Gordon Institute of Business Science
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Coping mechanisms of Black leaders in South African organisations.

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Abstract

Black people are at higher risk of experiencing racism and exclusionary practices in the workplace. This is as a direct result of South Africa's legacy of apartheid, which subjugated and oppressed the Black majority. Black people who hold leadership positions in organisations find themselves in the minority, although they are a majority in society. Their leadership positions do not shield them from experiencing exclusion by those in the majority, causing them to develop coping mechanisms in order to survive their work environments.

This research seeks to explore How Black leaders cope with exclusionary organisational environments, given their paradoxical role of being part of a majority outside their organisations, and at the same time being a minority inside their organisations.

A qualitative phenomenological approach was adopted to explore new insights into this phenomenon. A total of 13 semi-structured interviews were conducted with Black leaders at C-suite and senior management levels in organisations in South Africa.

Consistent with the literature, this study found that Black leaders make use of adaptive and maladaptive coping strategies in order to cope with exclusionary organisational environments. The study contributes literature and with implications and recommendations for government and business.

Key words

Coping mechanisms, Black leaders, Inclusion, Racism, Microaggressions, Marginalised groups, Social identity

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 THE RESEARCH PROBLEM

1.1. Introduction

Following South Africa's general elections of 1994, which saw the demise of apartheid, the government took decisive steps through legislative measures such as the Broad Based Black Economic Empowerment Act (2003) to reverse the injustices of the past. Directly or indirectly, these laws resulted in the increase of Black people in leadership positions in South Africa's corporate entities. Despite the increase, Black leaders in South Africa's corporate entities remained a minority and as members of outgroups in their organisations (Mokoena, 2020; Myeza & April, 2021; Zulu & Parumasur, 2009; Carrim, 2019). As outgroup members, some have found themselves being excluded in decision-making processes. While these have resulted in some high-profile resignations like former African Bank CEO and first black women in the role in the history of the organisation, Basani Maluleke (former African Bank CEO); Peter Moyo (former Old Mutual CEO), and Daniel Mminele (former Absa CEO), others have stayed in such organisations and found themselves having to cope with the exclusion. This research seeks to explore the coping mechanisms of Black leaders in South African organisations.

The history of South Africa's workplace is that of a highly racialised environment where limited opportunities were made available to the Black majority, mirroring the environment of the general South African society (Mokoena, 2020; Carrim, 2019; Zulu & Parumasur, 2009). Researchers remind us that organisations are microcosms of the societies in which they operate (Nkomo, 1991; Yıldırım et al., 2020; Carrim, 2019; Kofman & Senge, 1993). Therefore, it follows that South African organisations tend to reflect the structures of discrimination that have been prevalent in South African society, as a result of the previous system of apartheid.

This study reports on the findings of what mechanisms are utilised by Black leaders aiming to cope with exclusionary work environments in South Africa.

This chapter provides the context and background to the research and to explains the research problem. This will be followed by the research problem, purpose and rationale. The chapter also covers the relevance of the research, the research scope, and lastly the report structure.

1.2. Background

When examining South African organisations, they show that the historically marginalised groups are still a minority regarding the number of top and senior management jobs that are filled in in organisations (Commission for Employment Equity, 2020). In 1990, the percentages of Black managers in White-owned companies was only 4%, although they the Black population makes up 85% of demographics of South Africa (Booysen, 2007). Most recently, out of the 79% economically active Black population, only 15,2% are represented in top management positions, according to the Commission for Employment Equity (CEE). The CEE is a statutory body established by the Employment Equity Act of 1998(EEA) that reports annually on the progress of employment equity (EE) in those South African organisations that voluntarily make the information available to the Department of Labour (Commission for Employment Equity, 2020). These statistics show that there is a slow pace in organisations at diversifying the workforce, and especially so at a senior management level. Employment equity has been used in South Africa to diversify workforces and allow more people from historically marginalised groups, which is defined by the EE Act (1998) as previously disadvantaged groups, or designated groups. Some theorists view diversity as a precursor to inclusion, especially as it relates to ethnic minorities (Niishi, 2013; Shore et al., 2018). This is a similar context in the US, where White men still hold most of the top jobs, and those that are high paying in companies, while ethnic minorities remain underrepresented (Nkomo et al., 2019).

“If you are Black in South Africa’s world of work, it is a daily struggle against a system that constantly alienates you, aiming to exclude and side line you,” asserted Dr Wiseman Magasela in a widely acclaimed op-ed, *The Invisible Professionals*, published by the Mail & Guardian newspaper, in the year 2000 only six years after South Africa attained its democratic freedom (Magasela, 2000, para.2). A similar argument continues to be made in contemporary times relating to the experience of exclusion by Black professionals within the workplace in South Africa (Myeza & April, 2021; Carrim, 2019).

The significance of concentrating on senior managers in this research was based on the fact that they play an interesting and potentially paradoxical role. Managers shape the identity of the organisations they lead (Carrim & Nkomo, 2016). As senior managers and members of senior leadership in organisations, they hold positional power, with the ability to influence decisions at top levels of these organisations. It is also expected that as senior leaders, they would maintain and mirror the organisation’s dominant corporate culture.

However, at the same time, they are members of historically marginalised groups and have minority representation at senior levels. To what extent does their social identity membership mitigate their positional power?

Recent high profile resignations of senior Black leaders in different organisations has raised questions on the extent of exclusionary work environments and their effects on Black leaders. International examples include the case of Boris Johnson's most senior Black adviser, Samuel Kasumu, resigning amidst controversy around racism at Downing Street (Syal, 2021). A similar controversial case is that Dr Timnit Gebru, renowned computer scientist and formerly with Google, and known as being outspoken on issues of diversity in the tech industry (Hao, 2020). In South Africa, there have been a number of examples of more senior Black leaders' resignations in recent years, which have raised similar questions around their exclusion in organisations. Another recent example of a Black senior leader was the resignation of Keillen Ndlovu, well respected property portfolio asset manager at STANLIB (Naidoo, 2021). Implicit expressions of concern directly relating to the role of exclusionary cultures have been raised as playing a significant role in organisations' loss of senior Black talent.

Because of the contemporary legal framework in South Africa, which criminalises unfair and racial discrimination, it has become common for more tacit and subtle forms of discrimination to be used towards Black people (Alleyne, 2006). The use of exclusion in the workplace is one of these. However, Booysen (2007) argues that many South Africans have been experiencing an identity crisis because the political transition that occurred in 1994, and the subsequent policy changes to redress the past imbalances. One such policy or law is the Employment Equity Act (EE), No. 55 of 1998, which seeks to promote equality and economic development in the workplace and eliminate unfair discrimination among all groups. Broad-Based Black Economic Empowerment (B-BBEE) has also aimed to make more business opportunities available to historically marginalised groups in South Africa (Lipton, 2014; Zulu & Parumasur, 2009; Booysen, 2007). However, some of these laws that were meant to redress the past imbalances have created a situation where many among the dominant minority Whites groups feel threatened, as these laws advantage the Black majority over the White minority (Booysen, 2007; Oosthuizen et al., 2019). Transformation is the term used to describe the process of correcting the inequalities of the past and bringing about racial diversity in the workplace (Zulu & Parumasur, 2009).

Although legislation and public policy in South Africa favours such transformation, it has not translated into a reversal of dominance by the Black majority over the White minority (Zulu & Parumasur, 2009; Booysen, 2007; Carrim, 2019). This means that the Black majority continues to be dominated in economic terms by the White minority in South Africa.

The interplay between individual social identities and work identities is important in understanding how employees from historically marginalised groups experience the workspaces, where they are minorities, and how this influences their sense of belonging. This also highlights the paradox, where the Black majority holds a sense of socio-political power, because of their external majority status in society, while at the same time, they retain a lower economic status and perceived standing, because of their identity of being historically marginalised (Nkomo, 1992; Carrim, 2019). What makes this scenario even more noteworthy, especially when Black leaders are compared with the remainder of Black society, is that senior leaders in organisations hold the power to influence and make decisions, and therefore also have achieved the high status within their organisations. Management posts in South Africa have historically and largely been dominated by White individuals, especially White males (Carrim, 2019; Zulu & Parumasur, 2009). It can therefore be argued that Black people's political power is moderated by their economic disempowerment. Indeed, Carrim and Nkomo (2016) recognise the "hindrances to professional identity construction of individuals who have stigmatised cultural identities" (p. 263).

1.3. Research Problem

South Africa's political power that the majority gained 1994 has not translated into economic power, as the Black majority still remains in a lower economic status compared to that of the White minority. Myeza and April (2021) argue that both political and social power have failed to "unseat the patterns of economic power and historic practices embedded over centuries of oppression in South Africa" (p. 2). Organisations have made progress in increasing the diversity of their workforce. However, they continue to struggle with creating work environments that are fully inclusive (Myeza & April, 2021; April, 2020; Zulu & Parumasur, 2009). As a result, Black employees in organisations continue to experience workplace exclusion, despite the legal frameworks that had been developed to protect their rights to equality (Myeza & April, 2021; April, 2020). This has played a key

contributing factor to high profile resignations of senior Black leaders in South African organisations, which are focused on extensively by the media.

Organisations in South Africa have a role to play in transforming the economy, and thereby also solving the broader challenges faced by the country such as poverty, inequality and unemployment. Black leaders are needed to contribute to such transformation, and they cannot do so if they continue to leave the organisations as a result of exclusionary work environments. This creates a situation, where senior leadership teams in South African organisations continue to reflect problematic apartheid-type systemic structures (Mokoena, 2020). This can be further perpetuated by homosocial reproduction, where members of the majority in leadership positions continue to seek homogeneity through their hiring processes and selection criteria (Worsley, 2015). This can feed into a continuous vicious cycle, not allowing transformation to occur. When senior Black people leave organisations, in cases where they were already a minority, their resignation creates an even smaller pool of role models for Black professionals who are working in the junior ranks. The lack of senior Black leaders thus leaves no room for senior Black role models in organisations, which can limit the potential growth opportunities for junior Black professionals. Therefore, in instrumentalising this research problem, the following research question will be asked: How do Black leaders cope with exclusionary organisational environments, given their paradoxical role of being part of a majority outside their organisations, and at the same time being a minority inside their organisations? It explores how these senior leaders navigate the paradoxical identities; how significant their social identities are in executing their duties as leaders and professionals; and lastly, it aims to understand the coping mechanisms in dealing with exclusionary organisational environments.

Organisations are described as open systems, constantly evolving in response to their environmental changes, which provide a catalyst for evolution (Leigh & Melwani; 2019, Abatecola, 2014). This means that organisations remain dynamic and ready for change that is reflective of the current times. What makes this dynamism even more important is based on the fact that organisations are made up of people. These employees are both, members of their organisations, as well as members of the broader society (Nkomo et al., 2019; Carrim, 2019; Kanter, 1977).

The Social Identity Theory describes how individuals perceive themselves in relation to their social group membership (Turner & Oakes, 1986). The experience of apartheid in

South Africa was a collective experience for members of society. However, the meanings created in these experiences was also based on which social identity group one is part of. Such experiences were also a response from members of the social identity group that was feeling threatened, to come together and have a shared emotional response (Leigh & Melwani, 2019). This is so because as social beings, we create shared meaning among each other (Turner & Oakes, 1986). This extends to the experience of discrimination. Although it can be an individual experience, it can also be a shared one among a group of people from the same social identity group.

Discrimination experienced by members of historically marginalised groups outside of the confines of organisations also exists inside their organisations too (Janssens & Steyaert, 2020; Nkomo et al., 2019). In South Africa, this recognition has long existed as a result of its history of apartheid, especially as it transitioned into the democratic era, post-1994. It is for this reason that the country embarked on a transformation agenda in the post-apartheid era, underpinned by the promulgation of the South African Constitution, as the highest law of the land in 1995.

Diversity is also legislated as a means to redress the failings of the apartheid system by creating more employment opportunities for members of historically marginalised identity groups. The Employment Equity (EE) Act (1998) seeks to promote equality and economic development in the workplace, and eliminate unfair discrimination among others aims.

1.4. Research Purpose

The purpose of this research was to explore how Black senior managers cope with exclusionary organisational cultures. Recent literature has looked at practices and behaviours that contribute to an environment of inclusion. However, as noted by Shore et al. (2018), no literature has provided a well-defined “set of constructs with associated empirical testing” (p. 182). The majority of the research conducted in the field of diversity and inclusion has been conducted outside of the African context, and most of it only among managers and non-managers (Li, 2019; Shore et al., 2018, Nishii, 2013). This research aimed to address the research problem as it was defined. It also aimed to build a better understanding of the coping mechanisms utilised by Black leaders, as members of a marginalised identity group at a senior management level, in a workplace within the South African context.

The research also responds to the call for more research on the impact of exclusion, termed as ostracisation by Robinson et al. (2013). In this research it is framed within the perspective of exclusion as a result of social identity differences in race from minority members at a leadership level. This research has focused on senior Black leaders and their racial ethnic identity as an identifier, juxtaposed against their identity in the workplace as senior leaders.

In a study conducted by Carrim (2019), minority group South African Indian men reworked their identities when they were promoted to more senior roles. The experience of Indian men is similar to that of Black professionals, because they are a minority both in terms of them holding senior management positions and being a minority population group. The workplace is the ideal place where an intersection of inequalities between social identity groups occurs, as they are forced to work together, unlike in other spaces within society, where they do not necessarily mix so closely (Carrim, 2019).

Romansky et al. (2021) report that more than 1600 CEOs signed the CEO Action for Diversity and Inclusion Pledge in 2020. Further to this, they estimate a 1.8 times increase in the number of HR leaders who have prioritised diversity and inclusion within their workplaces (Romansky et al., 2021). However, the focus on inclusion in the workplace and the impact of exclusion of members of historically marginalised groups continues to grow for organisations. Therefore, this research addresses a theoretical and business need.

1.5. Rationale for the Research

The advent of democracy in 1994 brought with it a wave of legislation and regulatory frameworks being introduced to transition the country from the minority rule apartheid system, into a majority ruled democratic political system. On the other hand, organisations seem to have done the bare minimum to ensure that they are compliant with the promulgated legal requirements (Oosthuizen et al., 2019). This shortcoming is further exacerbated by the fact that Black Africans are underrepresented at leadership levels within South African organisations, making up only 15,2% of the management positions (Commission for Employment Equity, 2020). Those Black Africans who are in leadership positions therefore need coping mechanisms in dealing with their paradoxical role of being part of a majority outside their organisations, while maintaining a minority status within the workplace.

The work of Robinson et al. (2013) reveals that exclusion is a common social experience, including in the workplace. For individuals to experience an inclusive environment, they should perceive that their social identity has no bearing on how they are appreciated, accepted and integrated into the workplace (Köllen et al., 2020). Experiences of exclusion in the workplace can be described as the outside being reflected on the inside of the organisation (Booysen, 2007). It is for this reason that a Black woman's authority as a manager might be mediated or limited by her racial identity as being a member of a less dominant social identity group from a racial ethnicity and gender perspective (Booysen, 2007). Dominant national identities "spill over into the workplace" (Booysen, 2007, p. 13). Research into understanding how these spill over in the South African context is required.

There is sparse research available on minority managers in South Africa (Carrim, 2019; Köllen et al., 2020). Research on exclusion in management research within the ambit of diversity and exclusion has also been sparse (Köllen et al., 2020). Some frameworks will be utilised to apply this theory in gaining an understanding of the coping mechanisms utilised by Black leaders in South African organisations.

1.6. Relevance and Contribution of the Study

Identities are constructed and negotiated through various social interactions and group memberships (Ibarra, 1999). Outward images or portrayals of competence are important, because they enable professionals to sell services to clients as representatives of their organisations, especially in professional services (Ibarra, 1999). Individuals bring their own values, opinions and ways of being into the workplace (Carrim, 2019). However, workplace identities are also challenged by contradictions, tensions and struggles (Carrim, 2019). According to Carrim (2019), one of these contradictions lies in the fact that minority group managers feel that they constantly have to prove themselves, and that their leadership positions do not give them automatic credibility. In Carrim's (2019) study, the minority group Indian managers felt that their abilities were not automatically accepted by their White peers and managers. They felt that they had to continuously prove themselves, which was a form of undermining of their positional power (Carrim, 2019).

Booysen (2007) suggested that the workplace might be the only place where individuals from different social identity groups mix and interact meaningfully. This is because of the history of separation in South Africa. This makes the workplace a fertile ground for deep-rooted identity issues to play themselves out (Booysen, 2007). On the other hand, it can

also be seen as an opportunity for these same deep-rooted issues to be challenged, as shifts in power and changes are occurring and affecting what had been considered normal in society.

The increase in 'job hopping' among Black talent in South Africa has been attributed to the increase in opportunities opening up for Black professionals (Ndzwayiba et al., 2018; Zulu & Parumasur, 2009; Booysen, 2007). This is one of several factors contributing to high attrition rates of highly talented Black professionals in South African organisations, especially at senior levels. However, Zulu and Parumasur (2009) argued that insufficient research had been done in understanding whether turnover of Black talent was related to external opportunities and better salaries or to exclusionary cultures within work environments in South Africa (Carrim & Nkomo, 2016). This is further corroborated by Ndzwayiba et al. (2018), who argue that the simplistic understanding of Black professionals as job hoppers has problematic racial undertones, which do not take into consideration the influence of their exclusion.

1.7. Scope

The research scope was limited to understanding how Black senior managers cope with exclusionary work environments in South African organisations, based on their perceptions of exclusionary practices within these organisations. For the purpose of this research, Black leaders were limited to the racial-ethnic classification of Black African according to the Employment Equity Act (1998), as a group that has been historically marginalised in South Africa (Booysen, 2007; Carrim, 2019; Nkomo, 1992). The research aimed to assess their perceptions and insights into coping mechanisms utilised as minorities at their senior levels of leadership (Yıldırım et al., 2020; Mor Barak et al., 2016; Scott et al., 2013; Niishi, 2013; Shore et al., 2018; Carrim, 2019). Because of the paradoxical roles that these leaders find themselves in, the study will also provide insights into identity formation and negotiation, while these leaders have to balance multiple identities (Tajfel & Turner, 1979; Carrim & Nkomo, 2016; Köllen et al., 2020; Nkomo, 1992).

Although the study of workplace exclusion is related to other aggression constructs such as bullying and incivility (Scott et al., 2013), in this study it will be limited to understanding exclusion through the lens of identity-driven relational challenges, within the confines of the workplace.

1.8. Report Structure

The first chapter has provided the research problem intended to be solved as well as the research question. The second chapter will unpack the literature relating to this study and also provide the academic context that informed the research questions, which follow on in Chapter 3. Chapter 4 will provide the methodology followed for the study. Thereafter, Chapter 5 will present the results of the collected data, followed by an analysis of these findings in Chapter 6, when they are assessed against the research questions. Lastly, Chapter 7 will consolidate the findings, and provide recommendations.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. Introduction

The first chapter presented the problem that this research intended to solve. This chapter will review the most recent literature within the context of the research problem (Boote & Beile, 2005). According to Boote and Beile (2005), literature provides broader scholarly and historical context to advance a collective understanding. Therefore, the purpose of this chapter is to present the strengths and weaknesses of existing research as it relates to the research question of how Black leaders cope with exclusionary organisational environments. This will be seen in the leaders' paradoxical role of being part of a majority outside their organisations, and at the same time being a minority inside their organisations.

The theoretical underpinning of this research will lie in Tafjel and Turner's (1979) Social Identity Theory, which had been developed to explain intergroup conflicts and the drivers of discriminatory behaviours (Tajfel & Turner, 1979; Yıldırım et al., 2020; Mor Barak et al., 2016; Nishii, 2013; Nkomo, 1992). Individuals conceive of their identities in multiple ways and these are influenced by their group memberships, including their professional affiliations (Tajfel & Turner, 1979; McGinley & Martinez, 2018). The desire to fit in as part of how the Social Identity Theory conceives the in-group is strong in individual members' conceptions of self, forming part of how they build their self-esteem. Senior leaders in organisations play a unique role in that they are driving culture and experiencing it at the same time (Nkomo, 1992). As they negotiate their individual social identities that pre-exist before entering the work environment, they also manage their professional identities within their organisations as leaders and professionals to be taken seriously (Carrim & Nkomo, 2016).

The professional identity plays an important role in a positive self-identity of individuals who hold very senior roles within their organisations (McGinley & Martinez, 2018). This is based on the fact that those who hold senior roles are generally well accomplished individuals, who have a level of status above many within their circles. Managing these internal (organisational) and external identities is therefore something that is interesting to observe within those who hold the unique high position of leadership and a low status social identity of being historically marginalised.

The research provides insights into the conceptions of identity from the Social Identity Theory and an understanding of the experience of discrimination for historically marginalised groups (Tajfel & Turner, 1979; Yıldırım et al., 2020). The unique experience of 'minoritiness' in organisations provides for relational dynamics between those in the minority and the dominant, and in that way affecting certain types of behaviours in an effort to drive social cohesion (Kanter, 1977). Some of these experiences are as a direct response to inclusionary or exclusionary treatment (Shore et al., 2018; Nishii, 2013; Bernstein et al., 2020; Mor Barak et al., 2016). Minorities adopt coping mechanisms in order to fit in, survive and succeed in organisations with dominant organisational cultures (Kanter, 1977; Ibarra, 1999; Slay & Smith, 2011).

2.2. Social Identity Theory

Because of the widespread historical conflict based on social identities, Tajfel and Turner (1979) used the Social Identity Theory as a way to understand the driving factors in intergroup conflicts. The theory forms part of social psychology theories that are used to explain such phenomenon, which are mainly described in two camps. The Social Cognition approach describes discriminatory behaviour rooted in individual inner psychological issues (Yıldırım et al., 2020). This approach emphasises individualism and the understanding of oneself from that standpoint. On the other hand, the intergroup approach, which the Social Identity Theory is an example of, explains behaviour as rooted in the nature of social structures and social interactions (Yıldırım et al., 2020). Turner and Oakes (1986) argued that it is simply not plausible to think of individuals outside of their social experience, and that this reductionism becomes unhelpful when aiming to understand how individuals interpret the world as members of social structures. Janssens and Steyaert (2020) agree that individualism neglects to look at how individuals interact with each other, and describe such interaction as a more complex process.

Tajfel and Turner (1979) explained that in building individual identities, people categorise themselves into different groups. Part of this process is then how an individual self identifies (Tajfel & Turner, 1979). People desire to fit into a certain group. It creates a perception of integrated oneness (Ashforth & Mael, 1989). When a group of people perceive themselves as part of one social identity group, they share an emotional connection to this common understanding of self and 'us'.

