black females as failures as opposed to the individual (Kanter, 1977).

All of the above mentioned key findings are the factors that may be functioning contrary to diversity and inclusion efforts in the workplace. Thus, these may contribute to the high black female employee turnover in the banking sector and reasons to leave the employer.

A relationship may be drawn between research proposition two and three in that the indicators for inclusion as stipulated by Pellad et al. (1999) are nullified by the experience of being a token in the workplace, where one lack the ability to influence due to the absence of critical mass and being treated like an outsider due to the unwillingness to conform to the dominant culture.

### **7.2.4 Research proposition 4: Display of dominance and sense of high self-esteem by black female leaders is at odds with the expectation of women as according the social role theory.**

The finding for research proposition 4 support the social role theory in the following respects:

- When black women display assertive and dominance behaviour, this is not viewed favourably by the co-workers, particularly male co-workers. According to De Hoogh et al. (2015) the displaying of dominance and superiority is seen as the sole rights of men and when women engage in these type of behaviours, they are seen to be violating the gender rules or standards. Further, Grijalva et al. (2015) postulates that agentic characteristics are associated with male stereotypes.
- Women are deemed suitable to hold support positions organisations, such as Human Resources, Risk and Compliance, Marketing and Learning and Development. As stated by Clow, Ricciardelli and Bartfay, (2014) the division of labour by society has led to the stereotypes that women are deemed suitable to hold certain roles in organisations.

The findings further support the notion that women are not natural born leaders and that men are seen as the natural leaders. Accordingly, a leader is seen as possessing more the masculine characteristics than the feminine attributes (Booyesen & Nkomo, 2006).

Thus, as a factor needed to realise an inclusive climate, an inclusive culture needs to be developed that will ensure that amongst others, a safe environment is established where in all employees are enabled to grow and thrive.

### **7.3. Implications for management**

The research findings as presented in chapter 5 support the existing theories of diversity and inclusion, critical mass theory and social role theory. Moreover, as the research was focused on black female leaders in the banking sectors, the research findings are suggestive of a link between the diversity and inclusion efforts, the tokenism status experienced by black female managers and the impact which societies' division of labour has on black female employees and black female managers in the banking sector.

Thus, the findings of the research propositions show that the banking sector must increase the efforts of building diverse teams and climate of inclusion. Accordingly, there has to be a shift from diversity to inclusion. Thomas (1990) states that women and people in the minority have been granted entry and what is needed now is an upgrade and further, that organisations need to start utilising the people resource at every level, particularly at the middle and senior management roles.

The research findings point to the presence of diversity in the workplace and this observation provides credibility to the Submissions by the Banking Association on the progress made in transformation efforts and further that there is an acknowledgement that discrimination is unlawful and morally unjust (Thomas & Ely, 1996). However, the time has come for organisations to view diversity with all its positive attributes, including the competitive advantages it has the potential to give and the benefits of diversity may be realised through



an inclusive climate.

As a start, it should be mentioned that creating a space for meaningful change will consume considerable amount of time, effort and financial resources from all stakeholders in the banking sector. Therefore, these initiatives must be given adequate time to mature and show the results.

The following are recommendations that must be considered by managers and leaders, including human resources practitioners:

1. Management will need to identify stakeholders and undergo a rigorous consultation processes, to obtain the required buy-in and support. It is necessary that organisations identify the stakeholders in order to consult with the relevant parties. Whilst the hiring of people from diverse backgrounds is the prerogative of management, once an individual from the diverse background is employed, that person and other team members will have to work together and collaborate to achieve the organisation's strategic objectives. Thus, involvement of white employees in order to obtain support and buy-in is critical.
2. Develop and promote authentic leadership. Boekhorst (2015) posits that authentic leaders are able to spur and energise their followers on the importance of inclusion in the workplace. According to Robbins and Judge (2015) authentic leaders operate from the base of trust and as such they open share information and knowledge, inspire frank and honest conversations and communication. Moreover, as per Robbins and Judge, authentic leadership is associated with leaders who are true to themselves and what they believe in and are therefore their values and their actions are aligned.
3. The organisational leaders and managers must create a clear vision about why they are embarking on this drive and this must be communicated clearly to all internal and external stakeholders.
4. Management must undertake an assessment of the organisation to assess the attitudes towards diversity and inclusion amongst the employees as well as the culture that is either promoting or not promoting an inclusive climate. Thomas, (1990) suggests auditing the existing organisational culture to identify practices, commonly held beliefs is critical for an organisation that wants to make a shift into meaningful diversity and inclusion. This assessment of the organisational environment may well be helpful in building awareness about deep-level prejudice and biases.
5. Engage in genuine dialogue with the employees. Dialogue is important and as organisations are a mirror of the society, many of the societal race challenges will impact and influence business organisations.