Differentiation between social groups maintains their social standing. For the dominant group, identifying their difference with their social standing is a way of maintaining their social superiority, while keeping the non-dominant group in an inferior state (Tajfel & Turner, 1979). In other words, people's perceptions of their own identity groups is not sufficient; it also has to be placed against another group through comparison. These intergroup comparisons are part of what causes cohesion within the group, but causes conflict and competition across social identity groups (Tajfel & Turner, 1979).

Through such comparisons, members of an in-group think better of those within their group than those outside, which translates into them treating those outside their social identity group differently, potentially leading to prejudicial or discriminatory behaviours, which is referred to as in-group bias (Tajfel & Turner, 1979). The out-group is made up of people who do not form part of the specific social identity group, and this makes the bias even more prevalent, because sometimes people are unaware of this bias even existing (Tajfel & Turner, 1979). This is significant in the context of a workplace where employees from different backgrounds need to form cohesive teams that work towards achieving common business goals. In theory, the use of cultural boundary spanning can be used to bridge the identity boundaries between people in order to achieve cohesive teams (Ernst & Yip, 2009). Cohesive teams are needed to achieve all business objectives that deliver results from collaboration (Manev & Stevenson, 2001). In most cases, leaders inherently form part of the dominant group, even Black leaders who are a minority within their organisation (Ernst & Yip, 2009). However, given that Black leaders fall within both the dominant group (organisations' leaders) and also the less dominant group (historically disadvantaged groups), they could be utilised to fulfil a unifying effect to break down these cultural boundaries. However, Haslam and Reichter (2006) assert that these boundaries are permeable and should not be seen as permanent. This means that out-groups can move be in a position to move into the in-group. An example that can be made of this is the attainment of education, which allows for mobility from one class to another.

One tactic utilised in boundary spanning is the creation of a neutral zone, where engagements are based on individual personal interactions, as opposed to cultural identities (Ernst & Yip, 2009). The common identity is then elevated, based on organisational goals, and the demotion of cultural and ethnical identity. Manev and Stevenson (2001) explained that there was a correlating relationship with influence and boundary spanning. Given that leaders have higher influence in organisations, they are therefore better placed to perform boundary spanning (Ernst & Yip, 2009). This creation

of neutral spaces is said to break down in-group and out-group conflict, explained through the Social Identity Theory.

Most significantly, the Social Identity Theory also explains a strong connection between individual self-esteem and social identity. People desire to belong to groups that have perceived distinct positive identities or a higher social status (Mor Barak et al., 2016). The implications for this need to belong in the workplace are important within the context of creating a sense of belonging for all employees. It also raises the need for creating an environment where employees perceive that they have equal chances of growing their individual careers and can contribute to the success of their organisation. Therefore, the use of boundary scanning contributes to lessening the 'us and them' dynamics that can exist because of social ethnic differences (Schotter et al., 2017).

Other theorists have expanded on this concept by arguing that intergroup conflict is caused only when social identity differences create psychological meanings that perpetuate the status rankings and access to resources in ways that "reinforce historical and societal trends" (Nishii, 2013, p. 1755). In other words, the conflict does not arise merely from arbitrary superficial differences, but rather from ways that trigger historical memory and the interpretation of a perpetuation of injustice for members of historically marginalised groups. Organisations therefore have a critical role to play in countering this historical memory within the work environment, as employees do not live in bubbles within organisations, but are influenced by their social experiences even outside the work environment, through the various forms of discrimination.

2.2.1. Discrimination

Discrimination is defined as unfair, negative actions being metered out against people of historically marginalised groups, based on their status as members of their social identity (Yıldırım et al., 2020). Their status is generally lower than that of the more dominant social identity groups. This has multiple implications, including the potential barriers for economic functioning in society, which results in what Yıldırım et al. (2020) term as "cultural, political and spatial exclusion" (p. 3). Discrimination in the workplace prevents people from accessing the jobs they desire, despite their qualifications, potential career advancement and general opportunities for development (Yıldırım et al., 2020). There is a distinction between overt forms of discrimination and those that are subtle, which are more likely to be viewed as legitimate in the workplace, while playing a significant role to disengaging those from less dominant social groups (Shore et al., 2018). These covert forms of

discrimination are also known as micro-aggressions, which spill over from society into the workplace (Nkomo et al., 2019). Micro-aggressions are subtle and sometimes non-verbal and offensive put downs (Mokoena, 2020). Although subtle, they are still powerful in making individuals who belong to the historically disadvantaged or marginalised groups feel inferior.

Carrell and Dittrich (1978) argued that employees who perceive that they are discriminated against or 'inequitably treated' will seek to reduce the impact of that discrimination by "cognitive distortion of inputs and / or outcomes, by directly altering inputs and / or outcomes, or by leaving the organisation" (p. 203). This means that the thinking patterns of those who experience discrimination are negatively affected and might resort to a coping mechanism to counter the harm (Tajfel & Turner, 1989). When conflict occurs in the workplace, driven by social identity differences, it causes substantial stress in the individual, which can only be remedied through formal organisational programmes of intervention (Booysen, 2007). Alleyne (2006) described workplace discrimination as workplace oppression, juxtaposing it to the oppression faced by Black people during slavery and colonialism, which was a severe cause for stress and trauma.

These thinking patterns are part of the psychological effects of experiencing discrimination against members of historically marginalised groups (Yıldırım et al., 2020, Li, 2019; Hewlin, 2003; Carrell & Dittrich, 1978). Discrimination causes stress, demoralisation, a lower self-esteem and other associated psychological problems (Yıldırım et al., 2020). Furthermore, it might lead to lower levels of productivity. Victims of discrimination in the workplace also have a lower sense of belonging, which has negative effects on their job satisfaction, as well as their psychological well-being (Yıldırım et al., 2020). Some scholars (Li, 2019) recognise that it might be especially difficult to gain commitment from those individuals belonging to the social identity groups that are historically underrepresented in management positions in the various organisations, because of their predisposition to receive discrimination in and outside the workplace. Senior leaders in organisations set the tone for what the acceptable norms and values are in an organisation, tacitly or implicitly.

Carrell and Dittrich's (1978) research on perceptions of discrimination revealed that 'equitably-treated' employees and those whose expectations were met, were more content and less stressed than those who were not experiencing the same equity. This means that it could be argued that those who experience equitable treatment are

privileged in a multiplicity of ways, as they are receiving the actual treatment of equity; at a psychological level they are less distressed; and they also merely forming part of the dominant in-group. The antithesis is then applied to those who experience inequitable treatment. The equity norm suggests that people behave differently when they perceive that they will equitably rewarded (Carrell & Dittrich, 1978).

In Carrim and Nkomo's (2016) study of female Indian managers, being promoted to leadership roles and adopting the managerial identity did not protect them from experiencing exclusion and discrimination. Slay and Smith (2011) argued that professional roles provide prestige for those who occupy them; however, for stigmatised or discriminated individuals, this level of privilege is tainted.

2.2.2. Structural racism

Structural racism is described as prejudice that is reproduced in institutions, by laws, practices and processes, and one that is even embedded in the economic structures of a country (Bailey et al., 2021). The term is at times interchanged with systemic racism, as it denotes the interconnection of the different structural systems that racism is embedded in. This can extend to the quality of education that is received by dominant groups as opposed to historically marginalised groups, which then influences how they are able to contribute and participate economically in a society. An example is the migrant labour system in South Africa and apartheid's spatial geography, which had put Black South Africans on the periphery of centres of economic activity, with significant socio-economic ramifications (Mokoena, 2020). Bailey et al. (2021) argue that even the normalisation of the perception that Black disadvantage is intrinsic, is also a demonstration of structural racism. The power of institutionalised racism lies in its covert nature, which makes any attempts to challenge it very complex (Khumalo, 2018).

Systemic racism extends to social systems that are sometimes not even questioned, because they have been normalised, and moves beyond individual prejudices between people (Bailey et al., 2021). O'Dowd (2020) claims that systemic racism assumes White superiority and Black inferiority. The challenges that are brought upon by systemic racism are at many times invisible and tacit in nature, and therefore make it difficult to be addressed directly within the workplace. In spite of this, the findings of Myeza and April (2021) reveal that Black professionals feel that the struggles they experience as a result of structural racism play an important role in building resilience within them.

Because the impact of systemic racism is not one-dimensional, when aiming to tackle its remnants in the workplace, it needs to be an approach that is also systemic. There is also a need for policies to be implemented that can have the necessary power and impact of changing the systems that are in place (Bailey et al., 2021). Mokoena (2020) states that structural imbalances need to be dealt with at a broader societal level.

2.3. The minority status

Majority and minority dynamics within the workplace have a significant impact on the experiences of those who find themselves in the minority position (Kanter, 1977). The proportional numerical dominance versus the minority makes a difference to individuals' social experience, as it influences their behaviours (Kanter, 1977). Numerical dominance in a corporate environment affects the decisions that are made within the boardroom. Therefore, those who are within the minority experience the pressure to ensure that they maintain cordial relationships, so that those relationships can help them when key decisions require consensus agreement. The historical racial power in the workplace in South Africa is still characterised by the reinforced White power and Black powerlessness (Mokoena, 2020).

Leaders shape the culture of organisations (Holder et al., 2015). However, culture within the organisation is built collectively; therefore, it follows that the dominant culture in the leadership team would trickle down to the rest of the organisation. The lack of a critical mass of Black leadership reinforces the powerlessness of the individual Black leader. This creates a situation of what Mokoena (2020) refers to as "pseudo Black management" (p. 27). This refers to people who are in management positions, but lack the appropriate decision-making authority requisite of true leadership.

Skewed groups are those with large numerical dominance of a social category of people with a ratio example of 85:15 (Kanter, 1977). In this instance, those in the majority are dominant (Kanter, 1977). Although in this instance, dominance is referred to from a numerical perspective, dominance can also be in the form of status or power (Booysen, 2007). The dominance that is referred to in this thesis is that which is limited to numerical dominance. The higher the levels of uncertainty, the higher the desire to create a sense of control by those in the dominant position by hiring people who look like them (Hudson et al. 2017) and who will make the same decisions.

The limited numerical dominance of the minority can also have the impact of producing homosocial reproduction for those who are dominant. Homosocial reproduction occurs when members of the dominant group seek homogeneity (Worsley & Stone, 2015). This can also translate into how those in the dominant position perceive talent, as it has a mirror effect. Therefore, they subjectively see talent and potential in those who look like them, who have similar cultural backgrounds, views and visions, making it easier to invest in and promote those people.

According to Worsley and Stone (2015), ethnic minorities face barriers to upward mobility within their organisations, including promotions and salary increases. This is for various reasons, including limited mentors and role models (Worsley & Stone, 2015). Hudson et al. (2017) agree with this assessment and further state that homosocial reproduction perpetuates privilege for those in the dominant position.

It is also important to note that gender, and in this case women, find themselves at a minority in senior roles within most organisations. In the case of Black women, there is an even lower level of representation at senior levels. Together with ethnic minorities, women are generally often underpaid for the work they do, and opportunities for their career growth also tend to be limited as a result of homosocial reproduction (Hudson et al., 2017).

Crenshaw (1989) coined the phrase intersectionality to explain the unique experience of Black women, as they experience discrimination that intersects with race, class and gender. Intersection argues that when Black women are harmed through discrimination, it could be based on any or all of these classifications. Booysen (2007) noted that the authority of Black female leaders might be compromised by their lack of dominance within that space and also by the prejudices and attitudes held by society in general. Black women are therefore marginalised by being placed at the lowest rank of the race and gender hierarchies (Crenshaw, 1989).

Being ranked at the bottom of this hierarchy makes Black women vulnerable to even more covert forms of discrimination. It is for this reason that Holvino (2010) reminded us that systems of oppression are interlocking. The ‘triple jeopardy’ of race, class and gender that Black women face creates further marginalisation for them (Holvino, 2010). Kanter (1977) described minorities as ‘tokens’ in a study of women in the workplace, arguing that three phenomena were associated with minorities when they are grouped within these contexts; visibility; polarisation; and assimilation.

Visibility

Tokens tend to be treated as symbols of the social identity group that they represent rather than as individuals (Kanter, 1977). This is because their salience is unmissable, they essentially 'stick out like a sore thumb'. Race is the most salient categorisation in the South African workplace (Booysen, 2007). The impact of this visibility is that potential successes are glaringly public, and so are potential failures. This brings with it the pressure on tokens to perform at a higher rate than their dominant counterparts (Kanter, 1977). Tokens often perform under conditions that are vastly different to those who are part of the dominant social identity group (Kanter, 1977; Slay & Smith, 2011).

Because they stand out so significantly, they also experience having to carry the burden of being representative for their entire social identity group (Kanter, 1977). Therefore, their actions, behaviours, successes and failures can either positively or negatively affect the prospects of other tokens within their social identity in the future (Kanter, 1977). This symbolic consequence can be a source of added social and emotional stress (Kanter, 1977). These individuals have a pressure to not make any errors, as the burden is one that represents their entire race or gender group (Holder et al., 2015, Myeza & April, 2021). In order to counter this, Black professionals are often forced to place a lot more effort into working harder than their White counterparts, so as not to be perceived as incompetent (Myeza & April, 2021).

In addition, this increased visibility creates what Holder et al. (2015) refer to as hypersensitivity, where their behaviours and actions are closely monitored within the organisation as well as by the external groups. According to Holder et al. (2015), because of their minority status, senior Black women experience far more frequent questioning of their authority within the workplace, regardless of their seniority. Their capabilities are also more likely to be undermined (Holder et al., 2015).

The ironic paradox with physical salient visibility is that many Black professionals often feel a sense of invisibility. This is what Mokoena (2020) refers to as "being treated as though you do not exist" (p. 31). This can be in the form of a lack of acknowledgement or subtleties that include White colleagues refusing to make eye contact or failing to notice their Black colleague's presence (Alleyne, 2006).

Polarisation

Polarisation is the exaggeration of difference between the tokens and the dominants (Kanter, 1977). This creates exclusion for a token, as the commonalities between the dominants are seen in contrast to an exaggerated difference in the token (Kanter, 1977). In the Social Identity Theory, this is conceptualised as the in-group perceiving themselves in a uniquely better way, as they differentiate themselves from the out-group (Tajfel & Turner, 1979; McGinley & Martinez, 2018). Kanter (1977) described this as leading to "boundary heightening and isolation of the token" (p. 972).

However, Holder et al. (2015) argue that Black women often make use of pride in their cultural heritage to counter any micro-aggressions. This can be seen as the use of polarisation to achieve the opposite objective as a coping mechanism to address the exaggerated difference. Instead, the difference is used to create a positive perception, in order to foster a sense of pride. Black women even use shifting behaviours that work towards combatting stereotypes to limit being perceived as outsiders (Holder et al., 2015).

Assimilation

Assimilation makes use of stereotypes of a token's social identity group by the dominants in order to create meaning about them (Kanter, 1977). This can be seen as a form of typecasting, as there are not enough tokens within a skewed group to demystify certain stereotypes; therefore, it is easier to generalise. This creates what Kanter (1977) also described as "role entrapment, which locks the perceptions of expectation by the dominants on the tokens as very limited'. In Slay and Smith's (2011) study of Black journalists, some felt typecast and pigeonholed into writing stories about Black people and the Civil Rights Movement.

The dangers of maintaining a non-diverse workforce, which is largely skewed and having very low numbers of a minority, is that there are too few people to create a 'counter-culture' to the dominant one (Kanter, 1977). The dominant culture might not necessarily be what is best for the organisation. It is also difficult for those in a minority position to gain allies and thus more power within a social group that gains significant traction (Kanter, 1977).

The token position forces individuals to experience performance pressures that open them up to public scrutiny because of their noticeability (Kanter, 1977). In this way, and caused by such pressure, their individual actions are not their own natural ones, and rather an extension of who they represent (Kanter, 1977). They experience fears of failing and the failure resulting in the closing of doors for other people within their social identity group in

the future (Kanter, 1977). Another aspect of these performance pressures is the need to shake off being noticed for their racial identity, and instead rather being known for their competence (Kanter, 1977). They have to work harder to subordinate their external social identity, so that their technical competence is respected and appreciated (Kanter, 1977; Slay & Smith, 2011). This assessment rings true for the South African Black professionals that were interviewed by Myeza and April (2021). Their study revealed that Black professionals tend to work harder as a response to the pressure to prove that they are deserving of their roles. They take it so far as to associate their individual failure as a failure for all Black people, with the potential consequence of blocking other Black individuals from similar opportunities in the future (Myeza & April, 2021).

However, Kanter (1977) noted an ironic contradiction, wherein some tokens tried to maintain a low profile in order to blend into the crowd, while also trying to remain humble about their achievements. This was rooted in a fear of making dominants look bad by being too successful (Kanter, 1977). This is an interesting perception in that although tokens want to prove their competence and success, they believe that this should not be at the expense of humiliating a dominant group or individual (Kanter, 1977). This therefore creates a dynamic where the token must regulate the experience and level of their success in relation to that of a dominant group or individual, so as not to compromise the relationship with the dominants. It can therefore be argued that minorities suffer performance pressures as a double-edged sword; first the pressure to be competent and to manage perceptions of being competent; while at the same time, they have to manage the pressure of trying to fit into the dominant culture. These pressures create a situation where minorities feel that they are carrying their entire race and if they fail, it is a failure not just of themselves as individuals, but that of their entire race (April & Blaas, 2010).

A juxtaposition can be made with how senior female executives are usually numerically rare in most organisations, while they are a majority in the lower ranks (Kanter, 1977). The same can be said in most societies, where there are numerically more women than men; however, societal norms remain with the context of a patriarchal society, placing men in a more dominant position. Therefore, there are significance of being in the majority and it translating to more power has to be challenged.

Given that minorities in senior management levels have their racial identity as a salient feature, which is seen before they speak and are able to demonstrate their competence, they also experience the challenge of mistaken role identification (Kanter, 1977). They

may be mistakenly perceived to belong to roles that are less prominent than the ones they actually hold within the organisation. For example, token senior female consultants being mistaken for secretaries and are treated as though they hold that role (Kanter, 1977). The opposite exists, where the member of the dominant group holds a lower professional role. For example, when a male nurse is referred to as the doctor by an uninformed patient (Kanter, 1977). Mistaken role identification is therefore something that minorities are prone to not only internally by colleagues who may not know any better, but also by external stakeholders. This is in stark contrast to the research by Oosthuizen et al. (2019), which claims that in South Africa, the legislation that is meant to redress the past imbalances in favour of the Black majority who are still a minority in the workplace, is in fact reverse racism. There seems to be a perception that the implementation of EE policies provides special treatment of Black professionals and thereby can be interpreted as them not being as skilled as their White counterparts and thus needing special treatment (Oosthuizen et al., 2019).

2.4. A culture of Inclusion

Organisations can counter their employees having these feelings of being discriminated against by engendering a culture of inclusion. Shore et al. (2018) describe inclusion as involving equal opportunities being given to socially marginalised groups or historically underrepresented groups, and ensuring their participation, while doing the same for members of non-marginalised groups. They make an important point that while diversity can be legislated, as it had been done in South Africa, inclusion on the other hand “stems from voluntary actions” (Shore et al., 2018, p. 177).

These voluntary actions can have positive outcomes on organisational performance, as argued by Bernstein et al.’s (2020) theory of generative interactions. It states that when organisations move from diversity to inclusion, this can lead to an improved organisational performance, which comes from the improved allocation of their human capital (Bernstein et al., 2020). Employees who feel included in decision-making processes are more likely to experience higher engagement levels. Research has shown that this leads to greater organisational performance (Mor Barak et al., 2016). The experience of a sense of belonging in the organisation is a result of both formal and informal processes (Mor Barak et al., 2016; Vohra et al., 2015; Harrison et al., 2018). Employees who perceive their organisation’s environment to be fair and inclusive reciprocate by being more committed

(Li, 2019). This is why the promotion of a climate of inclusion positively affects business (Mor Barak et al., 2016).

Leaders of organisations face the challenge of embedding an inclusive culture, so that employees do not perceive that they are limited by their social identities at work (Nishii, 2013; Bernstein et al., 2020). They can do this by investing in programmes that inculcate this culture of inclusion and by leading by example. Inclusion cannot be reduced to an individual level; instead, it extends through multiple levels for it to be effective (Janssens & Steyaert, 2020). In order to produce inclusionary environments, organisations must accept that it is not a once-off action, but needs to be reviewed, adapted and maintained over time through multiple actions (Janssens & Steyaert, 2020).

A culture of inclusion means that assimilation of the dominant norms does not define or preclude those who are in the minority from opportunities of advancement such as promotions or social acceptance (Vohra et al., 2015). The research is overwhelmingly in agreement that the promotion of both diversity and inclusive practices has benefits for organisations. These include lessening conflict between different identity group employees, enhanced job satisfaction; creativity; and retention (Mor Barak et al., 2016; Vohra et al., 2015; Nishii, 2013; Janssens & Steyaert, 2020; Shore et al., 2018). However, there are others who argue otherwise; for example, Bernstein et al.'s (2020) research showed that in some cases, affirmative action programmes have a negative relational impact on both the minorities who are beneficiaries, and also members of the dominant group. Programmes that only target the improvement of outcomes for members of minority groups have a negative impact on cultivating inclusive work environments, with the unintended outcome of exacerbating negative stereotypes and causing resentment towards the beneficiaries of these programmes (Nishii, 2013). It is for this reason that the solution to this challenge is to create workspaces that are inclusive for all members of employees, comprising both the dominant and the non-dominant social identity groups.

There may be the temptation to look at inclusion as a soft issue that is difficult to measure, unlike diversity. However, there are tools available in order to evaluate the culture of inclusion in an organisation. These tools include, for example, the Gartner Inclusion Index (Romansky et al., 2021). It makes use of quantitative tools to evaluate employee perceptions around inclusion to give organisations the necessary data to work with, in response to the feedback. The Inclusion Index is another example that provides a measurement framework for organisational inclusion (April & Blaas, 2010). It also provides

an understanding of where an organisation can better place their efforts. In order for inclusion practices to be effective within an organisation, it is important that these practices are measured so that appropriate organisational actions are taken.

2.5. Exclusion

Scott et al. (2013) describe exclusion as “the extent to which individuals perceive that they are ignored or excluded at work” (p. 37). Exclusion is therefore experienced in a manner that can be expressed overtly or covertly, and based on how the receiver perceives it, whether the perpetrator is aware of it or not. Scott et al. (2013) argues that exclusion diminishes psychological well-being, performance at work, and satisfaction with how individuals relate to their colleagues.

Exclusion is experienced as a form of ostracism, which is painful for those going through it (Robinson et al., 2013). Similar to exclusion, ostracism is defined as a “general process of social rejection” (Robinson et al., 2013, p. 205). Exclusionary behaviours isolate and disconnect individuals from otherwise common interactions (Robinson et al., 2013). Kanter (1977) described the sense of distrust that dominants have towards the minority, which leads them to excluding them from informal activities, and forces them to prove that they are trustworthy. When distrust is established, individuals are unable to build attachments that allow for them to be vulnerable (Scott et al., 2013). Members of the minority need to prove loyalty to the dominant group by allowing themselves to be viewed as exceptions and different when compared to other members of their social identity (Kanter, 1977). Minorities must constantly work at proving themselves to the in-group dominants, because “the price of being one of the boys is a willingness to turn occasionally against the girls” (Kanter, 1977, p. 979).

Scott et al.’s (2013) research argues the view that exclusion occurs as a protective measure for the group against those who are being socially deviant. Therefore, it could be interpreted that it implies that it is the fault of the victim of exclusion, because of their inability to conform (Scott et al., 2013). This makes them a target for incivility and exclusion (Scott et al., 2013). This is because they cannot be trusted by the dominant group (Scott et al., 2013; Kanter, 1977). Those in a dominant position experience discomfort when dealing with tokens who do not fit generally accepted stereotypes of that particular minority group (Kanter, 1977).

Köllen et al. (2020) differentiate between job-career related exclusion and social exclusion. Social exclusion is related to how the Social Identity Theory explains the need for individuals to attach themselves to positive identities. Robinson et al. (2013) describe social exclusion as a condition of being denied meaningful social contact. On the other hand, job and career related exclusion has to do with actions that impede the success of individuals (Köllen et al., 2020). Exclusion experienced by minority managers in Carrim and Nkomo's (2016) study was in the form of information networks such as social events. Social exclusion plays a larger role and has more of an emotional impact than job and career exclusion in influencing intentions to leave (Köllen et al., 2020). High-status minority members who hold senior positions in organisations might be able to dominate in the professional formal setting, because of their hierarchal position; however, they lose power in the social informal setting, making them experience exclusion (Kanter, 1977).

Minority group managers are not precluded from experiencing exclusion merely because of the seniority of the roles they hold within the workplace (Carrim, 2019). Instead, they also experience exclusion and discrimination, and find that their competence is often questioned (Carrim, 2019). It also creates a perception among minority group managers that there is a lack of support for them, and this in turn can potentially lead to lower levels of organisational commitment, and ultimately, to intentions to leave (Köllen et al., 2020).

The significance of social exclusion is that the experience of exclusion by one individual colleague is not the same as being excluded by a group of people (Robinson et al., 2013). The latter has far worse psychological consequences, as the individuals are being rejected by a whole group or section of the organisation as opposed to one insignificant part. Being in the minority therefore amplifies the feelings of ostracisation further than if this were to be an experience caused by a larger collective function (Robinson et al., 2013; Carrim & Nkomo, 2016). When these types of experiences are undergone as a group, it is a more cushioned experience than when one is alone in a minority position (Leigh & Melwani, 2019). Robinson et al. (2013) argue that it can lead to interpersonal deviance, withdrawal behaviours and lower performance.

According to Scott et al. (2013), however, victims of exclusion also play a role in their mistreatment. They do this by not playing by the rules of the game, which violate the trust and expectations from those in the dominant position (Scott et al., 2013). When individuals who are in the minority in an organisation display behaviours that are interpreted by others to threaten the group, such behaviour then precipitates the response of exclusion towards

the individuals. In a sense, Scott et al.'s (2013) explanation 'justifies' or rationalises the exclusion, and provides for interesting scenarios or conditions under which it could occur. They do so by explaining that "incivility and distrust are related to the exclusion of those who violate norms central to social exchange" (Scott et al., 2013, p. 44). This view provides a different perspective of how victims of exclusion could potentially mitigate their mistreatment, by aligning themselves to the behaviour or the code of behaviour expressed by the dominant group, in order not to have their difference in being, thinking, or behaviour, be interpreted as incivility or an affront by those in the majority and dominant position.

2.5.1 Psychological impact of exclusion

Exclusion can have negative psychological impacts on people who experience it, where they will experience emotions such as alienation, helplessness and depression (Robinson et al., 2013). The vast majority of people have a fundamental need to belong (Tajfel & Turner, 1979; Robinson et al., 2013). Exclusion takes away this sense of belonging to a group. From the Social Identity Theory perspective, it is the need to form part of the in-group, which provides an individual with a more secure sense of self and higher self-esteem (Robinson et al., 2013; Tajfel & Turner, 1979).

Similarly, this can cause minorities to become hyper vigilant of the behaviours they display as well as their reactions to others. This is what is described as stigmatic stress (Alleyne, 2006). It causes stigmatised, ostracised or excluded individuals to become overly sensitive, which could be interpreted by others as these individuals over-reacting in their interpretations of why they receive certain reactions or treatment.

Ibarra (1999) argued that people experiment with "provisional selves that serve as trials for possible but not yet fully elaborated professional identities" (p. 764). His research with professionals transitioning into senior roles revealed that this process includes three tasks; first is the observation of role models to identify potential identities to adopt; second, there is an experimentation with 'provisional selves' or potential identities; and third, there follows an evaluation of these potential identities against internal standards and the feedback they receive (Ibarra, 1999). They construct new ways of being, while transitioning into these roles and adopting new styles, attitudes and routines (Ibarra, 1999). The scarcity of minorities in senior roles within organisations might limit the development of available role models in the creation of professional identities (Slay & Smith, 2011). Therefore, these individuals have to mimic the behaviour of White senior leaders (Carrim, 2019). Interestingly, in Carrim's (2019) study of minority group Indian

managers who adopted White male lifestyles, they were perceived to have better upward mobility within their careers compared to those who did not mimic such behaviour.

Being promoted to, or being offered a more senior role in business requires one to not only have the requisite technical skills, but also adopt the social norms on how to behave within that role (Ibarra, 1999). Failure to adopt these social norms could limit the individual's effectiveness within the role and their ability to act within the role (Ibarra, 1999). This gradually produces an internalisation of corresponding identities that serve the particular purpose within the workspace (Ibarra, 1999). Given that people feel the need to modify their professional identity, it is important to have a better understanding of this concept (Ibarra, 1999).

Ibarra (1999) argued that the process of socialisation includes conformity of the individual as they negotiate how they adapt to specific environments. Over time, they develop their own way of functioning within the role, which then becomes a combination of their own identity and what they have learned as being acceptable for the role (Ibarra, 1999).

When explaining how minorities in the US feel in the context of increased awareness about police brutality, Leigh and Melwani (2019) argue that they experience identity fusion "that involves the blurring of organisational and social identities through both affective and cognitive pathways" (p. 564). This means that any threat to their social identity that they experience outside the organisation is also one they perceive to exist within, although not in the same way. This could further be explained by stating that it is a question of safety, because minorities do not feel safe in society and this also translates into the way they feel within the organisations they work for (Leigh & Melwani, 2019). In response to this finding, their research reveals that minorities often have to turn on and off their social identities when they enter the workplace. This means they are constantly having to dial up or down those parts of their identity that either work for them or against them in the workplace. While Carrell and Dittrich (1978) argued that employees in such situations might end up leaving an organisation because of this pressure, Hewlin (2003) revealed that some employees found it easier to rather pretend and create facades of conformity than take on the cost of leaving. He explained that this then becomes a "survival mechanism" (p. 634).

2.6. Coping Mechanisms

Cronqvist et al. (1997) explained that there are different factors that influence how people cope with stress, depending on their life experiences, gender, culture, and social aspects. These coping mechanisms are also dependant on the situation and the meanings attached to them. The literature suggests that minorities make use of coping mechanisms when dealing with exclusionary work environments (Myeza & April, 2021; DeCuir-Gunby et al., 2019; Holder et al., 2015).

DeCuir-Gunby et al. (2019) distinguish between adaptive coping mechanisms and maladaptive coping mechanisms. Adaptive coping mechanisms are those that utilise positive approaches to managing stress such as seeking emotional support, forming professional networks, and turning to spirituality (DeCuir-Gunby et al., 2019). Maladaptive coping mechanisms are considered to be unhealthy approaches to dealing with stress. They are associated with the suppression of feelings, and social withdrawal that may lead to physiological sickness such as hypertension (DeCuir-Gunby et al., 2019; Cronqvist et al., 1997). Maladaptive coping mechanisms often lead to increasing stress levels, instead of reducing stress.

At times, Black people use the strategy of denying the existence of racism as a way of not having to deal with it directly in the workplace. They might even try to use social class as a way to disassociate themselves from their race, as a way to avoid experiencing racism (Myeza & April, 2021). By doing this, they adopt and internalise the values and beliefs of the oppressor (Allenyne, 2006).

According to DeCuir-Gunby et al. (2019), refusing to confront racism directly increases stress, as it is a form of problem or conflict avoidance. This coping strategy is therefore considered to be a maladaptive strategy. However, the avoidance coping mechanism might well be considered effective by those who utilise it, because it achieves the objective of reducing conflict. Cronqvist et al.'s (1997) work revealed that tension modulating behaviour is lower during higher stress levels. This could possibly explain the reason this coping mechanism is used by some individuals.

2.6.1. Identity adaptations, formations and renegotiation

Although the Social Identity Theory concentrates on the identity of oneself as seen against one's social group, it recognises that an individual can have multiple identities (Tajfel &

Turner, 1989). For example, a person can identify herself as a gendered woman, belonging to a specific racial group, and also as a professional teacher, and form part of the local hockey team – these are four different social identity groups. The statistics show that senior managers who are members of historically marginalised groups are minority members of senior leadership teams in South Africa. Such teams comprise individuals, where 56,1% are White senior managers, and most of them White, compared to 23,5% Black Africans in senior management positions, as reported by the Commission for Employment Equity (2020).

The Social Identity Theory shows that people's level of self-esteem leads to them having the desire to belong to groups that have perceived distinct positive identities or a higher social status (Mor Barak et al., 2016). An individual's positive identity is largely dependent on their group membership (Nkomo, 1992). The Social Identity Theory further explains how the status among people in dominant groups (in-groups) and those in the non-dominant groups (out-groups) creates identity problems for those in the out-groups (Tajfel & Turner, 1979). This is based on the perception that there is an internalisation of a sense of inferiority by the out-group members (Tajfel & Turner, 1979). This may cause members of this group to reject aspects of their own social identity group, because it is perceived as being 'less than' whatever they compare themselves to.

In line with this thinking, people who are members of the lower social identity group (in the case of South Africa, it would be Black Africans) may behave in such a manner that they reject what links them to their social group, a group that they may perceive to be inferior, whether consciously or subconsciously. In the workplace, this can be played out in the form of personal behaviour, or through their relations with colleagues and subordinates. Their perception of what is acceptable could then be shifted towards what is more acceptable by the dominant social identity group (Tajfel & Turner, 1979).

Ramarajan and Reid (2013) argue that employees negotiate their personal and professional identities. The more aligned individuals are to their organisational identity, the less critical they will be of its practices, as there is alignment between their two identities (Ramarajan & Reid, 2013). The opposite is also true when there is misalignment between their social identity and the work identity. It is then easier for these individuals to see power relations as a constraint within the organisation (Ramarajan & Reid, 2013). Carrim (2019) reports that although being in a more senior role placed the minorities in that study in a higher hierarchical space in the workplace, "their racio-ethnic identity placed

them in a lower position, and they were not awarded the respect that should go with such a post" (Carrim, 2019, p. 16). In this case, they renegotiated their identities within these roles by becoming more forceful towards their White employees (Carrim, 2019).

Ibarra (1999) argued that the basic assumption was that people's professional identity is built over time, and therefore, it is more fluid and adaptable. There is an interplay of identities that move in two opposite directions: The one is the high status identity, and the other identity is one of a very low status, and Black senior leaders can easily find themselves being confronted by both identities. Although the professional identity is built over time, it constantly intersects with the other identities held by individuals (Ibarra, 1999).

2.6.2. Adaptations of professional identities

Given that all managers (and not only Black managers or leaders) are attached to multiple identities linked to their personal social identity groupings, together with their professional ones, they find themselves constantly having to renegotiate and adapt their sense of self (Carrim, 2019; Ibarra, 1999). Ibarra (1999) argued that people convey personas that they want people to believe about them, linked to perceptions they want to create within the professional roles they hold, for example, perceptions such as having business acumen and competence in a process of constant adaptation. Part of this adaptation is the adoption of role models who are mimicked. More often than not these role models will be people in the dominant social identity group because there is more of them in leadership positions. Some of these identities may be in line with pre-existing identities held by the individuals; however, other identities may not be in line and need more time to be developed further (Ibarra, 1999). The notion of provisional selves is therefore an important one in understanding the professional identity (Ibarra, 1999).

Slay and Smith (2011) spoke of redefinition rather than the adaptation process referred to by Ibarra (1999). They argued that redefinition occurs when individuals begin to develop a unique sense of self based on the positive perceptions in Black identity (Slay & Smith, 2011). In other words, positive perceptions about their own racial identity make a difference to how they perceive themselves. Slay and Smith (2011) referred to historically marginalised people as stigmatised cultural identities. This reaction to the perceived stigmatised self by gaining a sense of pride for one's racial identity is a coping mechanism. They argued that such stigmatised Black people are unlikely to take part in the adaptation process, which would include the task of identifying role models in the organisation or responding to external feedback (Slay & Smith, 2011). While there is a limited number of

Black role models in most organisations, they question the credibility of the feedback they receive from these seniors who may not view Black people in the same way as they do (Slay & Smith, 2011).

2.6.3. Subordinating 'Blackness' in the workplace

Another coping mechanism for Black professionals is the need to subordinate their race in the workplace in order to be taken seriously (Slay & Smith, 2011). Work environments that are inclusive provide a much safer space for people to integrate their non-work social identities and their work identities (Ramarajan & Reid, 2013).On the other hand, exclusionary environments drive individuals towards hiding their social non-work identities and separating them from their work identities (Ramarajan & Reid, 2013). They believe that they have to rather focus on the work and not be distracted by issues relating to their social identities.

Minorities who hold down so-called token positions tend to experience resentment from the dominants, as their presence heightens the awareness of possibly problematic cultural norms that may have previously been taken for granted (Kanter, 1977). Therefore, dominants would like to rather focus on "get[ting] on with business" (Kanter, 1977, p. 975). Their overtly expressed preference for focusing on business, and undervaluing or underestimating the impact of the introspection of problematic and discriminatory practices, is also a way that dominants model what it means to be in power. By implication, in order to be more powerful and to be taken seriously in senior positions also means subordinating issues or challenges of social and racial identity, while elevating business demands, goals and strategies. This means that many members of the minority of Black leaders, who are in these senior positions, also adopt this pragmatic attitude. Therefore, they take on the role of being "instruments of an underlining rather than an undermining majority culture" (Kanter, 1977, p. 976). Thereby, they also model the same approach to other, more junior Black staffers, who will learn that this is what it takes to be at the top as a member of a previously marginalised group. Therefore, they internalise and normalise the dominant culture's behaviour without seeing anything wrong with it. Crocker and Major (2003) pointed out that "the more members of a lower status groups endorse ideologies that legitimise their lower status, the less likely they are to attribute rejection by a member of a higher status group to discrimination" (p. 235). The term internalised oppression is also used to describe this behaviour where minorities fortify the dominant culture (Alleyne, 2006).

Alleyne's (2006) research into the psychological effects of workplace oppression interpreted the subordination of blackness as a form of internalised oppression. Internalised oppression is form of preserving the oppressive status quo, while it is being supported by those who are being oppressed, as they have reached a point where they have unconsciously normalised their position of inferiority (Alleyne, 2006). Therefore, the reaction of subordinating race could be seen as a reaction that only benefits those who are dominant and thus, this is a form of internalised oppression.

This is a form of muting an individual's dominance in a group, because of their relative sub-ordinance in another group (Booysen, 2007). Because stigmatised identities are deemed to be inferior or tainted, their career journeys are uniquely different to those of other dominant groups (Slay & Smith, 2011). This is because they have to play a juggling act of managing perceptions of their stigmatised identities, while also focusing on delivering results and thereby proving their competence, with the additional pressure of avoiding failure.

Slay and Smith (2011) conducted a study on Black journalists, and found that in order to be taken seriously as professionals, race had to become a non-issue. They illustrated this by noting that "White media outlets often seemed to suggest that Black journalists needed to subordinate their racial identity to be successful, that is journalists needed to behave in ways similar to White reporters" (Slay & Smith, 2011, p. 101). Although this was the expectation in the workplace, the opposite was expected from their Black readers who are an important stakeholder group (Slay & Smith, 2011). The act of ignoring 'blackness' was hugely looked down upon by Black readers (Slay & Smith, 2011). This contrast left them with feelings of being "shunned by the in-group and [by the] out-group" (Slay & Smith, 2011, p. 101). This profound responsibility of carrying a racial identity that has been historically marginalised could be seen as a great burden for individuals who take on senior positions and extra responsibilities.

2.6.4. Facades of conformity

Facades of conformity are defined as "false representations created by employees to appear as if they embrace organisational values" (Hewlin, 2003, p. 634). Employees do this by hiding their true feelings through conscious efforts they make in order to fit in. Fitting in does not only have social or superficial implications, but this can also be a determinant of other rewards such as salary increases, and possible promotion opportunities (Nkomo, 1992). The more subjective an environment is in how it controls its

reward system, the more pressure its employees will have to create these facades (Hewlin, 2003). This is closely related to what is referred to as complying, where individuals outwardly make it seem as though they accept the norms and comply with them, whereas internally they do not (Ramarajan & Reid, 2013).

Minority groups are most vulnerable to practising this survival mechanisms by choosing to mask their social identity at work in order to display conformity to the majority's status quo in order to prove competence and create an impression that they are non-threatening (Leigh & Melwani, 2019; Hewlin, 2003). Facades of conformity are a way in which employees manage the impressions of themselves within the work environment (Hewlin, 2003). It is a mechanism to manage one's reputation, and it helps members of historically marginalised groups manage the impressions that have been created about them in the workplace, which influence how others perceive them. Another notion closely linked to facades of conformity is the idea of assimilation. Assimilation is described as a one-way linear process, whereby non-European people take on European traits in order to fit into the dominant culture (Nkomo, 1992).

Employees do this because they may perceive that the organisational culture is not inclusive enough to be accepting of their authentic social identity (Ramarajan & Reid, 2013). Members of historically marginalised groups who are in senior management roles are not the norm, but rather exceptions in the workplace and society for the status they hold from these positions. Not fitting into organisational norms could be detrimental for their progression, as it reminds their counterparts of their external lower status through their outer or non-work identity, putting them in potentially compromising positions (Ramarajan & Reid, 2013). This is because the image of an ideal worker does not fit into the demographic which they occupy or represent (Ramarajan & Reid, 2013).

Leigh and Melwani's (2019) work suggests that individuals activate their work identity when they step into the work environment, and deactivate their social identity. However, aspects of their social identities do not remain completely deactivated, as there are some aspects that remain passively active (Leigh & Melwani, 2019). The Social Identity Theory explains this by describing how members of a social group identify themselves in comparison to another (Tajfel & Turner, 1979). The basic premise of wanting to enhance one's self-esteem by being associated with a social group that is perceived as better is also what may drive this interplay of work and non-work identities.

Therefore when individuals perceive that their social group does not maintain a positive social identity, they may have the desire to leave the group (Tajfel & Turner, 1979; Turner & Oakes, 1986). This is easier for social identity groups that are not attached to something such as race, age or gender, as it is not something one can ignore or walk away from. However, it is possible to disassociate oneself from what is perceived behaviours or actions of one's social identity group, so as to seem different and more accepted by the more dominant group (Kanter, 1977).

Hewlin (2003) argued that new employees tended to conform with the organisational cultures by receiving cues about what was acceptable and how things were done in the organisation. They argued that some employees feel a pressure to suppress their feelings and pretend to take on the organisational values. However, not behaving in an authentic manner is emotionally demanding (Hewlin, 2009). Work pressures to emulate the dominant culture also influence how minority group individuals choose to balance their work and non-work social identities (Ramarajan & Reid, 2013). It is perceived that exclusionary practices create the pressure for minority employees to reject their personal non-work social identities (Ramarajan & Reid, 2013).

While Carrell and Dittrich (1978) had argued that employees in these situations may end up leaving an organisation, Hewlin (2003) countered this by saying that others will find it easier to rather pretend than take on the cost of leaving, as stated above. The decline in job security, and declining economic activity in an economically depressed country may add to feelings of insecurity among employees, who prefer to take on facades of conformity to fit into dominant social identities (Ramarajan & Reid, 2013).

This demonstrates the importance of a perceived culture of inclusion in the workplace, which creates a sense of psychological safety for all employees of all backgrounds to be authentically themselves as long as their authenticity does not conflict with ethical standards, company rules and legal standards. Employees do not only have legally binding contractual agreements with their employees, they also have a psychological contract with them (Mousa, 2019). When employees perceive their work environment as being inclusive, they perceive that their employers are also living up to this psychological contract and providing a safe environment, one they may not necessarily be experiencing outside the organisation (Mousa, 2019). Therefore, a positive and inclusive psychological contract enables employees to have trust and commitment towards their organisations.

The creation of an inclusive environment in the workplace is critical for how learning organisations should behave to enable employees to perceive that they belong, regardless of them being members of non-dominant social identity groups. Well thought through identity-conscious programmes are known to produce the best results for creating a culture of inclusion in organisations (Li, 2019). Kofman and Senge (1993) described learning organisations as those that resist fixed cultural norms, and as spaces for "generative conversation and concerted action" (Kofman & Senge, 1993, p. 16). They argued that such conversations allow for common understanding being achieved as people connect. This is correlated with strong role modelling from the top, starting with the CEO and his leadership team who have to act in an authentic manner (Li, 2019).

Learning organisations seek to gain a deeper understanding of the challenges that face them, rather than merely looking for quick fixes (Kofman & Senge, 1993). In many ways, this can be argued as what is required for building inclusive environments, as it is a complex process that is reflective of societal challenges. This means that for an organisation to begin to become inclusive, it needs to develop the characteristics of a learning organisation. Ultimately, for organisations to remain competitive and sustainable, they need to be agile, dynamic and responsive to the current social order, closely linking themselves to what is required for their employees to thrive and produce the targeted business outcomes (Li, 2019).

2.6.5. Employee commitment

Meyer et al. (2018) recognise that employees can experience commitment to their companies in different ways. The three-component model argues that commitment can be judged through three lenses: first, a desire to remain employed within an organisation known as affective commitment; second, the perceived obligation to remain in the organisation, known as normative commitment; and third, the perceived cost of leaving known as continuance commitment. These types of commitment can be experienced at different levels and at different points in an employee's career journey within an organisation. Also, an individual can experience one or two aspects without the others, for example, continuance commitment without normative or affective commitment (Meyer et al., 2018; D'souza et al., 2017).