6. Establish a platform for mentors and coaching between senior managers and junior and non-managerial employees in the workplace. The mentoring programme must be designed to ensure that senior managers are linked up with employees they would not normally have engaged with and built relationships with.
7. Identify and nurture talented black individuals. In addition, manage the careers of these black employees and monitor the performance management of the black employees to ensure that they are being treated fairly. The intention is to reduce the high employee turnover amongst black employees, with the intention to retain them over a long period. Linked to the recommendation above, this will ensure that over a period of time, black mentors are identified and created.
8. Establish forums where male and female employees openly discuss challenges faced by both genders and share perceptions about each gender. These should not be women only forums, but should be intentional about including both males and female employees.
9. Create awareness amongst employees about both unconscious and conscious bias in the behaviour and actions of towards employees with diverse characteristics.
10. Build alignment between senior, executive leaderships teams and all levels of management. Creating alignment will guarantee that the diversity and inclusion efforts have an increased chance of correct implementation.
11. Build inclusive culture in the workplace. An inclusive culture is that one which will encourage open conversations and encourage practices in the workplace that are conducive to an inclusive workplace.

#### **7.4. Limitations of research**

As mentioned in chapter 4, the method of selecting the sample may have exposed the study to questions of reliability and objectivity of the research. The researcher also relied on the informal networks for referrals and this increased the possibility that the population sampled was homogenous.

Further to the above, the study had the following limitations:

1. The research participants were based in the Gauteng province and therefore a larger population could not be accessed.
2. Many of the research participants had many years of experience and mature. Therefore, an argument could be advanced that they are better position to handle conflict and exclusionary practices.

3. The scope of the study did not look into the diversity and inclusion policies of the banks where the research participants are currently employed. The researcher believes such consideration would have enriched the findings of the research.
4. The study only considered and therefore included black female employees or managers. Excluded from this study was the Indian, White and Coloured female employees.

## **7.5 Recommendations for future research**

Research in South Africa to date has heavily focused on the challenges to the implementation of the EEA and very light on the diversity management challenges that are unique to the South African case.

For future research, it is suggested that future research considers barriers to achieving inclusion in the workplace and the reasons for the high black employees' turnover in the banking sector.

Further to this, future research about black female leaders is needed and their leaderships styles and influences. This recommendation for future research is considers the fact that there is going to be an increase in the number of black females entering the banking sector and it will be beneficial if academic research is conducted on this demographic.

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**APPENDIX I: INFORMED CONSENT LETTER**

I am conducting research on factors needed to realise an inclusive climate within a diverse workplace and the focus is on the black female leader, employed in the South Africa's Banking Sector. Our interview is expected to last an hour and will assist me in understanding the experiences of black female leaders as the minority in the Banking Sectors, when it pertains to diversity efforts.

Your participation is voluntary and you can withdraw at any time without penalty. This data will be reported anonymously. If you have any concerns, please contact my supervisor or me.

Our details are:

**Researcher Name:** Matlhodi Leteane

**Research Supervisor Name:** Dr. Tumo Kele

Email: [matlhodileteane@gmail.com](mailto:matlhodileteane@gmail.com)

Email: [kelet@gibs.co.za](mailto:kelet@gibs.co.za)

Phone: 082 569 4324

Signature of Participant: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature of Researcher: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## **APPENDIX II: INTERVIEW QUESTIONS**

This section covers the questions that will be asked from the research participants.

<b>Number:</b>	<b>Interview Question</b>	<b>Sub-questions</b>
1.	<b><i>How diverse and inclusive is your workplace?</i></b>	How would you describe diversity in your workplace?
		How would you describe the climate of inclusion in your workplace?
		What do you perceive as barriers to attaining an inclusive climate within your workplace?
		In your view, which initiatives are likely to result in an inclusive work climate?
<b>Number:</b>	<b>Interview Question</b>	<b>Sub-questions</b>
2.	<b><i>Are you made to feel as an insider only when you conform to the dominant culture in your workplace?</i></b>	Is there an organisational culture that is dominant in the organisation you work for and how would you describe it?
		What would the effect be if you were accepted as an individual without the need to conform to the current organisational culture?
		What value is placed on diversity and inclusion efforts in the workplace?
<b>Number:</b>	<b>Interview Question</b>	<b>Sub-questions</b>
3.	<b><i>Do you sense that you are viewed as a token by your white colleague and not as a person who is appointed on merit?</i></b>	Do you have to work harder to prove that you are competent and qualified for the role that you hold?
		In order to feel accepted, is there an expectation that you must downplay your uniqueness, that is being a woman and a black person?
<b>Number:</b>	<b>Interview Question</b>	<b>Sub-questions</b>
4.	<b><i>Are there any typical behaviours which in the opinion of your male counterparts are regarded as being the reserve for male and male managers?</i></b>	Is it frowned upon when you engage in aggressive and self-promoting behaviour?
		Is there an expectation or a general held belief that women leaders should be in certain positions or roles?

**APPENDIX III CERTIFICATION OF ADDITIONAL SUPPORT**

(Additional support retained or not - to be **completed by all students**)

**Please note that failure to comply and report on this honestly will result in disciplinary action**

I hereby certify that (please indicate which statement applies):

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