An employee's commitment to an organisation speaks to their long-term loyalty to the organisation (D'souza et al., 2017). It is dependent on an individual's perception of the organisation. Factors that influence this perception are opportunities for promotion,

growth, and role clarity (D'souza et al., 2017). D'souza et al. (2017) argue that cultural intelligence can also play a role in an employee's commitment. They define cultural intelligence as the ability to adapt to cultural differences and managing them effectively (D'souza et al., 2017). Cultural intelligence leads to a reduction in conflict (D'souza et al., 2017). Cultural intelligence can therefore contribute to a culture of inclusion that allows for employees from different cultures to work together effectively.

Leaders play a critical role in times of organisational change, and their full commitment to an organisation is required for the successful implementation of change initiatives (Meyer et al., 2007). The importance of commitment also relates to the individuals' willingness to go above and beyond the minimum requirements of their job descriptions (Meyer et. a., 2007).

The concept of paradoxical contentment argues that when members of a minority do not realise that they are being discriminated against (even if they are), they do not experience dissatisfaction (Crocker & Major, 2003). This can explain the importance of the employees' perception of an inclusive culture. When employees perceive that the environment is inclusive, their commitment levels are higher (Meyer et al., 2007; D'souza et al., 2017; Virick, et al., 2004).

It is important to note the role of job satisfaction in employees' commitment to the organisation and their job. Job satisfaction is described as attitudes towards the job (Nzukuma & Bussin, 2011) and the feelings derived from executing the job well. Research has found that there is an inverse relationship between employees' commitment and job satisfaction (Nzukuma & Bussin, 2011). Therefore, it is expected that the levels of satisfaction that senior Black leaders experience within their jobs would be highly influential to their organisational commitment.

2.6.6. Intentions to leave

Intention to leave is used as a synonym for turnover intention, which refers to a process that an employee goes through when considering to leave an organisation (Kim et al., 2021). The term turnover refers to the act of leaving or resigning from an organisation. These two terms can therefore be used interchangeably (Kim et al., 2021). Intention to leave is experienced as a process triggered by negative psychological responses to a job, or negative feedback derived from others regarding the job and the person holding down the job, resulting in cognitive and behavioural withdrawal (Kim et al., 2021). It starts with

a thought to leave, which may lead to actions that will bring about the eventual result of leaving the organisation (Kim et al., 2021).

Kim et al. (2021) argue that there are several factors that influence intentions to leave an organisation, such as organisational climate, working conditions, management, reward and recognition, individual demographic issues, unmet expectations, and so forth. Managing turnover is important, as high turnover rates have an impact on organisational success (Oprea et al., 2020). This is because there are high costs involved in replacing employees, losses in terms of time, knowledge and skills, which have a negative impact on the competitiveness of an organisation (Oprea et al., 2020).

Booysen (2007) argued that job hopping is a phenomenon experienced among many Black African managers in South Africa, partially caused by their demand as members of this social identity group, and legislation requiring organisations to fill vacant posts with qualifying members of historically marginalised groups. Poaching of highly skilled Black African managers at high premiums has thus become commonplace (Booysen, 2007). While White business owners or managers might interpret this move as an indication of a lack of loyalty, an opportunistic attitude and being motivated merely by income and not job satisfaction, such interpretation could be very different among Black leaders. When understanding such regular turnover from the perspective of the Black African managers, other issues, for example, their perception that they do not fit into the organisation's environment, which speaks to their exclusion in the workplace, can also be seen as a driver of this phenomenon.

However, this view does not take into consideration that professional mobility is now considered more positively and is more frequent than what it was in the past (McGinley & Martinez, 2018), irrespective of the individual professional's race or gender. Therefore, it is not necessarily a negative occurrence that people move around to different jobs, as it is a way for them to leverage their talent and take ownership of their careers (McGinley & Martinez, 2018). This is especially important if they do not consider that the environments they work within are inclusive, where they can grow and develop (D'souza et al., 2017; Crocker & Major, 2003). The ability to move on to other jobs then becomes an important aspect their agency. At the same time, it also means that employers are hesitant to employ someone, and invest into their growth path, when they are likely to leave the organisation after a short time.

Nzukuma and Bussin (2011) argued that senior Black professionals respond to push and pull factors when deciding to leave an organisation. The push factors are related to limited growth opportunities through training and development, and also the discrimination that they experience within the workplace (Nzukuma & Bussin, 2011). The pull factors have to do with their desire for better remuneration, or even acting on their entrepreneurial ambitions. Among Black senior professionals, the level of job satisfaction is highly influential when deciding whether to leave an organisation or not (Nzukuma & Bussin, 2011). Employees are most likely to leave lower paying jobs than the higher paying ones, according to the Human Capital Theory (Nzukuma & Bussin, 2011). People in senior management within organisations are paid much higher salaries or packages than the ordinary workers, which may limit their likelihood of leaving, even if their pay were to be lower than that of their White counterparts. Ultimately, it is not as simple as arguing that Black talent only leaves because there are more or better opportunities for them in the market, but this phenomenon is driven by multiple factors. The Human Capital Theory also suggests that those who have made greater investment in their own futures, such as improvements being made into education, and who have gained the right experience, should also have more career options (Worsley & Stone, 2015). This makes them attractive to the market, and it would follow that they will have more job offers than any average worker.

Ndzwayiba et al. (2018) argue that the term job hopping, when it is used to describe Black professionals in South Africa, has racial undertones, which feed into the stereotypical attitudes held about Black professionals. The notion that Black professionals are job hoppers in South Africa does not take into consideration the exclusion they face in organisations as a result of systemic and institutionalised racism. According to Ndzwayiba et al. (2018), the narrative around Black professionals job hopping associates them with disloyalty and reliability driven by greed. This view is problematic and overtly simplistic in nature, and perpetuates the negative stereotypes about Black professionals. It also does not take into account the agency that Black professionals have in managing their careers (McGinley & Martinez, 2018). It places them in a position where the judgement towards them is harsher than towards their White counterparts who also move to other companies on the grounds similar to those stated by Black professionals. Especially younger professionals, irrespective of their race, might find it difficult to create their career in only one organisation. Added to their need to grow and learn, gaining new experiences and

broadening their skills, they will all need to find the 'fit' with an organisation where they can be authentic and valued.

2.7. Conclusion

Individuals are influenced by multiple aspects of their identities as they conceive of their holistic identities, which includes their racial-ethnic identities and their professional identities. Their conceptions of self and group membership of their social identities are brought within the work environment (Carrim & Nkomo, 2016). Successful career progression is often associated with positive identity formation (Slay & Smith, 2011). However, it is impossible to imagine a career identity being divorced of its social context, which includes race, gender, and other aspects of social classification (Slay & Smith, 2011).

The professional identity plays a critical role in building positive self-images and being part of the in-group, thereby gaining greater status, which is especially important for those who belong to historically marginalised groups (McGinley & Martinez, 2018; Tajfel & Turner, 1979). This is even more significant for those who hold senior positions in their organisations, and who have high levels of professional skills and achievement, as this professional identity provides them with a reprieve from the lower status racial-ethnic social identity (McGinley & Martinez, 2018; Slay & Smith, 2011).

The pressure to fit into dominant cultures is significant for individuals in management or leadership roles within organisations (Carrim, 2019; Hewlin, 2003; Ramarajan & Reid, 2013; Leigh & Melwani, 2019). This is because of the social capital that comes with being in the in-group, and the ability to be more effective when there is agreeability at that level (Carrim, 2019). It then follows that in order to protect oneself against exclusion, conforming to the dominant culture becomes critical. Coping mechanisms utilised by professionals in leadership who belong to historically marginalised groups include conformity in order to gain trust (Hewlin, 2003; Ramarajan & Reid, 2013; Leigh & Melwani, 2019), the subjugation of their external racial-ethnic identities (Slay & Smith, 2011; Ramarajan & Reid, 2013; Kanter, 1977; Crocker and Major, 2003), and the renegotiation of their internal and external identities (Kanter, 1977; Carrim, 2019; Ibarra, 1999).

The literature reviewed has revealed that minority group members have a unique professional experience in the workplace (Kanter, 1977; Slay & Smith, 2011; Booysen, 2007). The literature also reveals that driving a culture of inclusion and cultural intelligence

can be hugely advantageous for organisations with diverse workforces. Inclusion leads to greater employee commitment and reduced intentions to leave (Nishii, 2013; Shore et al., 2018; Mor Barak et al., 2016; Janssens & Steyaert, 2020; Vohra et al., 2015; Harrison et al., 2018; D'souza et al., 2017). Researchers agree that intentions to leave increase as a process that starts with mere thoughts and culminates in actual planning (Kim et al., 2021). It is easier for intentions to leave to surface when an employee sees no congruence between their personal values, and career aspirations with the organisations (Oprea et al., 2020). Higher levels of employee engagement generally lead to lower levels of intentions to leave (Oprea et al., 2020). Therefore, employers have to make greater efforts in designing jobs that are challenging, meaningful and create alignment with people's career aspirations in order to combat intentions to leave (Oprea et al., 2020; Nishii, 2013; Shore et al., 2018). This is especially relevant when it comes to retaining Black talent, especially under conditions where there is intense competition for them in the market, as there are so few Black senior leaders to choose from (Booysen, 2007).

Although there is general consensus in the literature that attrition is negative and not good for business, McGinley and Martinez (2018) provide a parallel perspective. This is by arguing that the current labour market seeks to build career mobility and finds value in the individual's ability to leave organisations (McGinley & Martinez, 2018). This is an important aspect of professionals' ability to take control of their own career trajectory, allowing a greater sense of professional agency. Further to this, leaving an organisation where conflict is experienced is seen as a good way to protect oneself by seeking out other alternatives that may provide for better well-being (McGinley & Martinez, 2018). The literature overall has provided the basis for understanding how Black senior leaders cope with exclusionary organisational environments.

CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH QUESTIONS

3.1 Research Questions

Based on the findings in the literature, the research question for this study was: How do senior Black leaders cope with exclusionary organisational environments in South African organisations, given their paradoxical role of being part of the majority outside their organisations, while at the same time being minorities inside their organisations? In order to answer the main overarching research question, the following supporting research questions were developed:

Research question 1

How do Black leaders cope with exclusionary work environments?

Research question 1 aimed to explore what the Black leaders' perceptions are on exclusionary behaviours in the work environment, and to identify what coping mechanisms are utilised by Black leaders in these environments. This will provide an understanding of how Black leaders conform in order to fit into dominant work cultures.

The lack of conformity immediately places one in the out-group by the in-group from a Social Identity Theory perspective (Tajfel & Turner, 1979). Exclusion can be used to discourage negative behaviour and drive conformity (Kanter, 1977; Scott et al., 2013). The questions posed on conformity evaluated to what extent Black leaders consciously make use of conformity with a dominant culture as a coping mechanism. Exclusion can therefore be seen as a form of ostracism and a punishment for the lack of conformity (Robinson et al., 2013).

Carrim and Nkomo (2016) note that what it means to be a manager or leader in the South African context is a racialised and gendered process, where social cues indicate that the White male identity is the norm. Because of this, it is this identity that is mimicked for leadership positions (Carrim & Nkomo, 2016). Other leaders also mimicked the management styles of White males in management; however, over time, they developed and gained their own management identities (Carrim, 2019).

Research question 2

Do exclusionary organisational environments influence intentions to leave the organisation?

Research question 2 aimed to understand to what extent the racial-ethnic social identity of Black leaders influences how they go about their jobs and behave within their organisations. It aimed to expose whether the experience of exclusion influences intentions to leave an organisation.

Booysen (2007) stated that change is perceived differently by different social identity groups. Transformation may be perceived as too slow by some Black managers, while it is being perceived as too fast-paced by some White managers (Booysen, 2007). Therefore, one's social identity may influence the perceptions on these changes occurring in the workplace. Managers cannot automatically assume that they can be their authentic selves at work, because they have the pressure of needing to be perceived as competent and having the ability to take control (Carrim, 2019). Therefore, the need for senior managers to maintain credibility exists in a heightened manner.

Research question 3

Does the perception of an exclusionary organisational environment lead to a lack of commitment to the organisation?

Research question 3 aimed to understand the influence of the experience of exclusion on the commitment to an organisation. It aimed to shed light on how relationships with colleagues and senior leaders influence the commitment to their organisations. The answers aimed to provide an understanding of how social identity influences relational outcomes with subordinates.

Commitment to an organisation can take different forms for individuals, which ultimately affect their support to their organisations (Meyer et al., 2007). Having an emotional connection to an organisation also has an impact on an individual's commitment. It helps to build a reciprocal relationship of trust between the employer and employee, directly affecting their commitment (Virick, et al., 2004). The literature indicates that the experience of exclusion by minorities' influences can lead to a lack of commitment (Virick, et al., 2004; Meyer et al., 2007; Mor Barak et al., 2016). Part of a leader's commitment is also demonstrated in how they lead their subordinates. Carrim's (2019) study of minority Indian managers revealed that some individuals experienced discomfort in supervising White subordinates, as they were part of a higher-status social identity group. Questions around the influence of social identity provide insights on whether this is relevant for senior Black leaders.

CHAPTER 4: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

4.1. Introduction

This research sough to explore how Black leaders cope with exclusionary organisational environments, given their paradoxical role of being part of a majority outside their organisations, and at the same time being a minority inside their organisations. This chapter discusses the research methodology used in this study. The study adopted a qualitative approach in order to understand the defined phenomenon. The data was collected through semi-structured interviews, which were conducted online, utilising the video conferencing software Zoom and Microsoft Teams.

4.2. Research Method and Design

The research approach that was used for this research was qualitative, because the use of qualitative inductive research allows for new insights to be gained from existing knowledge (Bansal et al., 2018). A post-modern approach was taken in the research design in recognition that there are multiple truths that exist, based on the perceptions and experiences of the actors involved (Saunders & Lewis, 2018). The research was an explorative one, which aimed at gaining new insights on a topic that was not completely understood yet (Gresch et al., 2020). This was achieved by assessing the data in a way that was open to new sourcing the thoughts and insights shared by the participants (Gresch et al., 2020).

The objective was to understand how Black leaders cope with exclusionary organisational environments, given their paradoxical role of being part of a majority outside their organisations, and being a minority inside their organisations. To this end, the research paradigm followed was interpretivism. The paradigm represents a basic belief system that guides a worldview (Guba & Lincoln, 1994). The research approach was inductive. The inductive approach is a bottom-up method that allows for theory development, which occurs as a result of what is presented from the data (Creswell, 2013). Certain conclusions were made from that data, which was used to develop propositions or theories explaining the phenomenon being studied.

The interpretivist approach is non-positivist, concentrating on understanding social reality, with a recognition that understanding the social world requires interpretation (Leitch et al.,

2010). Given that the philosophical approach of this research was that of interpretivism, Black leaders in organisations were seen as the social actors. Interpretivism seeks to observe social actors within their natural environment and interpret their experience (Guba & Lincoln, 1994). This philosophy was appropriate for this research, as interpretivism allowed for exploring the meaning of a phenomenon, as experienced by individuals (Rootman et al., 2017).

Semi-structured interviews were utilised. Although the use of a mixed-method would have possibly provided for richer insights, with perhaps a combination of semi-structured interviews and a follow-up questionnaire, this would have required a longer time horizon (Saunders & Lewis, 2018). Given the time limitations of this research, the mono-method was be used and viewed as the most appropriate to answer the overarching research question, focusing only on semi-structured interviews. Given the short time horizon of this research, it was a cross-sectional study. A cross-sectional study is a “snapshot of a particular research setting at a particular time” (Saunders & Lewis, 2018, p. 129). The data was collected over a five-week period.

This research explored a complex social phenomenon experienced by those interviewed, in line with Lenger’s (2019) description of the goal of qualitative research. Because this was the study of a phenomenon, where the focus was on describing shared experiences, the phenomenological method was utilised (Marjan, 2017). The use of phenomenology was appropriate, as it allowed the researcher to gain subjective views on the experiences of the individuals working in organisations as senior leaders (Sanders, 1982). Phenomenology allowed the researcher to go through a process of making meaning from the descriptions provided (Sanders, 1982).

4.3. Population

The population identified as relevant for this study was senior African Black managers from organisations in South Africa. The sampling technique used for this research was non-probability. A purposive snowball sampling strategy was utilised to collect the data, which focused on people who are experiencing or have had previous experience of the phenomenon being studied (Creswell, 2013). Because of these personal experiences, these participants could therefore be classified as ‘experts’ regarding this phenomenon (Wilson & Washington, 2007). According to Creswell (2013), when trying to understand a phenomenon experienced by a group of similar people, then a homogeneous sample

should be utilised. This is what the researcher utilised for this research. The homogeneity was in the form of their social identities, linked to their racial-ethnic background, and that they were in senior leadership positions. The sample population was that of Black African individuals in leadership roles in organisations in South Africa.

The sample of Black African individuals in senior leadership positions was based on the definition from the Employment Equity Act (1998), classifying them as people in designated groups. Furthermore, the sampling criteria limited participants to individuals in senior management roles, also defined by the occupational levels in the Employment Equity Act (1998). Only individuals either in top management or senior management qualified to be included in the research, based on these sampling criteria.

Therefore, the sampling criteria were:

1 The individual at top management level (C-suite) / Group Exco or reporting directly to the Group Chief Executive; **OR**
2 The individual at a senior management level (reporting line should be into the C-suite);
3 The race of the individual was limited to Black African individuals.

Gender did not form part of the sampling criteria, therefore both men and women were interviewed.

4.4. Unit of Analysis

Ritella et al. (2020) describe the unit of analysis describes the objects that are intended to be studied. The unit of analysis that was utilised was individuals, representing themselves by describing their personal experiences in coping with exclusion in their work environments of their current or previous employers.

4.5. Sampling Method and Size

According to Sanders (1982), a fundamental point about sample sizes in phenomenological research is that interviewing more participants does not necessarily equate to a better quality of the research results. Instead, the researcher is expected to engage deeply with the information provided by a limited number of data sources, and make meaning from this at the point of data saturation (Sanders, 1982).

Data saturation is the point at which adding new participants does not yield any new ideas, also referred to as data saturation (Guest, 2006). For phenomenological studies, it is expected that data saturation may occur after a minimum of six interviews had been conducted for phenomenological studies (Guest et al., 2006). There is a view that recommends between six and eight interviews for a homogeneous sample to reach data saturation; however, Guest et al.'s (2006) research suggested that data saturation is reached at 12 interviews. This is because 92% of the total number of codes identified in their analysis were reached at that point (Guest et al., 2006). To this end, it was initially planned that a minimum of 10 and a maximum of 12 interviews would be conducted for this research. However, a total of 13 interviews were conducted, with data saturation having been reached.

4.6. Measurement Instrument

The study utilised semi-structured interviews, making use of a list of prepared questions, while varying them based on the responses given by the participants (Saunders & Lewis, 2018). The questions were open-ended and probing, in order to allow for maximum participants to openly share their experience. Very few closed ended questions were asked in order to evaluate similarities to certain aspects of the research questions among interviewees, for example finding out whether they had ever resigned at any point in their career due to exclusion.

During the interviews, follow up questions were asked to the participants in response to interesting insight that they provided. This was appropriate for a phenomenological study, as it allowed the researcher to build a rapport with the participants, and facilitating a sense of trust for honest responses to be given (Saunders & Lewis, 2018).

4.7. Data Gathering Process

Data gathering occurred online, utilising the video conferencing software, Zoom and Microsoft Teams, which had become necessary because of the Covid-19 restrictions. The interviews were recorded with the prior permission having been obtained from the participants. Confidentiality was guaranteed to all participants, and signed consent forms provided information about how their confidentiality would be protected in the final research product. The objective of this step was to ensure that participants were as honest as possible.

Phenomenological studies make use of three data gathering techniques: first, interviews, second, studies of secondary research that is used in combination with interviews, and third, participant observation (Sanders, 1982). Observation of participants occurred through the researcher making notes during the interviews. The researcher also made references to how the participants responded, for example, any hesitation in their voices, and so forth.

The data was stored in three forms: It was stored on the researcher's laptop as the primary source; it was also backed up on a cloud; and stored on a separate memory stick for the stipulated minimum period of 10 years.

4.8. Analysis Approach

A textual analysis of the data was conducted after its collection in a consistent manner. In qualitative research, data can be divided into either text or non-text; recorded data may be recorded and transcribed into written text, which is referred back to for the analysis stage of the research (Saunders & Lewis, 2018).

According to Sanders (1982), there are four levels of the phenomenological data analysis. The first level includes a description of what is contained in the transcribed data. The second level goes into an identification of themes, then correlating them. This allows for assertions to be tested as to whether they are true or false. Lastly, an interpretation of these themes was conducted.

This same process was followed for the data analysis, as follows; first, meaningful categories or codes that come out of the data were developed; then patterns that emerged were evaluated deeply. These patterns were be used to understand how these leaders cope with exclusionary practices in their work environments (Lenger, 2019). The use of eidetic reduction was used, which is a process of unveiling patterns that go beneath the surface level understandings through processes of "intuition and reflection" (Sanders, 1982, p. 355). These patterns provided a basis for the themes presented in this research.

4.9. Quality Controls

Following the recording of the interviews, transcriptions that were automatically provided by the software were checked by the research and also with the use of a transcriber. This process was conducted in order to verify the accuracy of the wording in the transcripts and to ensure consistency as is recommended by Guba and Lincoln (1994).

The premise of this type of research is an acknowledgement that multiple truths exist, as within the tradition of interpretivist research, and the purpose is to surface them (Sarma, 2015). However, the researcher aimed to guard against subjectivity, as a Black middle manager, by making an effort to suspend existing biases.

In order to address the credibility of this research, four aspects were addressed (Guba & Lincoln, 1994). These are truth value, applicability, consistency, and neutrality, applied as credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability (Guba & Lincoln, 1994). Credibility refers to how the truthfulness of the findings can be established (Sarma, 2015). For this research, all interview recordings were stored and made available, in line with the University's guidelines.

4.10. Limitations

There will be limitations with regard to generalising the outcomes of this research, in that the comparison of Black leaders' experiences are specific within the South African context. This is a general limitation for phenomenological studies, where generalisations are not made beyond the group that is being studied (Sanders, 1982). Although this may be considered a limitation, for qualitative researchers, generalisability is considered slightly irrelevant as the research is highly contextual (Sarma, 2015).

Sanders (1982) argued that in phenomenological studies, the researcher should suspend all judgements and previously held biases to gain the new knowledge that comes out of the data referred to as "epoché" (p. 358). As Sandberg (2005) stated, phenomenological epoché requires that looking or examining precedes judgement. The way in which phenomenological epoché was implemented in this study was by the research ensuring that first, there was openness to various interpretations of lived experiences; second, participants were asked open-ended questions; and third, all data received was treated as equally important (Sandberg, 2005).

CHAPTER 5: RESULTS

5.1. Introduction

This chapter presents the results of the empirical research conducted to answer the research question: How do Black leaders cope with exclusionary organisational environments, given their paradoxical role of being part of the majority outside their organisations, while being minorities inside their organisations. Given the often public departures of some leaders from companies, it is important to understand how those who stay cope in exclusionary environments, given the fact that there is a plethora of evidence supporting the existence of such environments.

In presenting these results, the chapter starts with the presentation of the participants' demographic details to bring context to the findings of the study and add to its credibility by demonstrating that the right people were sampled for the research. Thereafter, the chapter presents the results in accordance with the supporting research questions as set out in Chapter 3. While these research questions were academic in nature, they were converted into interview questions as outlined in the interview guide attached to this document as Appendix 4.

5.2. Sample Description

A total of 13 interviews were conducted with Black African senior leaders working in organisations in South Africa. Purposive snowball sampling was conducted with referrals from participants and other colleagues being contacted for interview participation. The seniority of the participants was a key consideration of the research; therefore, only C-suite senior leaders who report to a Chief Executive of an organisation, or senior managers, who report to C-suite executives, were interviewed. Another key consideration was the race of the participants, and all were Black African. Table 1 below provides a snapshot of the study's participants and their backgrounds. The sizes of the organisations were based on the number of employees in the organisations, as follows:

a) Small: Under 100 employees
b) Medium: Over 100 – under 1000 employees
c) Large: Over 1000 employees

Female and male respondents participated, with most of the participants (8) being females and a total of five males. Out of the eight female leaders, four were C-suite executives and

the other four were senior managers. Out of the five male leaders, three were C-suite executives, and two were senior managers, as per Table 1 below. Table 2 provides an overview of the complete interviewed sample.

Table 1: Gender distribution

	Males	Females
C-suite	3	4
Senior managers	2	4
Total	5	8
Grand total interviewed	**13**	

Table 2: Overview of sample

Interviewee	Gender	Company Size	Industry	Private / Public sector	Occupational Level
1	M	Small	Financial Services (Investments)	Private	C-suite
2	M	Large	Financial Services (Insurance)	Private	Senior Manager
3	M	Medium	Advertising & communications	Private	Senior Manager
4	M	Medium	Financial Services (Investments)	Private	C-suite
5	F	Large	Financial Services (Banking)	Private	Senior Manager
6	F	Large	Financial Services (Insurance)	Private	C-suite
7	F	Large	Financial Services (Banking)	Private	Senior Manager
8	F	Large	Financial Services (Banking)	Private	C-suite
9	F	Large	Industrial Services	Private	Senior Manager
10	F	Medium	Media	Private	C-suite
11	F	Large	Financial Services (Insurance)	Private	Senior Manager
12	F	Large	Media	Private	C-suite
13	M	Large	Telecom & IT	Private	C-suite

Table 3: Sample Industry variables and minority status

Company size (small, medium, or large)			Industry					Minority or not (from race perspective at occupational level)	
S	M	L	Financial services	Advertising	Media	Telecoms	Industrial services	Minority	Not-minority
1	3	9	8	1	2	1	1	10	3

5.3. Data Saturation

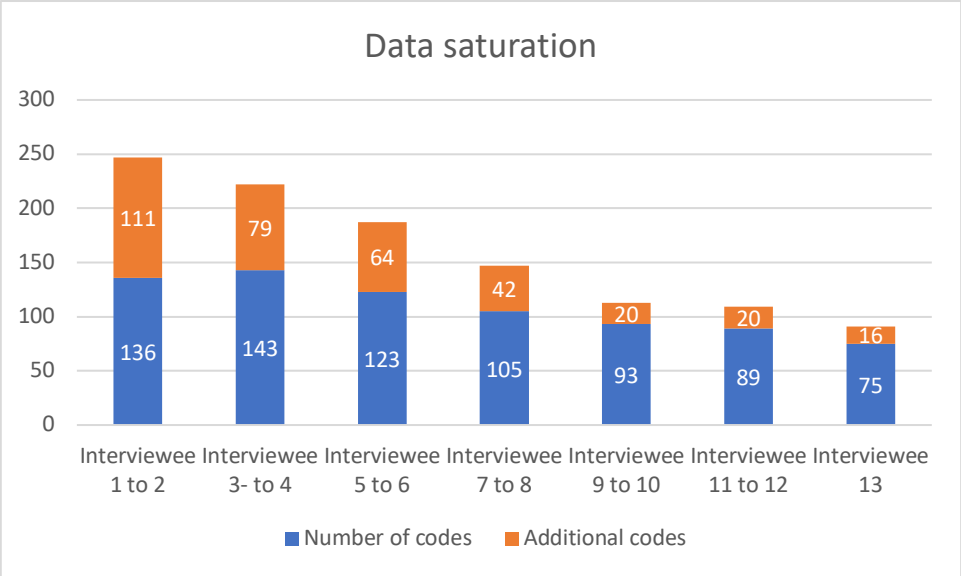


Figure 1: Data saturation of interviews

Guest (2006) argues that data saturation for phenomenological studies is generally reached by the twelfth interview. Fusch and Ness (2015) further state that data saturation is the point at which the data is no longer producing additional themes. It is for this reason that data was no longer collected after interview 13.

5.4. Results for research question 1

How do Black leaders cope with exclusionary work environments?

This research question sought to understand what coping mechanisms are utilised by Black leaders in dealing with exclusion, being experienced as minorities in organisations.

As a starting point to build this understanding, they first expressed their perceptions on exclusion, based on their experiences in their current and past employer organisations.

5.4.1. Perceptions on exclusion

All participants indicate that exclusion exists, where certain groups of people who look the same phenotypically, tend to thrive more than others. This is something that all participants find problematic, but struggle with rationalising whether it was intentional or whether it was a function of unconscious homosocial reproduction. These are some descriptions of what the participants view as exclusionary:

> *"An environment which has, shall I say, a ceiling for a particular set of people, but not necessarily for another set of people. So, in terms of growth, you'll find that certain people grow and get to certain levels, but actually, when you look at their makeup, they are largely similar…and those that don't grow is also sort of largely similar makeup."* – **Interviewee 4**

> *"It's an environment where people only qualify on the basis of demographics and nothing else. Or demographics are a strict criterion, based on whatever the prevailing majority is there"* – **Interviewee 3**

Although the perceptions on exclusion expressed by the participants vary, they mainly focus on the social aspects of exclusion, not necessarily formalised exclusion within the workplace. A key feature is how the social aspects then influence their experience within the formal setting of the work environment. The following main themes emerge as top ways in which senior Black leaders experience exclusion in the workplace.

a) Decision making exclusion
b) Gender stereotyping
c) Promotion limitations
d) Being invisible

5.4.1.1. Decision making exclusion

Decision-making is an important aspect of leadership, and is a very common theme of concern, as a perceived form of exclusion. The participants express that they are often excluded from social activities, which also often results in their colleagues making business decisions in their absence. Many of the leaders seem not necessarily perturbed

by exclusion in social gatherings at a social or superficial level; however, they feel the social setting influences the formal work setting.

> *"It's where people because they have friends or they know each other, they have the same community, same demographics meet on a Sunday afternoon, over a braai and decisions are made. By the time you get into a boardroom the next morning, you kind of feel like the conversation is not starting with you. So, a conversation will start about a serious strategy issue. And you kind of feel like you are uninformed about this. Then you realize later on that this conversation happened and it happened in a forum where you were not in."* – **Interviewee 6**

> *"I'm sometimes not aware of other relationships of boys. And then people come into a meeting and they present something like a pure idea and then a few weeks or a few days later, you realize that there was another [pre-]conversation. Or someone says, 'hauw did you see that?'"* – **Interviewee 12**

Participants feel that social gatherings create a space where their White colleagues are comfortable with one another and engage on similar interests. The participants feel that some of the activities are those they would personally not be interested in to partake; however, their acute awareness that business was discussed during these social events makes them feel left out. They feel that when the colleagues came back to the office on Monday morning, they presented an idea in the boardroom as though it was completely new, when in fact they had discussed it over the weekend in the social setting. Because of this, their White counterparts are able to gain consensus much quicker in the boardroom, which leaves them feeling that they are missing some additional, related information to help in the decision-making.

5.4.1.2. Gender stereotyping

The term "Old boys' club" or "Boys' club" comes about in a number of interviews as a description of the type of exclusion that is experienced by the participants. Many of them describe these "old boys' clubs" as informal groupings that are mainly White male dominated, some of which have a history of being established before the formal workplace relationships existed. These groupings mostly relate to social settings, not in the formal work setting. Some participants describe similar groupings, without making use of the actual term "old boys' club".

“I think for me the exclusionary experience has a lot to do with you belonging to a certain group. So in my instance it's more of a boys club, but I've also had experience where it's a racial club, so it's not always obvious. With that being said, there are certain things that happen that just don't include you. If you don't play golf, you're not part of certain conversations. If you don't hang out and go to the bush [camping], you're not part of certain conversations. So it's about almost a designed system that excludes you without really saying you're being excluded. It's not in the mainstream of work, because there everything is fine...” – **Interviewee 12**

“So exclusion to me was really in the relations. So, I came in and I was an outsider. So there was already a knowledge and understanding that started with schools that people had been to, kind of university environments that people had been to. And general everyday life that people have and therefore when we were in a group, people then just gravitated to talking about those things which then of course excluded me.” – **Interviewee 10**

Some of these ‘old boys’ clubs’ are as a result of alumni networks, some of which have been from historically elite schools and universities. There is a sense of patronage that the participants link these groupings to.

“I have seen people say well this is an old St. John’s boy, he is more likely to fit into the environment. And I have seen this especially at investment banks…it does happen. And those practices tend to be exclusionary, I just don’t know if they are deliberate” – **Interviewee 1**

In order to gain entrance into these old boys’ clubs, some executives become intentional in trying to set themselves up to gain entrance into them. One particular participant, who is a senior C-suite executive, explains the social pressure that came with being out of the club, which eventually led to him deciding to do a post-graduate course at one of these universities, as a way to gain entrance into these exclusive networks.

“So someone like me, who has come from historically disadvantaged universities in the past, I had to try and make sure that I get into one of the good universities for me to kind of break into the club” – **Interviewee 1**

The challenges expressed by the female participants reveal that their struggles are slightly more nuanced because of their gender. Women invariably find themselves in an even more minoraritised position within the work environment at their level, because there are even fewer Black women in senior roles.

> *"As a black female…I always used to say that you come into any of these engagements having triple disadvantage, that you are a black, you're female and you're young…So you have to be three times sharper than a middle-aged white male. So you [I] would read your [my] pack, you [I] would do everything three times better, so that you [I] come across sparkly and bright. And as one got older, it's like, why must one be that person? I'm not saying that one shouldn't try and be brilliant at all times. But why am I the only one that's staying up until 02:00 so that I know every single thing, just so that I appear without any blemish in that meeting. That in itself is a form of discrimination because you must appear to be three times better than anybody else."* - **Interviewee 6**

> *"I work a lot with clients that are a specific grouping and with the buy side analysts, [and] with the shareholders. You normally find that in shareholder groups you are going to find that it's going to be quite typically male in a lot of environments. Very few female portfolio managers out that actually serve to be my clients."* – **Interviewee 9**

> *"I was also in an environment where I was told, 'why am I doing all this hard work. Why am I doing everything to try and get things done'. What I should do, is actually look pretty and go home and stop putting so much effort in. But I will never forget: look pretty. It really hit hard. It got me in my gut. I was in an environment where I was told to suck it up and just carry on. Stop voicing out what I thought was unfair. And I didn't stay in that environment either."* – **Interviewee 9**

Interestingly, the challenges that are unique to women are not only discussed by the female participants, even the male participants raise them as issues of concern, which create a disadvantage for women in the workplace. They recognise that gender creates an additional challenge as a result of patriarchy, over and above racism. One of these is the stereotypical view of Black women as being aggressive when they assert themselves in the workplace. The classification of "angry Black woman" is one that is also unique to Black women, and they therefore feel the need to constantly moderate themselves in order to avoid this label being put on them.

"As a black woman you commonly get told to calm down more than anybody else in the room, whereas other people are voicing their opinions…you are told to calm down as though that is an invisible label that you get about calming down…Either you must be as tough as a nail, or a Pitbull in the boardroom and then, yes you will get the label. But then geez, you've scared everyone away. You must carry your power in a different way" – **Interviewee 9**

"The one way to do it is to tackle it directly, aggressively head on, as and when it happens, call it out right there and then. Then that label of being an angry black woman [is put on you], where you're just angry and you lash out at everything that happens. That's one way. The other way is [to be] kind [and try to] to understand, kind of conciliatory but [it] also doesn't always work." – **Interviewee 6**

Some female participants raise the point that they had to make different life choices because of having to balance being a mother and a successful career professional. This particular struggle is unique to women, and is a challenge that women across the globe have to face. Although the men recognise that women have to face and manage different challenges, the pressures of balancing motherhood, career progression and the need to provide for their children is unique to the female participants.

"It's just about the difficulty of being a woman in having to make different choices, because you are a woman…before I became a senior, I had to make a decision that if I want my child to go to the best schools, [then] I need to move up the corporate ladder quite quickly. But I couldn't do it with him here, which then meant that I as a mother had to sacrifice about six years of his teenage years into adulthood [of him being in boarding school], because I was trying to pay for the best education [for him]. And I think that women should never have to do that." – **Interviewee 12**

5.4.1.3. Promotion limitations

Participants recall that they have experienced exclusion through limitations being in place that affected their potential promotion in the organisations, regardless of their qualifications and experience. Participants feel that promotions into certain positions were reserved for their White counterparts. They express frustration over White colleagues being given opportunities to move into senior positions and their careers being accelerated

at a much faster pace than their own. They feel that excuses are made when it comes to promotions that should be given to Black people, while the situation is much easier for their White counterparts. This view is mostly expressed by participants who hold down senior management positions, as opposed to the C-suite executives.

> *"…there are some opportunities that are kept for others, irrespective of qualification and experience, whilst others are also kept for those that you would perhaps deem as not qualifying but they're given. So you may be excluded in a certain way from other positions, from promotions…*" – **Interviewee 2**

> *"That's kinda the reason I left the banks, because I just felt that we were being excluded…when I am saying 'we' I am saying black employees were being excluded from career progression, whether it was a promotion…And it was more likely going to go to a young white fellow before it comes to you. To such an extent that we used to celebrate a black person getting into a particular role. You know I don't think we should be celebrating Sim Tshabalala becoming CEO of Standard Bank, we should simply say he is a qualified executive. He deserves to be a CEO. But to say he is one of the very few CEOs for a bank, it's like we are qualifying why he is there."* – **Interviewee 1**

> *"So what you often find is that you are a perpetual trainee, Black people are perpetual trainees. It's almost like, you have to prove yourself over and over and over again. And for some reason, it also feels like you're judged by a different standard. What you will often find is that Black people in these corporates are fairly well qualified, and it's not to say their white counterparts are not qualified. But the ones [Black people] who are qualified, and have experience, for some strange reason, there's always this ceiling that tends to exist and it's unspoken of. It's not an official ceiling, but it's there."* - **Interviewee 4**

Where the promotions have been available to them, participants express their feeling that they need to over-perform and be over-qualified to be given these opportunities for growth. They feel that they need to make a greater effort than their White colleagues, especially White males, have to make to be candidates for promotion.

> *"…their standards of what qualifies one for any upward migration in terms of promotion and role seniority, things like that…you need to almost perform three times more. You need to shoot the lights out! Not once but multiple times for you*

to even call attention to yourself from management. So you can say I did this!... I feel if it was someone else who's white, and they really wanted them to move forward, they would have motivated it. And I can't pin it on one person, I think it's an organisational cultural" - **Interviewee 3**

5.4.1.4. Being invisible

The theme of being invisible is common among the participants, both among those in senior manager roles and in the C-suite. They experience invisibility in differing ways, but with similar impact. Participants feel that they are sometimes merely ignored by their colleagues. These experiences happen in different forums and in such a manner that makes this difficult to call out. However, it makes these participants feel as if they are purposefully not being acknowledged.

> *"Your colleagues can sometimes ignore you, or they just don't see you. And what do I mean by that? People talk over you as though you are not there…"* – **Interviewee 6**

This participant explains how after working on a paper that was to be presented at Board level, all questions were directed at her White male counterparts, who were not specialists in what was being presented:

> *"…I'm there to present the paper and the Board only looks to the two white males who have come with me to get validation on the recommendations that are made in the paper, and not to me. It was almost comical watching it, because I was the obvious expert and that's why I was in the meeting. But because it was quite technical in nature, it's almost like the Board wanted the validation from external parties. They didn't even give me the opportunity to ask me..."OK? What are you presenting? What are your recommendations?" and then [only afterwards] look to the others to get confirmation. That meeting ended up with me only having said, "Good afternoon, we're here to present the paper. I will take it as read…" And then all the questions got directed to the gentlemen, even though the paper had my name on it. It was quite jarring for me that it still happens."* – **Interviewee 9**

Some participants note that their experience of invisibility is at times perpetrated by stakeholders, and not necessarily their immediate employers and colleagues. In these instances, it would evoke the same feelings, but a greater sense of helplessness, because this behaviour is perpetrated by a stakeholder, for example, a client, where they feel they

cannot really do anything about the behaviour to stop or change it, unlike if it is an internal stakeholder.

> *"Even at my level, I'm the CEO of the business, but I work very closely with the founder and he's a [white] gentleman. And he is a guy that I [have] worked with for a long time, and he's actually pro-transformation, like proper pro-transformation. But, it's simple things like, if we go into a meeting with him, you may find in certain instances, that the people on the other side, that more often than not look like him. They will talk to him as if I'm not even there. I've been on calls with him where, I think, I might as well not have been on the call. Because, as far as those people are concerned, I don't exist. I don't know what they think my role is, or whatever. But in reality,[as] much as we are at that meeting together and it may be in some instances my meeting. They speak to him. I don't know if it would be the case if I looked like them. I don't know. I'm making assumptions here. But I mean obviously it's disheartening, because should I then maybe not come with him to these meetings? But then you also wonder how seriously people take you…."* – **Interviewee 4**

One participant is a C-suite leader for a media company, where a key stakeholder is the broadcaster's listeners. This leader notes:

> *"So…the administrative organ of the organisation…was more welcoming. That's where my social identity was used to enrich the experience of the organisation. But there was a platform which was different, which was listeners. And there my social identity was used against me…So the corporate environment itself welcomed me. But…for me it was the stakeholder that wasn't as accepting"* – **Interviewee 10**

5.5. Coping Mechanisms

After having expressed their various experiences of exclusion, participants reveal that they make use of various coping mechanisms in order to deal with the sense of exclusion. Participants express the need to cope with the environments in order to survive. The main themes that emerge as coping mechanisms are:

a) Working harder
b) Having a strong support system
c) Maturity
d) Conformity

The first two themes, working harder and having a strong support system are adaptive coping strategies, whereas the latter two, maturity and conformity, are maladaptive coping strategies.

5.5.1. Working harder

Out of 13 participants, all except three, agree that they are under the impression that they have to work harder than their White counterparts. There is a feeling that they need to place more efforts into ensuring that they do not fail, as they have the additional pressure of being a representative of an entire race. This pressure for excellence is seen as both a blessing and a curse, because on the one hand, it pushes them to constantly perform at their peak, while on the other hand, it creates significant stress. Participants believe – rightly or wrongly - that their White counterparts do not experience this type of pressure and do not have the burden of being a representative of an entire race, which gives them additional privilege.

> *"For me what has helped is to make sure that no ball is dropped in terms of my delivery. And also, just making people understand that I am here to do a job, if we get along and we end up drinking it's a bonus, but we don't have to be friends."* – **Interviewee 12**

> *"For me in any job, it was always about performance and it still is because that's the primary reason that you are there. You are there gainfully employed to deliver on what your role requires you to deliver. And so for me I've always approached my work with that in mind, to say anything I put forward that carries my name has got to be the best, equivalent to any other best metric that is out there. So it shouldn't be that it's the best Black, or the best from South Africa whatever."* – **Interviewee 3**

Part of this pressure of working extra hard is an underlying desire to prove that they deserve these roles that they are in. Most of the participants feel the need to constantly prove to others that they were not appointed into the roles merely as employment equity (EE) candidates or affirmative action appointments, but that they really do deserve these positions. They feel that there were perceptions about Black people being given positions to fulfil EE requirements, and they feel they need to disprove it.

> *"I overcompensate by always having a point of view. These are things that [my] personal coach also says: make sure that in the room there's an opinion that you've*

given! It's understandable there, but for me it even extends to the informal coffee chats, the informal walks and things like that. You never switch off… you wanna overcompensate for the difference that exists by saying actually, the main reason why this person is here is because he knows his stuff. He knows how to interpret this and manage that, and we don't have to ask too many questions about how that client is doing." - **Interviewee 3**

"Being a young black female in corporate in a leadership position, it's almost like every day you have to prove your value in the organization. It takes time to build that rapport, especially in a new organization where people can really trust that you bring in the right experience. They shouldn't judge [you] just based on your age or your race or your gender. So that does influence how you then approach certain things in the organization, how you approach conversations. You sometimes feel that you have to do that a little bit more, compared to your peers just because of that" – **Interviewee 8**

5.5.2. Having a strong support system

The participants note that another aspect of coping is ensuring that they have a strong support system. This support system can be internal through having networks of colleagues in their organisation (which is quite rare), and others external. These support networks are groups of like-minded individuals who are going through similar challenges in their organisations. Most of these networks are within social settings and mostly made up of other Black professionals. These spaces provide a platform for them to openly converse around these issues and share ideas around how to handle them.

"We have got a sort of grouping, I don't know what to call it…like Alcoholics Anonymous, but it's some sort of a support group like that. Because all of these guys that you are taking to in investment banking, we will be sitting there and talking, "you know this guy, he joined the company 3 months ago, all of a sudden he is being given a huge assignment, he's being given a very big deal to do. And then in a years' time this person is our boss". We will talk about these things in our own cycles. It is not a formal group but I always joke and say that is a support group. Because that's where we used to talk about all of these things and it's predominantly black people." – **Interviewee 1.**

"I guess partnering with other females leaders in the organisation, or even outside of my organisation. Just sharing ideas and thoughts around how they're managing in their environments. Some of the things that I might find challenging, somebody might have already gone through it and might have a point of view around how you can solve for that. So it's important to have a network of other females that are in leadership positions that are able to just share their insights and how they're managing just so that there's a support network that's able to help with that" – **Interviewee 8**

"So I've had a really good support structure both internally and externally…When I worked at a financial services company, more in the investment banking, I was coming from the mining sector and therefore I realized that the only way for me to succeed at that leadership role was to have a very good network of investment bankers. Not only within that company that I was working for, but across South Africa, across the continent and even globally. And that sort of helps me in coming across as I understand what I'm talking about and I am accelerating my development and closing those gaps where I do not know." – **Interviewee 5**

The need for a good support system is highlighted by the participants as being important, because they feel that it contributes to one's mental wellness. They feel very strongly that being mentally strong is needed in order to survive their work environments. They use differing techniques in building their mental strength. While some are more spiritual, leaning heavily on their religious beliefs as a guide in how they manage, others refer to family support.

"The one thing I will say is that you need mental strength because it can be exhausting. It can be disheartening and in some ways, demoralizing and therefore you need mental strength." – **Interviewee 4**

"First and foremost the home base. Having a system of support in the family is crucial because you're all up against so many things outside of home. And if you get the validation at home, you don't need too much of it from the outside, where you will chase that validation at the expense of everything else if you don't get it at home." – **Interviewee 3**

"I'm a very spiritual person, so I pray a lot and that would be regardless of whether I'm in the minority or majority of the racial demographic. I never start my day without

praying. And I never start anything without asking guidance from God." – **Interviewee 7**

5.5.3. Maturity

Many of the participants speak at length about what they have learned over time as they have matured. There is a view that with maturity comes the lack of wanting to fight issues related to race and racism in the workplace, and a desire to look beyond race. Further to this, there is a sense that one needs to choose one's battles carefully, especially because they are constantly having to manage how they are perceived by others in the workplace.

Some participants believe quite strongly that issues relating to race in the workplace are holding Black professionals back, and they should rather seek to suppress any feelings relating to race in the workplace. They feel that people should focus on the work and forget about race. They state that the most important thing at work is what you deliver, and not what race you belong to. These participants seem to equate maturing to having less of a desire to tackle race issues in the workplace. They feel that bringing race as an issue into the workplace was to limit the progression of Black professionals and create an excuse for them to underperform. Many of them use the word 'maturity' to express this state of mind, saying that they have this view as a result of their acquired maturity. By saying this, the insinuation is that the need to bring up the issue of race in the workplace is therefore done by people who are immature. This is a very prominent attitude held by the C-suite executives, compared to the attitudes held by the slightly more junior, senior managers. Senior managers tend to still be more inclined to speak candidly about how their race acts as a barrier to their progression, while the C-suite executives do not hold this view. The C-suite executives seem to have successfully moved 'beyond race'.

> *"I would say to you that it was escapist for me earlier on in my career to always ascribe everything to a racial thing. When I worked with XY as the CEO at X IT company, he challenged me a lot on that topic. Even though sometimes he was wrong and it was a racial thing. He was one person that always refused to acknowledge race as the first form of escape. Through that interaction it put me in a situation where I always had to use race as the last resort to analyse, make sense and synthesize any particular situation"* – **Interviewee 13**

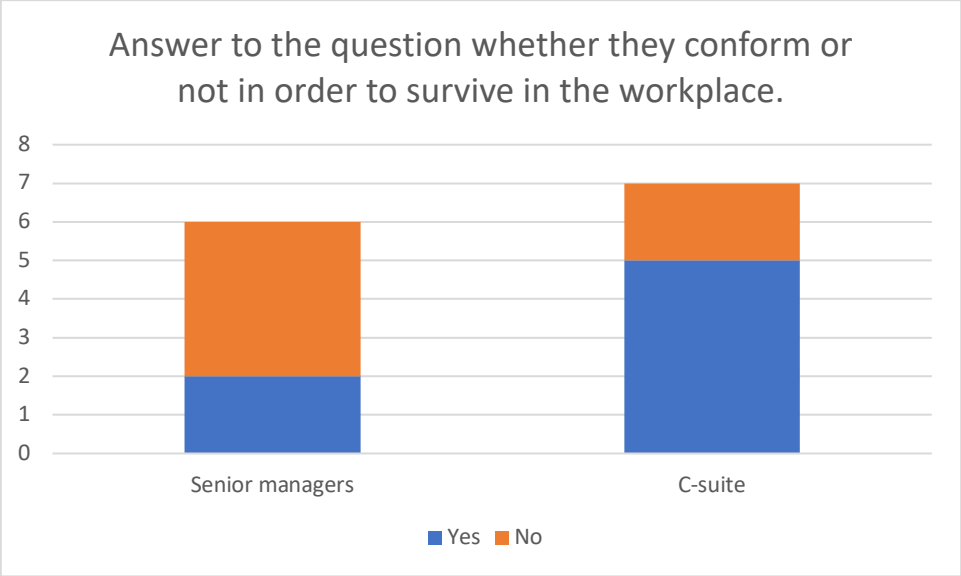
“There's a certain EQ maturity that's also come to fruition through just experience and age where you’re quite clear which battles you participate in or not. It becomes very apparent quickly what the politics are and you can walk away…but you sort of let it slide because as you can imagine in these type of things, you don't get to my age 47, and you’re still fighting those type of battles. You actually just turn up and do your work and roll your eyes a little bit and carry on with it.” – **Interviewee 9**

“Honestly, it is about work, can we just address anything and everything about work and not try not to include diversity issues and whatsoever. I just work… For me, I just strive for that. Just work.” – **Interviewee 11**

5.5.4. Conformity

The participants were asked whether they conformed to survive in the workplace. Many of them seem to struggle with answering this question, some of them building arguments to explain how they do not conform, and then afterwards change their minds and eventually admit to conforming. Others are very clear that they have to conform in the workplace in order to survive, and they accept this as a reality of being a minority in the organisation as senior Black leaders. The split between those agreeing to submitting to conformity or not is interesting when analysed across the occupational levels. Most of the senior managers conclusively answer no to the question of whether they conform in order to survive in the workplace, whereas most of the C-suite executives clearly state that they do conform in order to survive, as per Figure 2 below.

Figure 2: Perceptions on conformity at occupational levels



For some C-suite participants, who are still new in their roles, it seems easier to say they do not conform, compared to those who had been in their roles and part of the leadership team for longer. Out of the seven C-suite executives who participated, the two who state that they do not conform, both attribute their possible non-conformity to being new in their current work environments. Both had only worked within the current organisations for less than a year.

> *"I guess I'm new in the in this role that I'm in now, so I haven't been here long, so I guess that makes me slightly different, so I view things in a different way. Well, some people that are serving with me on Exco have been in the organisation for a while, I'd say 18 plus years most of them… I come with a different perspective. I come from a different industry and I tend to question some of the things…I guess I'm still playing that I'm new card so I'm allowed to just ask those questions without offending anyone in anyway"* – **Interviewee 8**

> *"You either come to the realization that I have got to conform or you need to leave."*– **Interviewee 1**

> *"So conformity maybe is a strong word, but there's certain things that you just turn a blind eye to and it's about the choices you make. What am I sweating? What am I not sweating? Choosing your battles. So yes, it may look like conformity, but I think as you grow and you become senior, you also realize*

that your peace of mind is priceless. So you're not going to fight everything…Sometimes we just let it slide." – **Interviewee 12**

Participants explain that they feel that there are consequences to non-conformity, which make life a bit more difficult in the workplace. This participant explains what leads to conformity from their perspective.

"I think environment and consequences…Consequence of who you are and what you do in an environment really does impact you. So if you're in an environment where because you speak up all the time, then you start not getting invited to meetings, for example. Or you get excluded even that much more, because you've not conformed or that people know you will call things out then that becomes pretty dangerous in an environment" – **Interviewee 9**

5.5.5. Summary of findings for research question 1

The participants express their perceptions of exclusion, which results in four main themes emerging as their perceptions on exclusion, decision-making exclusion; gender stereotyping; promotion limitations; and being invisible. All these perceptions make participants feel that they do not experience a full sense of belonging in their organisations.

The experiences of exclusion seem to force them to develop coping mechanisms in order to be able to manage and remain within the work environment. The themes that emerge from this are: working harder; having a strong support system; maturity; and conformity. Participants utilise all these coping mechanisms in varying degrees to ensure that they are able survive their working environments.

What stands out in the results for research question 1 is the difference in opinion between the participants based on their occupational level. As far as perceptions on exclusion are concerned, there is general agreement among all participants, both the senior managers and the C-suite. However, the perceptions on blocked promotion opportunities are unique to the senior managers. It is mostly the senior managers who feel that promotions are limited for Black professionals.

Regarding the coping mechanisms, both senior managers and the C-suite are in agreement that coping mechanisms involve the themes of working harder and the need to have a strong support system. The difference in perception regarding coping mechanisms is obvious in the themes of maturity and conformity. These two themes show

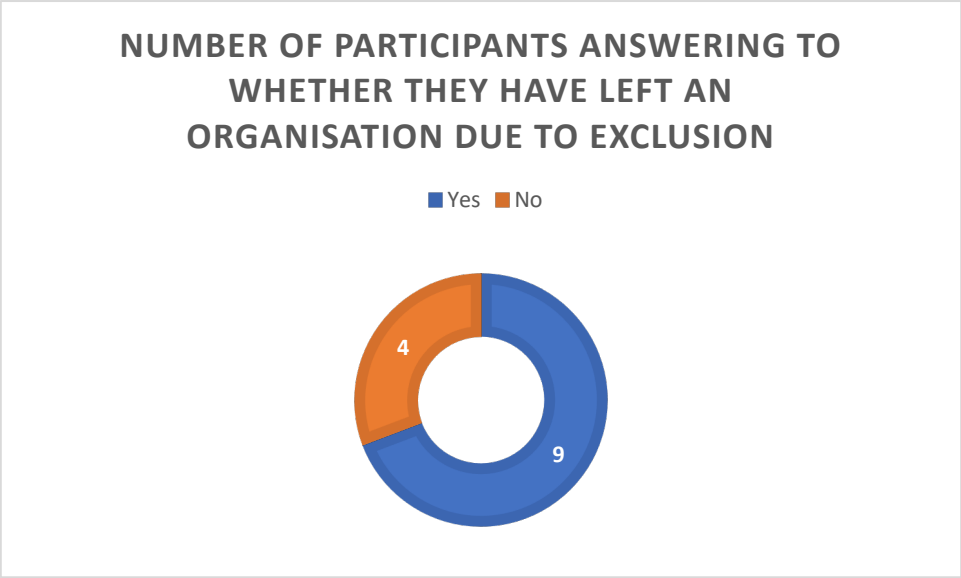
strong similarities in responses from the C-suite who believe that race should be subordinated in the workplace, and everyone should focus on work. The C-suite also agree that they conform to the dominant corporate culture in order to stay relevant and survive in the workplace, compared to senior managers, who state that they do not feel the need to conform.

5.6. Results for research question 2

Do exclusionary organisational environments influence intentions to leave the organisation?

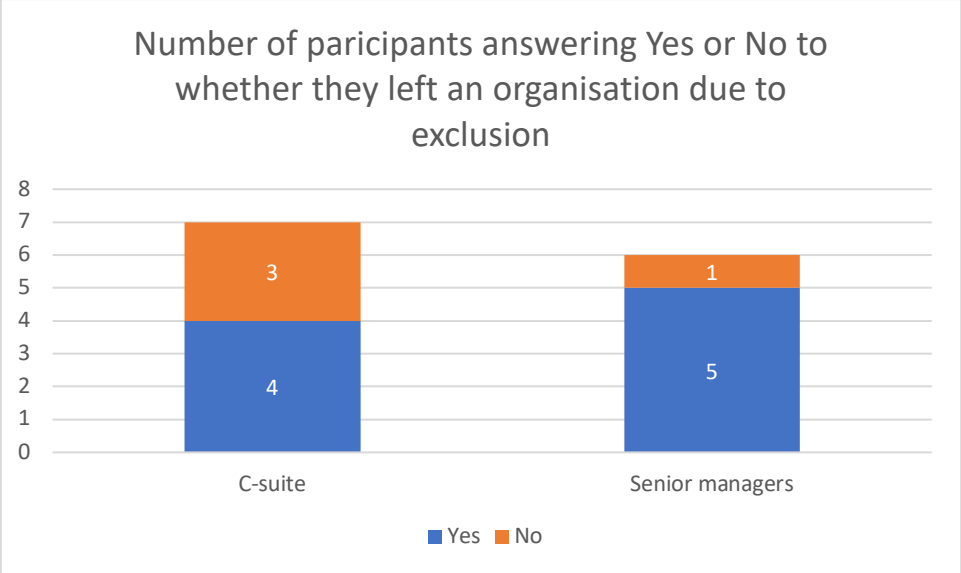
This research question sought to understand the factors that influence the attrition of Black leaders in organisations, in relation to their experiences of exclusion. The question of leaving an organisation due to exclusion produces similarities expressed by the participants. Out of the 13 participants, nine had resigned at some point in their career, attributing the reason directly to the experience of exclusion, as demonstrated in Figure 3.

Figure 3: The role of exclusion in deciding to leave an organisation



The split between the occupational levels is also an interesting one, as demonstrated in Figure 4. More senior managers indicate that they had left organisations as a result of experiencing exclusion, than the C-suite executives, suggesting that the senior managers may be more likely to leave organisations caused by their experience of exclusion than their C-suite counterparts. Perhaps there is a link between the senior manager's not conforming to dominant culture and their likelihood to resign when they experience exclusion or rejection of their attitude or behaviour of not conforming within the workplace.

Figure 4: The split between occupational levels



Participants seem to view leaving an organisation as an expression of their independence, and a belief that because of their high level of skills, they would easily find other employment. Even for those who do not leave organisations, when they speak about talented Black professionals, they describe them as having more freedom to move, because of their high level of skills, which makes them attractive to the market. Two main themes emerge to the research question: Do exclusionary environments influence intentions to leave the organisation? The emergent themes are:

a) Different expectations
b) The freedom to leave

5.6.1. Different expectations

Out of the 13 participants interviewed, 10 believe that there are different expectations set for and of Black leaders, compared to their counterparts of other races, as per Figure 5 below. All C-suite executives interviewed answer that they perceive there to be differences in expectations, as per Figure 6 below. However, the senior managers' perception is split. Senior managers who perceive that there are different expectations, believe that judgements of Black leaders are different to those for other races. They compare themselves to White, Indian and Coloured colleagues, and not only to White colleagues. Senior managers feel that the failure of a Black leader is judged with far harsher treatment,

than it is for other people. The coping mechanism of working extra hard to avoid failure is then used as a mitigation for this.

Figure 5: Perceived difference in expectations for Black leaders

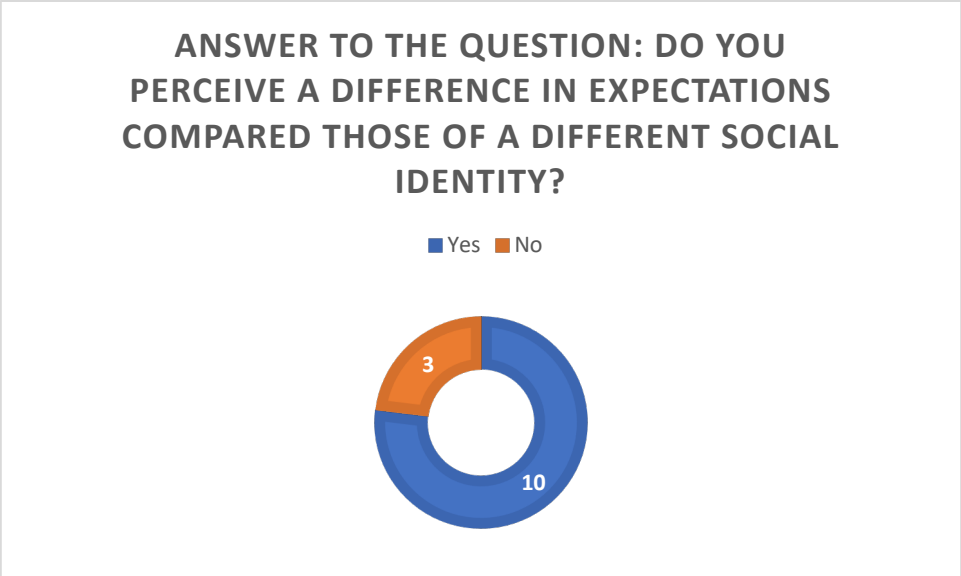
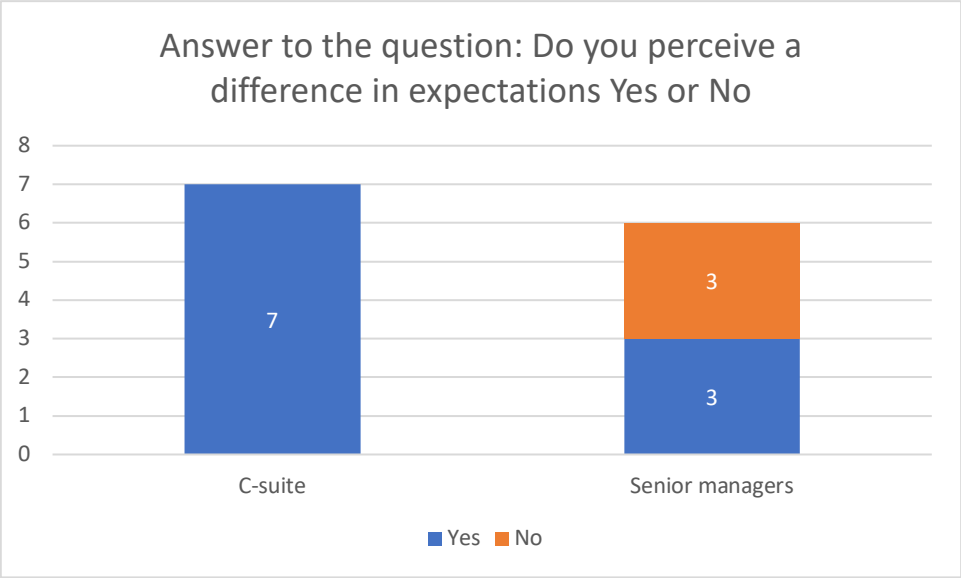


Figure 6: Perceived difference in expectations for Black leaders occupational level split



> *"We are held to a different standard than other people. So if something goes wrong and you are a Black person, it gets scrutinized as incompetence, corruption or criminality. Whereas, if it's other people it is just a mistake and it can be fixed."* – **Interviewee 12**

For some of the participants, the different expectations are explained as stemming from the perceptions of the additional role they should play in the business as Black leaders in relation to managing other Black professionals and also bringing in 'Black' business.

> *"For me it was a lot more in terms of labour relations. 'So they are your people. Why are they not satisfied? Just get them to shut up. We gave him an increase last year. Why are they bringing up the issue again? Talk to your chomi' kind of thing. Whereas, someone else of another race wouldn't have those expectations on them."* – **Interviewee 10**

> *"People for some reason have an expectation that for some reason, I can maybe bring a lot more government business, or unionised business just by the fact that you are [I am] Black… depending on who the person is in their role, if I was a Jewish person of Jewish origin, would you expect me to bring more Jewish business?"* – **Interviewee 6**

The senior managers who answer that they do not perceive a difference in expectations, feel that the same expectations put on other races for performance are also placed on them as Black professionals.

> *"No. Because unfortunately my Exco is not ginormous. There aren't a lot of people who report into my current bosa. So there's no room to hide and I can't hide behind the colour of my skin if I don't deliver."* – **Interviewee 7**

> *"No. Personally for me I don't see race. I believe if you are qualified to be there and on merit you should be there. I don't want to find myself going against my religion, starting to judge who should and who shouldn't be for whatever circumstance."* – **Interviewee 11**

5.6.2. Being in control of their careers

Black leaders feel that the ability to leave organisations whenever they want provides them with the freedom to be in control of their careers. Many of them express this as a positive aspect of being highly skilled, and there being a smaller pool of people of their calibre. Many of them do not like the fact that they are a minority and that there are few Black professionals holding the senior positions which they occupy; however, they see it as an advantage whenever they feel that they want to leave.

Participants thus believe that given the high rate of exclusion that they experience, being able to move on allows them a greater sense of freedom. One participant, who is a C-suite executive, points out that they often think of leaving, even if they do not always act on it. For this executive, the ability to go onto a job search engine website such as PNET provides some sort of relief and comfort in moments of frustration. The confidence that they have the ability to move on because of their attractiveness to the market also acts as a coping mechanism, shielding them from the distress of having to remain in the same organisation if they become too frustrated and are experiencing exclusion.

> *"My view is that black talent…and female talent for that matter…There are so many opportunities for people at the top that they are not going to take any nonsense for a while. They'll take it for a [short] while, they'll try and convince [themselves], but then if they become ostracized, they just opt to leave because there is opportunity out there. True talent is very mobile. And people wonder…"black talent always moves, we pay so much for BEE"… They are not going to take rubbish. If there's an opportunity elsewhere, they'll go try it out and if they find the same rubbish, they'll move on"* – **Interviewee 6**

> *"I think it's not a coincidence that if you go to investment banking at XYZ Bank, and you ask them, "who is the longest serving member of those teams?" You're never gonna find a black person who has sat that long, and there's a reason for that. It's because they don't stay, they just don't find that environment conducive. They leave at a certain point."* – ***Interviewee 1***

> *"It's something that comes up all the time periodically. As senior as you [I] may be, you [I] find yourself [myself] in a meeting, and as people are talking…you [I] just go onto PNET and start searching for a job, because it can be so disheartening"* – **Interviewee 6**

Another participant, who had only been at the current organisation for a couple of months, admits to currently being active in the market searching for a job, based on the experience of exclusion. This participant feels that it would be a waste of time to try and make things work at the current organisation. They feel what they were experiencing at this current employer is mirroring past experiences at other employers and could therefore predict how it would end. They believe that leaving quickly is in the best interest of their own mental wellness, instead of trying to make it work.

"I'm sure I'm going to [resign] right now. I think I'm going to because I've already even been in interviews, so I think I'm definitely going to leave. It's only a matter of time" – **Interviewee 11**

"At one stage, I was head of a division in one of the insurance companies. And then my boss came in and said… "I was on a plane flying from Cape Town and I was sitting with somebody from this other company. And they told me that they can double the size of our business in a year, is that something that you can do?" I looked at them and I said, "double it in a year? Wow. Unless we are buying a company that doubles our size. I don't see how we can do it organically". He said "well this person can". I said "wow, good for us, we must bring them on board if they can do that. He said, "yes, I'm thinking the same way as you…there's a catch. The catch is that they just may want your job. So maybe we should think about where we're gonna put you or whatever" I said you know what, the very fact that you are thinking about that is a reason for me to get out of here. And then I tendered my resignation." – **Interviewee 6**

5.6.3. Summary of findings for research question 2

Research question 2 sought to understand the factors that influence Black leaders' intention to leave. Black leaders associate leaving an organisation with positive connotations such as freedom, independence, and abundance. Two main themes are identified in their responses: different expectations; and the freedom to leave.

Black leaders tend to experience different expectations when they compare themselves to leaders of other races. These expectations include being expected to engage with staff members of the same race differently, and being expected to bring in government business because of their race. These different expectations influence their experience of the workplace over time, leading to them having thoughts of whether it is worth staying with the organisation or if it would be better to move to greener pastures. Their past experiences of other organisations make Black leaders more aware of corporate patterns and cultures that indicate that they have to decide what they are willing to live with in the workplace, and what they are unwilling to tolerate. Sometimes, they leave quickly after having only been in an organisation for a couple of months, whereas other times, they decide that they can actually conform according to the expectations of them. However, others perceive that the expectations on performance are the same for all races.

It is clear that all Black leaders feel the pressure to perform, stating that failure is simply not an option. The only difference is that those who perceive that there is no difference in the expectations, also feel that this pressure not to fail also exists for leaders of other races.

The freedom to leave is a theme that is strongly embraced by Black leaders. Black leaders perceive that the freedom to leave allows them to be in charge of their career path. Because they perceive that they are not offered promotion opportunities as much as their White counterparts, leaving organisations puts them in control of promoting themselves by moving into better positions. Thus, in the first place they remain loyal to themselves rather than to the organisations if these organisations do not provide them with what they are looking for.

5.7. Results for research question 3

Does the perception of an exclusionary organisational environment influence to a lack of commitment to the organisation?

This research question sought to understand the factors that influence a lack of commitment by the participants to an organisation. Participants express these factors in different forms, which have been summarised into two branches, positive influencing factors and negative ones. Within these branches, common themes emerge.

For positive influencing factors, the themes that emerge are:

a) Personal work ethic
b) Being representatives of all Black people

For negative influencing factors, the themes that emerge are:

a) No decision making powers
b) Relationships with colleagues
c) The lack of an inclusive culture

5.7.1. Positive factors influencing commitment

Positive factors that influence commitment are those that help these Black leaders remain in an organisation for longer. The participants feel that the positive factors that influence their commitment have more to do with their own internal self-esteem, rather than external

factors. The two themes that emerge from the answer to this question are very internally based, that is personal work ethic and an internal feeling that they represent all Black people.

As already stated, the two themes that emerge as positive factors are:

a) Personal work ethic;
b) Being representatives of all Black people.

5.7.1.1. Personal work ethic

Participants state that they value their jobs and many of them are committed by virtue of having achieved their roles. They express that they take their roles as leaders quite seriously. Many of the participants state that having achieved their level or role was based on their own personal drive to do their best in everything, no matter what circumstances they find themselves in. This means that working extra hard is an internal process and drive, as opposed to a response to external circumstances and their experiences in the workplace.

> *"I'm just a professional...I think my work ethic is just on that level… I will always give it 100% it's the extra mile if I feel that I'm not being treated fairly, then it's going to be difficult for me to perform more than 100%"* – **Interviewee 2**

> *"We get paid a lot, we get paid a lot for us to not give our best… I guess for me I'm a very disciplined person. I value time, I value consistency, I value output action. It's things that I just value regardless of whether it's a personal thing or it's a work thing, but I'm just that type of person, it's my own personal values"* – **Interviewee 11**

> *"Simply because of the position that I hold, I have a duty and obligation to still be respectful towards them in spite of how they might feel about me and ultimately comes down to execution and deliverables."* – **Interviewee 7**

5.7.1.2. Being a representation of all Black people

Black leaders express an awareness of how being a minority within their environments places them in a position where as individuals, they are a representation of other Black people. Although being seen as a representative of all Black people is viewed as an unfair position that Black leaders find themselves in as minorities, there is also a sense of

responsibility, which they feel they take seriously. It is a burden that they use to constantly remind themselves to strive for excellence in their work. This brings with it an additional pressure to ensure that they do not fail. Not only this, Black leaders feel the need to break down the stereotypes of Black people being lazy, and underperformers. Black leaders feel that when they fail as individuals, it becomes a reflection on all other Black people. Their concern with this challenge is that it can close off opportunities for those who come after them. Therefore, they take on the responsibility of being excellent as Black professionals and believe that it is a personal responsibility.

The other stereotype that they feel under pressure to debunk is that Black people appointed in leadership positions are merely EE appointments, who are not appropriately skilled, capable or qualified. Black leaders state that they feel the need to always prove that they are more than just EE appointments, that they deserve the jobs they have been given.

> *"I can't fail because when I fail, I fail on behalf of many people who are not going to be given a seat at the table, because you will be used as an example of saying, we tried, it didn't work. So I refuse to be that standard…"* – **Interviewee 7**

> *"White candidates don't have to deal with it. They don't they don't carry the burden of the people in the same demographic as them. They are just coming in as 'I'm excelling, I qualified and I will do the work for myself and my family'. Whereas, for us it's like when they look at you they're looking at all black people… So your pressure is to make sure that you don't mess it up or for everybody else coming after you as well."* – **Interviewee 3**

> *"And there's always this perception that people are being given roles for which they're not ready for and so forth. And I suppose once you assume a particular role, then you're always conscious of that and consequently, put pressure on yourself…it's almost sometimes feels like if a white organisation fails it's fine, these things happen…in any case one in 1000 businesses succeed, blah, blah, blah, we know the stats. But if it's led by Black people, they say 'we knew it'… So there's that pressure, which is brought about by race"* – **Interviewee 4**

5.7.2. Negative factors influencing commitment

Negative factors influencing employee commitment make it easier for Black leaders to leave organisations, sooner or later. The participants state that they have a commitment

to their jobs; however, negative factors then influence their commitment to their organisation. There is a differentiation between commitment to a job and that to the organisation. This means that when these negative factors become too overwhelming, Black leaders perceive that although they remain committed to doing their jobs with excellence, they experience a lack of commitment to the organisation. Lack of commitment to their organisations ultimately leads to them leaving an organisation.

The themes that emerge as negative factors are:

a) No decision-making powers;
b) Relationships with colleagues;
c) The lack of an inclusive culture.

5.7.2.1. No decision making powers

Some of the participants feel that Black leaders do not have real power in South African organisations. They believe that most Black leaders are figureheads, who are blocked from practising positional power, which makes them question the authority of certain Black leaders in very senior positions. It is notable that these leaders tend to demonstrate having similar perceptions to what they consider those of their White colleagues are by assuming that some Black appointments may just be EE appointments, because of the lack of decision-making powers. Participants make this observation of other Black leaders, but none of them admit this to be their own personal experience where they are not given decision-making powers.

> *"…why are we still sitting with a whole lot of these companies that are being led by Black executives that are not transformed themselves. Is it a reflection on the Black leader, does he really have the power?"* – **Interviewee 1**

> *"What I've sadly seen in the in the industry is that you have a White director and a Black director. The Black director is there on paper a director. When you look at the scope and the decision-making powers and all of those things the White director versus the Black director, they are not equal by any stretch of imagination. Therefore, it also goes for the pay, where they justify why the one gets more versus the other. They'll say 'no you are working on a portfolio that brings in less revenue, so they their portfolio brings in more revenue so they get a higher cost to company ratio. But the work is the same, [and] you've got a proportionately same size team."* – **Interviewee 3**

"…I was a broker at an investment bank, and it was not a particularly big broker, it was fairly small. I wouldn't say I was the most skilled, but I was the most qualified person on the desk. And skill and qualifications are two different things. And, because of how they perceived qualifications, they put me on the Board of the South African operations. It was an international investment bank. But it was quite clear to me that it was done for them to look good and to say, here's an Exec and all of that. But in reality, even I knew that…But I certainly did not have that power as an Exec as it was being perceived...that played a part in my decision to leave the organization" – **Interviewee 4**

Lacking decision-making powers leads to participants feeling that they are being undermined by colleagues and subordinates. They experience being undermined in different forms, many of which are subtle and could be classified as micro aggressions.

"This is the best one…you get invited [to a meeting], but nobody bothered to check your diary. So, you're invariably not available for that. Or you need to make hard calls about which meeting you need to be at. And both could be equally as important." – **Interviewee 6**

Being undermined also comes in the form of double standards being used to judge them.

"My CEO gets information from me, and once I've given it to him, I've prepared it for him, he owns that. It is his to use as he sees fit. But when I do the same, it's like, "oh, no, she didn't do the work. So and so did the work for her. It's not her work". But hey, once you've done it, and you've given it over, it is now my work… It just becomes like such a double standard way of doing things." – **Interviewee 6**

"So you'll be accused of either being too operational, because you demonstrate the depth of issues, or you will be accused of just being uninformed. One needs to strike the right balance." – **Interviewee 6**

5.7.2.2. Relationships with colleagues

Participants have mixed feelings regarding the influence of good relationships with their colleagues. Most agree that this is important for them to be effective leaders. Because they are in a minority, when consensus is required in the boardroom, it is important to have good relationships with one's colleagues. It helps them in the making sure they can get certain parts of their jobs done. Most of these participants also note that good

relationships are important, because not having good relationships adds to stress levels that are already high because of work demands. They believe that it is easier to have a positive experience at work when they have cordial relationships with people, especially their colleagues on the same level and their seniors.

> *"You get to a certain point, I guess the level in the organisation where, let's call it, you are at that cold place where it's thin at the top. And actually all that matters is about the people that you work with and the purpose."* – **Interviewee 13**

> *"You can never work with people that don't believe in you, because they will always find something to this, don't always find something to be at fault with you."* – **Interviewee 6**

> *"The job that you do has to be meaningful…meaning can come in the smallest most profoundest of ways, just something that you can latch onto…Sometimes you create that meaning for yourself and that meaning has to align to some purpose, a reason for being. Regardless of your differences and whatever your social standings and backgrounds, [when] we have a common purpose when all is said and done…[and] band together towards that common purpose. If you're not able to do that, it becomes very hard to stay committed to an organization"* – **Interviewee 13**

Another demonstration of the lack of decision-making powers is being powerless when faced by the shifting of goalposts. This creates the impression that their success is not a top priority for their employer.

> *"…like in my role, I drive revenue and numbers. So it's hard core and very transparent. This year, I'm making my numbers. Suddenly numbers are not a big thing. The big thing is about compliance or some other thing. Whereas the year before, when you were [I was] so compliance focused, and didn't deliver the numbers, the numbers were a big thing. When do you win?"* – **Interviewee 6**

> *"It happens without the support, without the grooming, without the development…It's almost like the scale in the criteria is shifted, the goal posts are shifted when it comes black talent being appointed in senior roles"* – **Interviewee 3**

5.7.2.3. Lack of an inclusive culture

Participants state that having an inclusive culture contributes immensely to their length of tenure in an organisation. However, when they experience the opposite, the lack of an inclusive culture, it makes them question whether they truly belong in the organisation.

> *"…if people come into another organisation that has a so-called bad culture. It can be a very good organisation, but the culture is so bad that it's very hard for good people to stay."* – **Interviewee 13**

> *"I was once told what I must disassociate myself from making my opinion too loud, even when I'm right. And that was an organisation very easy to leave. Within six months of that statement having been made, I left."* – **Interviewee 9**

Although the culture of an organisation takes its cues from the top senior leadership team, it is still very much driven by middle management. One participant explains that problems with exclusionary organisational cultures are also being driven at the middle management level.

> *"By the way It doesn't matter if the CEO is Black, because often enough, the CEO is Black, but there's quite a strong layer of management, which is not Black, and that is where the problems start. The problems are there."* – **Interviewee 4**

In expressing how they would perceive that the environment is inclusive, participants explain that inclusionary environments strongly influence their commitment to organisations.

> *"I think for me at work I want I want to be heard. I want to be seen in and I want to be recognized for my contributions…My view is I wanna be seen as a human being first before I am seen as female and Black, because that's how I see myself."* – **Interviewee 5**

> *"I'm so happy when I walk into a room and my chairman is this tiny lady who doesn't necessarily carry a private school accent or anything like that. She's just herself and as soon as she sits down and she Chairs the meeting, I'm like wow! You don't see the size anymore. This is an individual with input, with gravitas, with everything that you need in the room"* – **Interviewee 9**

5.7.3. Summary of findings for research question 3

Research question 3 sought to understand the factors that influence the lack of organisational commitment. The main findings for this question are that there are both positive factors that drive organisational commitment and negative factors that drive the lack of organisational commitment.

For the positive factors, two main themes are given by the participants; first, their personal work ethic; and second, being representatives of all Black people. Participants feel that their primary driver of organisational commitment is their work ethic. They believe that they have pride in their work and at all times want to be associated with excellence. However, they differentiate between commitment to their jobs and commitment to the organisation. Commitment to their jobs is not something that they felt they ever questioned, however it is commitment to their organisations when they experienced exclusion that became questionable.

For the negative factors, three main themes emerge: no decision-making powers; relationships with colleagues; and lastly, the lack of an inclusionary culture. Participants state that an important aspect of leadership is decision-making. The inability to make decisions negatively affects their organisational commitment. They also feel that the lack of decision-making powers affects how others, including subordinates, perceive them, which often causes them to be undermined in various ways. Participants state that having good relationships with co-workers contributes to a generally positive experience in the workplace. The last theme addresses the lack of an inclusionary culture having a negative influence on organisational commitment. Participants feel that sometimes, the organisations they work for are wonderful places to work at; however, it is the corporate culture and the behaviour of middle management that sometimes drive them out of the organisations.

5.8. Conclusion

The purpose of the three research questions was to assist in answering the overarching question: How do Black leaders cope with exclusionary work environments, given their paradoxical role of being part of the majority outside their organisations, while being minorities inside their organisations.

The first research question was: How do Black leaders cope with exclusionary work environments? This question sought to understand the coping mechanisms utilised by Black leaders. First, the participants gave an overview of their perceptions on exclusion, then they provided the coping mechanisms that they use. The main themes that emerged as coping mechanisms were working harder; having strong support systems; maturity; and conformity. The answers to the research question revealed that there are some nuanced differences in how senior managers cope with exclusionary environments, compared to their C-suite counterparts. The themes of maturity and conformity were much stronger emotions and coping mechanisms among the C-suite, who felt that Black professionals need not concentrate so much on issues of race in the workplace. They believed that focusing on the race card could be detrimental to the careers of Black professionals, therefore they should rather focus on the work they were hired to do. Under the theme of conformity, the results revealed that C-suite executives conformed more to the dominant culture of the organisation to be able to keep their jobs intact.

The second research question was: Do exclusionary organisational environments influence Black leaders' intentions to leave the organisation? The results for this research question revealed two main themes: different expectations; and the freedom to leave. Under the theme, different expectations, participants felt that there were different expectations set on them as Black leaders compared to leaders that belonged to other races. Interestingly, this view was strongly held by the C-suite, as they all unanimously agreed on this view. However, only half of the sample of senior managers agreed that they perceived different expectations on them as Black leaders. What makes this finding interesting is that C-suite executives in the first research question felt quite strongly that Black professionals should not focus on race, yet they also felt as strongly that different expectations were set for them as Black leaders.

Under the theme of freedom to leave, participants demonstrated a sense of satisfaction that they possessed the ability to leave an organisation whenever they wished to. This provided them with the agency to be in control of their careers. Because they cannot control factors such as exclusionary organisational cultures, the freedom to leave gave them something they could still maintain control over.

The third research question was: Does the perception of an exclusionary organisational environment influence to a lack of commitment to the organisation? This question sought to unpack the factors that influence a lack of commitment to an organisation by Black

professionals. This research question produced themes that were placed into two main categories: positive factors influencing organisational commitment; and negative factors influencing organisational commitment.

Answers to the positive factors influencing organisational commitment in turn produced two main themes: personal work ethic; and being representatives of all Black people. For the first theme, participants felt that they differentiated between commitment to their jobs and commitment to their organisations. They all expressed commitment to their jobs, as a demonstration of their work ethic. However, commitment to the organisation was influenced by their experiences in the organisation. The second theme spoke to being representatives of Black people. Participants felt that as minorities at a senior level, they were no longer seen as individuals, but rather in their adopted role of being representatives and role models or gate openers for other Black people. Because of this perception, and their fear of letting other people down or closing doors for them, they placed extra pressure on themselves to ensure that they always put their best foot forward as they felt it was their responsibility to do so not only in their own interest and based on their own sense of work ethic.

The answers to the negative factors influencing organisational commitment produced three themes: no decision-making powers; the relationships with colleagues; and a lack of inclusive culture. First, participants felt that decision-making power was an important aspect of exerting meaningful leadership. The lack of decision-making power therefore made them feel as if they were figureheads. Second, the participants felt that having good relationships with colleagues was important in the workplace as it avoided conflicts and provided a good basis for cooperation. Lastly, participants felt that the lack of an inclusionary work environment negatively affected their organisational commitment. The factors that influenced organisational commitment, when put together, ultimately also influenced their decision to leave an organisation.

The findings of all the research questions revealed that Black leaders make use of coping mechanisms that are specific to them, and based on their experience of exclusion in the workplace. The differences in some responses between the senior managers and C-suite managers suggested that there are similarities in how C-suite executives perceive how to manage exclusion, compared to senior managers. These similarities also suggested that a particular pattern of thinking may influence the type of Black professional whose career

path is likely to either end at senior management level, or has the potential to get to C-suite level.

These were the thinking pattern similarities in the C-suite executives, which could be considered as influencing the success in their career progression:

- They mostly believed in subordinating the issue of race in the workplace;
- Conforming to the dominant corporate culture is important.

However, behavioural and thinking patterns that showed congruence with those of both senior managers and C-suite executives could be considered as simple order qualifiers:

- Highly qualified, competent and skilled individuals;
- High achievers and results driven;
- Strong work ethic.

The similarities and differences in behavioural and thinking patterns could be tacit messages that are sent to junior to middle level Black professionals on what it takes to make it to the top echelons of organisational leadership. The similarities in the C-suite suggested that perhaps at some point when these leaders were in junior positions, they learned that these types of thinking patterns are what is required to become a C-suite leader, and therefore adopted them. Across the occupational levels, among both the senior managers and the C-suite, there was agreement that Black professionals experience exclusion in the workplace. Furthermore, there was an acknowledgement that they need coping mechanisms in order to survive these exclusionary work environments. The differences, however, were mainly in the mechanisms used to cope both behavioural and in thinking patterns.

CHAPTER 6: DISCUSSION OF RESULTS

6.1. Introduction

In this chapter, the results of the research will be discussed in greater detail, with reference to the literature that was presented in Chapter 2. These results will be discussed with the aim of answering the main research question, which was to explore how Black leaders cope with exclusionary organisational environments, given their paradoxical role of being part of a majority outside their organisations, and at the same time being a minority inside their organisations. The discussion of the results will be based on each research question, against relevant literature.

6.2. Analysis of Results for Research Question 1

This research question sought to understand what coping mechanisms are utilised by Black leaders in dealing with exclusion, as minorities in organisations. Before these coping mechanisms could be explored, a view on the perceptions of exclusion where solicited from the participants. A presentation of the perceptions will be provided compared against the literature, then it will analyse the themes generated from answer to research question 1, which was: How do you cope with exclusionary work environments?

6.2.1. Perceptions of exclusion

Alleyne (2006) linked the experience of Black people in the workplace to a legacy of colonialism and slavery, by referring to this experience as workplace oppression. Black people suffer more negative effects of workplace stress and trauma because of their experiences of discrimination within the workplace (Alleyne, 2006; Myeza & April, 2021).

When discussing these perceptions on exclusion, participants who had worked in both large organisations and smaller ones noted that they found the experiences of exclusion to be more pronounced in the bigger organisations. Perhaps this could be explained by Kanter's (1977) explanation that greater uncertainty drives managers in senior positions to seek similarity through their hiring decisions. As White male managers are still in the majority in large organisations, this leads to greater opportunity being made available to those who look like them, disadvantaging minorities and members of historically marginalised groups. This then results in homosocial reproduction (Worsley & Stone, 2015).

The main perceptions on exclusions were based on four main themes:

a) Decision-making exclusion;
b) Gender stereotyping;
c) Promotion limitations;
d) Being invisible.

6.2.1.1. Decision making exclusion

An important aspect of leadership lies in the ability to make decisions, which is something that the participants of this research felt was significant in executing their leadership roles. They perceived that they experience decision-making exclusion, caused in part by social networks that exist among those in the dominant position. Participants seemed to understand that social groups develop based on interests and social background; however, they had a problem with business decisions often being made in social settings.

The Social Identity Theory explains that people make sense of their individual identity through their group membership (Tajfel & Turner, 1979). They desire to be part of in-groups that have positive social standing, which fulfils the purpose of building their self-esteem. By virtue of the roles they hold within their organisations, Black leaders form part of an elite in-group. Köllen et al. (2020) differentiate between social exclusion and job related exclusion. Social exclusion is exclusion that is related to social identity, whereas job related exclusion has to do with denying someone access or belonging in the professional setting (Köllen et al., 2020). Social exclusion is a lot more prevalent than job related exclusion. In South Africa, job related exclusion is protected against by legislation (Zulu & Parumasur, 2009).

Most of the participants stated that they mainly experienced social exclusion, as opposed to job-career related exclusion (Köllen et al., 2020; Carrim & Nkomo, 2016). However, the participants seemed unperturbed by not being invited to social events, especially so when these events were not of interest to them, but they took exception to the fact that decisions would be taken at these social interactions and expressed frustration towards being excluded from decision making. According to Kanter (1977), dominants exclude the minority from informal social settings because they do not trust them or because they would not fit in, for example, where they did not play the specific sport. Minorities have to earn their trust and make a real effort to fit in in order to access the informal social settings.

This demonstrates that senior Black leaders may be able to hold high status within organisations, however, their race can still hold them back from accessing the dominants' powerful social networks. Social networks are important for career growth as they provide access to opportunities such as mentoring, role modelling and sponsorship (Hudson et. al, 2017). Not being part of certain social networks can be a barrier to upward mobility for Black professionals (Worsley & Stone, 2015).

The status of being part of a minority already places one at a disadvantage (Kanter, 1977). When there is exclusion from informal social networks, it further amplifies the experience of being a minority. Decisions that require consensus put those who are in the majority in a more advantageous position. When decisions have been made without Black leaders being present in social settings, which are then presented in the formal setting for ratification, it undermines the leadership position of these Black leaders. According to Holder et al. (2015), the treatment of being undermined in the workplace is common for senior Black leaders. However, this is a subtle form of being undermined, which can therefore be classified as a micro-aggression.

6.2.1.2. Gender stereotyping

The term 'old boys' club' was a recurring theme among the participants, mentioned by four out of the 13 participants. They used this term colloquially to explain social networks of men who meet casually on a regular basis. Some participants mentioned how some of these networks were responsible for creating opportunities for those who are part of them. Worsley and Stone (2015) point out that social connections can be critical in helping to promote people.

Hudson et al. (2017) argue that social connections can either be beneficial or detrimental to access to opportunity. They are beneficial for those who form part of the dominant groups, and the opposite effect for those in minority and historically marginalised groups. These casual relationships often form as social capital in the workplace for White males (Worsley & Stone, 2015). Old boys' clubs limit the career growth of minorities (Worsley & Stone, 2015). The experience of this limitation is worsened when applied to Black women, as they form an even smaller minority in the higher echelons of executive leadership in organisations (Kanter, 1977).

Intersectionality explains that Black women experience discrimination that is threefold, based on their race, their class and gender, and often their age (Crenshaw, 1989). They

are vulnerable to more micro-aggressions in the workplace (Holder et. al., 2015). This places them in a position where they need to work harder to manage the perceptions held about them, so that negative stereotypes do not harm their career progression.

Black women have to constantly manage perceptions of their individual brands by going against stereotypes. One of these is the angry Black woman stereotype. This is a common stereotype, which typecasts Black women as aggressive, especially when they assert themselves in the workplace (Holder et. al., 2015). Often times, Black women notice double standards in terms of behaviours that are allowed by men, but treated as unacceptable when performed by women (Kanter, 1977). Therefore, although assertiveness can advance a man's career growth, being perceived as an angry Black women on the other hand can have damaging effects on a Black woman's career progression, creating an unwanted distraction away from their technical competencies. Black women in leadership often experience questioning of their authority and credibility (Holder et. al., 2015). The angry Black woman stereotype further exacerbates the experience of having their credibility questioned and undermined.

When asked about influences to organisational commitment, only one participant responded to what can be classified as a bread and butter issue. This female respondent attributed her organisational commitment to having children that depended on her income. Holvino (2010) described that the intersection of race, class and gender has a marginalising effect on Black women. Another female participant described how the need to provide a good education for her son pushed her to make the difficult decision of compromising on her role as a mother, because she could not be both successful in the workplace as well as in the home as a single parent who must provide. The need to secure their financial security is one that proves Holvino's (2010) point that the general lack of economic privilege for Black women creates more unique challenges. In most cases, they do not have a fall-back support plan that they can depend on should their career progression not work out. This could be because Black women have historically been the support system for others (Holvino, 2010).

6.2.1.3. Promotion limitations

Participants felt that they were limited in terms of promotion opportunities, compared to those of their White counterparts. They felt that some opportunities were made available to White colleagues. Some participants explained their frustration in perceiving that White people's career paths progressed faster than Black people's careers. This finding is similar

to Worsley and Stone's (2015) research, which found that Black professionals experienced favouritism towards White men who looked like the seniors to be a barrier to their growth. This observation was mostly made by the senior managers.

Worsley and Stone (2015) point out that ethnic minorities experience challenges with upward mobility in their organisations for various reasons, including the limited access to mentors and role models. Homosocial reproduction could be used to explain the reason White managers promote White individuals over their Black counterparts. Homosocial reproduction explains that senior managers who are dominant have a tendency to create an environment where they are around people who look like them.

It is notable that this perception of White professionals receiving preferential treatment is contrary the perceptions of White professionals towards preferential treatment being given to Black professionals due to EE (Oosthuizen et. al., 2019; Booysen, 2007). It is argued that Black professionals have better opportunities than their White counterparts because of the EE legislation in South Africa (Oosthuizen et. al., 2019). Some even claimed that EE is reverse discrimination (April & Blaas, 2010). However, the statistics of Black senior leaders in South Africa suggest that this may not necessarily be the case. If Black professionals had better opportunities for promotion because of their race, it would then follow that they would hold more senior positions in management. The low numbers of Black senior leaders in South African organisations suggests that the likelihood of promotion for Black workers compared to their White counterparts is much lower, in line with Worsley and Stone's study (2015). Further to this, Khumalo (2018) also shows that there is evidence through case law, which has shown unbiased action by South African courts on issues related to racial discrimination, regardless of whether the victims are Black or White.

6.2.1.4. Being invisible

Alleyne (2006) described invisibility as a form of workplace oppression. Participants mentioned various examples of being ignored, sometimes by colleagues and at other times by White stakeholders, who would rather choose to engage their White colleagues. This behaviour can also be classified as a micro-aggression, and although subtle in nature, it has equally harmful effects as overt racism (Mokoena, 2020).

Being ignored or treated as invisible is a common form of subtle discrimination in the workplace experienced by Black professionals (Alleyne, 2006). Mokoena (2020) argues that Black professionals are treated as though they do not exist.

This finding was a surprising one. Many of the participants spoke of their primary employers being more accepting and inclusive than the other stakeholders they deal with. What is possibly hurtful about micro-aggressions that come in the form of stakeholder rejection is the sense of helplessness that comes with it, partly because of the difficulty of proving that the rejection is based on race, and the other part is that the particular stakeholder relationship is needed for business. When a client ignores the the Black leader in a meeting or refuses to make eye contact, who do they report this to and what law or procedure can the Black leader claim has been contravened?

Mokoena (2020) describes this as “indignities, whether intentional or unintentional that communicate hostile, derogatory or negative racial slights or insults” (p. 26). Mokoena (2020) believes that South African law is too limited to be able to deal with this type of racism because of its subtlety.

6.2.2. Coping mechanisms

These are the four themes of coping mechanisms that were generated from the interviews conducted as stated in Chapter 5:

a) Working harder;
b) Having a strong support system;
c) Maturity;
d) Conformity.

6.2.2.1. Working harder

Kanter (1977) explained that tokens experience performance pressure. This pressure comes with the fact that their racial salience often makes them a representative of their own race. Their individual actions are not seen as their own, but rather as an extension of who they represent (Kanter, 1977). They have to work harder as a way of debunking the negative stereotypes about Black people.

The participants were of the view that they had no room to fail. To ensure this, they had to work much harder and put in more effort than their White counterparts. Many of the

participants mentioned the pressure to prove that they were not merely EE appointees, but that they deserved the positions they were in. According to Myeza and April (2021), Black professionals believe that their success and the fact that they were given their positions was based on the scarcity of Black talent in the market, rather than attributing it to them being deserving by merit. Considering the seniority of the Black leaders interviewed for this study, who were also minorities either within their organisations, or in their professions, there was also an acceptance of how small the pool of Black professionals was at their occupational level. The leaders in this study expressed that they felt they deserved their positions, as they had earned them through hard work, experience and qualifications. However, it is unclear whether they feel the need to work harder and prove that they are not just EE appointments is linked to a subconscious feeling that maybe, they had actually been appointed merely as EE appointments, as suggested by Myeza and April (2021).

Their need to be taken seriously is closely linked to them feeling that they were on display, which was created by them being in the minority position as explained by Kanter (1977). This places them in a vulnerable position where their wins and their failures are in public display, there is therefore no room to hide (Kanter, 1977). This exposure is one that all participants of this research were acutely conscious of at all times. It is this display that causes severe pressure on many of them, as failure is not seen as an option.

6.2.2.2. Having a strong support system

This was a strong theme that came from the participants, indicating that the need for support is quite an important coping mechanism for Black leaders. Myeza and April (2021) also state that Black professionals cope better with exclusion through the support networks of other professionals who look like them outside their organisations. The participants of this research named information networks of support with other Black professionals within their friendship circles, and networks of professionals outside of their organisations. Interestingly, none of them mentioned support networks that come from within their workplaces. This is interpreted as a direct function of their minority position. Because there are few people at their level, they therefore need to seek those who are similar but can only be found outside of their immediate working environments. Holder et al. (2015) describe this as networks of people who help them validate the experience of and existence of racial discrimination. These networks provide a safe space for them to

"test the accuracy of their perceptions of racial micro-aggressions" (Holder et al., 2015, p. 175).

Many of the participants mentioned their spirituality as a key coping mechanism. This is in line with Holder et al.'s (2015) research, where they found that religion and spirituality helped Black women cope with the micro-aggressions in the workplace. However, their finding was more related to the participants having a sense of forgiveness towards the perpetrators. In this study, participants did not speak of forgiveness as a concept, and did not attach their spirituality to external parties. Instead, they used spirituality to control how they viewed the world, which helped them cope with having a more positive mindset.

6.2.2.3. Maturity

Many of the participants attributed the need to forget about race to their maturity. They seemed to suggest that the subordination of race was a demonstration of growth and maturity, which has helped them elevate their thinking beyond race. One participant revealed that one of the CEOs he once worked with would tell him to come up with reasons to explain issues other than race. This participant was being encouraged by a senior Black individual to try find other reasons, as though using the race card was an inferior way of thinking. While this could well be interpreted as delegitimising the experience of racism by Black people in the workplace, it could also be an indication that racism is mainly an issue to junior managers and those on their way to the top, while maturity has shown senior C-suite leaders that it is often not merely a question of racism that holds people back from success. Also, in a multiracial country such as South Africa, with the recent history of apartheid, racism will be a factor for as long as multiple races will work together, and bring with them different cultures, different priorities, and experiences. Therefore, solutions will have to be found to address all problem areas.

DeCuir-Gunby et al. (2019) argue that refusing to confront racism is a form of problem avoidance and therefore a maladaptive coping mechanism. Maladaptive coping mechanisms are said to be unhealthy and increase stress levels (DeCuir-Gunby et al., 2019). This coping mechanism can therefore be seen as counter intuitive, even though it achieves the purpose of avoiding confrontations. Tension is therefore reduced between people, but it creates higher stress levels (Cronqvist et al., 1997).

Slay and Smith (2011) argued that Black people subordinate their race in the workplace in order to be taken seriously. The workplace is therefore not a safe space to be overtly

racially expressive, as others may react to such expressions as a sign that the person is more concerned about their race and not sufficiently serious about the work. In Kanter's (1977) research, dominant groups preferred to focus on work, thereby undervaluing discriminatory practices.

This normalisation or delegitimising the acknowledgement of racism in the workplace by Black senior leaders can be interpreted as internalised oppression. Internalised oppression is described as the internalisation of values, beliefs, stereotypes and the misinformation by those who are oppressed (Alleyne, 2006).

What is significant about this finding is that it was the C-suite executives who demonstrated this attitude the most. By doing this, Black senior leaders take on the role of what Kanter (1977) described as being "instruments of underlining rather than undermining the majority culture" (Kanter, 1977, p. 976). Therefore, they perpetuate the dominant culture of exclusion by choosing to cope with it by ignoring it, as a means to be taken seriously. Because this view was mostly held by those in the C-suite, it could potentially be sending an unintentional message to other Black professionals that in order to be accepted and successful at that senior level, this is the type of thinking and behaviour was required within corporate organisations.

6.2.2.4. Conformity

Most of the C-suite executives admitted to conforming to the dominant culture within the workplace, as opposed to the majority of the senior managers who said they do not conform. This suggests that the more senior the individuals are, the more pressure there is to conform or to be seen to conform. Hewlin (2003) described the false representation of conformity as facades of conformity.

Facades of conformity make it seem as though people are conforming, when in actual fact they are hiding their true feelings (Hewlin, 2003). Minority groups are most vulnerable to this, because there are not enough of them in senior positions in the organisations to counter the dominant culture. They do this in order to be perceived as non-threatening (Leigh & Melwani, 2019; Hewlin, 2003). This is an interesting paradox, because C-suite leaders are the most senior people in their organisations, second in command operationally only to the CEO. As leaders, they influence organisational culture. However, because Black leaders, as minorities, do not have a critical mass, it seems their power to

influence the corporate culture as leaders is mitigated, forcing them to assimilate to the existing dominant culture.

The role of trust among their colleagues is highly valued by senior leaders. The layer of leadership that they find themselves in is usually very thin; therefore, their circle of trusted colleagues at their level is even smaller than that of the ordinary professional. Decisions made within the boardrooms need to be supported by their peers; therefore, they need to gain the trust of their colleagues on Exco. This finding aligns with Scott et al.'s (2013) assessment of trust towards the minority, which is limited. They argue that exclusion is used as a protective measure against those who do not conform. This therefore explains the behaviour of conformity among the most senior Black people in their organisations.

The behaviour of Black leaders to create the perception that they do conform to the dominant culture is therefore in line with the literature that suggests that minorities use conformity as a coping mechanism (Leigh & Melwani, 2019; Hewlin, 2003; Ramarajan & Reid, 2013; Kanter, 1977).

6.2.2.5. Summary of the discussion of research question 1

The results for research question 1, which sought to explore the coping mechanisms utilised by Black leaders are validated by the theory. Black leaders in South Africa show similarity to other minorities in coping with exclusionary environments (DeCuir-Gunby et al., 2019; Myeza & April, 2021; Kanter, 1977; Holder et al., 2015; Alleyne, 2006). The research results revealed similarities in thinking patterns of C-suite executives. This revealed that there could be opportunity for future research into whether there are certain types of thinking patterns in Black professionals that make them amenable to succeeding as minorities in White dominated organisational cultures.

6.3. Analysis of Results for Research Question 2

Do exclusionary organisational environments influence intentions to leave the organisation?

This research question sought to understand the factors that influence the attrition of Black leaders in organisations in relation to their experiences of exclusion. Various considerations were taken into account when individuals thought of leaving an organisation (Kim et al., 2021). However, it is accepted that negative triggers are responsible for individuals making the decision to leave an organisation (Kim et al., 2021;

Oprea et al., 2020). An analysis will be provided in relation to the themes that research question 2 generated, which was: Do exclusionary organisational environments influence intentions to leave the organisation? The two themes that emerged from responses to this research question were:

a) Different expectations;
b) Being in control of their careers.

6.3.1. Different expectations

In response to the question of whether there were any perceived different expectations on them as Black leaders, one participant commented that senior management would often tell her to take control of the Black people working in the company. This expectation was disturbing for the particular participant as they perceived that this additional responsibility was given to them based solely on their race. They felt that this was not the expectation placed on White leaders. Upon analysis, this expectation was one based on cultural boundary spanning. Leaders form part of the dominant group because of the inherent nature of leadership in an organisation (Ernst & Yip, 2009). However, because Black leaders have the paradoxical role of being in both part of that dominant group and also in the minority and less dominant group because of their race, there could be the expectation that they play the role of bridging the cultural divide.

Schotter et al. (2017) reveal that boundary spanning helps to create cohesion that reduces the ‘us and them’ dynamics within teams. Strong in-group bonds within organisations make it difficult for those in the out-group to feel welcome and part of the team (Schotter et al., 2017). Perhaps an unspoken expectation, which is taken automatically, is that Black leaders embrace this role of boundary spanning by their White counterparts who may struggle to relate to Black juniors.

However, given that it is not a formalised expectation, some Black leaders take offense to this expectation. Ethnic minorities often suffer from being typecast in the workplace (Hudson et al., 2017). The practice of expecting Black leaders to bring in Black business is a form of being typecast. In questioning this practice, one Black leader irritatingly noted they did not see their organisations expecting White, Jewish, or Afrikaans-speaking leaders to do the same with their social identity groups. Mokoena (2020) compares this to the apartheid government’s practice of appointing ‘indunas’, whose role was to control Black people in informal settlements on behalf of the White establishment. According to

Mokoena (2020), this makes Black managers pseudo-managers. Effectively, it demotes them to figureheads who simply have the title that does not match the authority that should come with it.

Participants also felt that they were judged according to a different standard. At times, goal posts would be shifted when certain rules were applied within the organisation, depending on whether the recipient was White or Black. One participant commented that when it came to performance measures that were seemingly neutral of race, they felt emphasis was placed on elements that they had challenges with, rather than where they excelled. This left them feeling that sometimes, the organisation was not committed to their success. The findings of Nzukuma and Bussin (2011) suggested that many Black leaders felt sabotaged in the workplace. For the leaders included in this research, this played a significant role in influencing their intentions as to whether to leave or remain within an organisation.

6.3.2. Being in control of their careers

According to human capital theory, it is easier for employees in lower paying jobs to leave than it is for those in higher paying jobs (Nzukuma & Bussin, 2011). The participants of this research did not raise remuneration as one of the factors that would influence whether they left or stayed in a company. One of the participants mentioned that they had reached this stage in their career where the most important factor was their peace of mind. This suggests that for some senior Black leaders, higher remuneration is not an influencing factor for leaving an organisation. Even if the market were to be willing to pay a premium for them to move, they were more influenced by other factors.

This is contrary to perceptions that Black people change jobs frequently, or job hop, because they are driven by the desire for more money (Ndzwayiba et al., 2018). Ndzwayiba et al. (2018) argue that notions that Black talent is purely driven by money, insinuating that they are disloyal, are in fact racist in nature. These perceptions do not take into consideration the influence of exclusionary work environments when Black leaders leave organisations.

Out of the 13 participants, 9 said that they had left an organisation because of exclusionary practices. One participant said that they were currently in the process of interviewing with other organisations, as they were experiencing these challenges. This participant had only been with this organisation for nine months. This participant explained that they would

rather move to another organisation, than invest years into this organisation that could hurt their mental wellness.

From an occupational level, the majority of the sample who had left organisations because of exclusion were senior managers. Five out of the sample of six senior managers said that they have left an organisation before for these reasons. From the C-suite, it was almost an even split, four said they had left an organisation in the past because of exclusion, and three said they had never done so. This suggests that Black senior managers may be more prone to leaving organisations, as a way of responding to exclusionary work environments, than the C-suite executives.

McGinley and Martinez (2018) explain that the current job market is such that professionals have more freedom to move around. This freedom gives people the satisfaction to be in control of their careers. When the participants responded to questions about leaving, they demonstrated this same satisfaction of being able to leave an organisation if they wished to. It seemed as though it is something that they enjoy having control over, as other factors that contribute towards them wanting to leave an organisations were out of their control. According to Nzukuma and Bussin (2011), Black leaders take control of their career trajectory by moving. Having the power to self-select and leave an organisation provides them with a sense of agency that nobody else can control.

Considering the seniority of Black leaders, and their high skills levels, it should not be surprising that they are able to practice this freedom to move around. Human capital theory argues that people who have invested more in their human capital, will naturally be more mobile because of their attractiveness to the market (Worsley & Stone, 2015).

6.3.3. Summary of the discussion for research question 2

The results of research question 2, which sought to find out whether exclusionary organisational environments influence intentions to leave the organisation, generated two themes, which revealed factors that influence the intention to leave as different expectations; and second, being in control of their careers. These results validate what has been discussed in the theory as key influencers of intentions to leave for Black people (Mokoena, 2020; Hudson et al., 2017; Nzukuma & Bussin, 2011; Worsley & Stone, 2015; Ndzwayiba et al., 2018). The results also revealed that there is potential for further

research to be done in understanding the push and pull factors for Black leaders as they take control of their careers.

6.4. Analysis of Results for Research Question 3

Does the perception of an exclusionary organisational environment lead to a lack of commitment to the organisation?

This research question sought to understand the factors that influence a lack of commitment to an organisation. Meyer et al. (2018) recognise that employees experience commitment to their organisations in different ways. First, there is a desire to remain employed within an organisation known as affective commitment; second, there is the perceived obligation to remain in the organisation, known as normative commitment; and third, they consider the cost of leaving, known as continuance commitment (Meyer et al., 2018). An individual may experience these at different points in their career, and it does not have to be simultaneous. This is highly influenced by the perception that an individual has of their organisation (D'souza et al., 2017).

This section also presents the themes that were generated in relation to the literature, as a result of research question 3, which was: Does the perception of an exclusionary organisational environment lead to a lack of commitment to the organisation? Participants expressed these factors in different forms, which have been summarised into two branches: positive influencing factors and negative ones. Within these branches, common themes emerged.

For positive influencing factors, the themes that emerged were:

a) Personal work ethic;
b) Being representatives of all Black people.

For negative influencing factors, the themes that emerged were:

a) No decision making powers;
b) Relationships with colleagues;
c) The lack of an inclusive culture.

6.4.1. Perceived positive factors influencing commitment

Commitment of employees towards their organisations is influenced by various factors. These factors are based on their perceptions regarding the opportunities for growth within the organisation, the organisational culture, and whether the employees experience job satisfaction (D'souza et al., 2017; Nzukuma & Bussin, 2011). Positive factors that influence employees' commitment may be related to what is perceived to be an inclusive work environment. Research has shown that when employees perceive an environment to be inclusive, their commitment levels are higher (Meyer et al., 2007; D'souza et al., 2017; Virick et al., 2004).

6.4.1.1. Personal work ethic

The participants of this research indicated that their commitment was highly influenced by their personal values, and not necessarily by the external pushes in response to organisational issues. According to Nzukuma and Bussin (2011), remuneration plays a significant role in the commitment of employees. They argued that remuneration is a powerful motivator (Nzukuma & Bussin, 2011). Although the respondents of this study did not refer to remuneration as their motivator in response to the question asking what factors influence their commitment, many of them had indicated that the pay gap is a form of exclusion. However, they did not relate it to influencing their lack of commitment.

The main themes that emerged from the participants' response to what they perceived as positive factors that influenced their organisational commitment were their own personal work ethic and being a representative of their entire race. Many of the participants emphasised that they were committed to their organisation, because it is part of their personal and individual work ethic, and that they always gave their best to every job they had.

6.4.1.2. Being representatives of all Black people

Kanter (1977) explained that minorities go through three phenomena when they are in a skewed minority situation: visibility; polarisation; and assimilation. The theme of being representative of all Black people is as a result of their visibility. The impact of visibility is that they are treated as symbols of their social identity (Kanter, 1977). This is because there are so few of the people of the social identity that they are part of, they as individuals then become that representation of the whole group. This reduces their anonymity, which means that they are constantly being watched as to their mistakes and their performance.

Minorities have the pressure not to make mistakes (Kanter, 1977; Myeza & April, 2021). They often feel that when they make errors, this will be interpreted not only as an individual error, rather it will be a representation of all people of their race (Holder et al., 2015, Myeza & April, 2021). The Black leaders in this study felt that if they fail, it will not only be their own failure, but it will be seen as a failure of all Black people. Further to this, they felt that if they failed, it would close off opportunities for other Black people who came after them. This is an indication that Black leaders are hypersensitive to the potential perception of them not being capable. Holder et al. (2015) describes hypersensitivity that is experienced by minorities as behaviours and actions that are closely monitored.

Black leaders were constantly careful of what they did, how they behaved and how this may be interpreted by others. They were conscious that they had to manage perceptions about themselves. In an effort to go against what they perceived the dominant group was thinking of them relating to negative stereotypes, they worked harder (Myeza & April, 2021). Therefore, they tried to create a different perception of Black people through their own individual actions.

6.4.2. Perceived negative factors influencing commitment

The following factors were raised as the most negatively influential in driving a lack of commitment to an organisation: no decision-making powers; relationships with colleagues; and the lack of an inclusive culture.

6.4.2.1. No decision-making powers

Black leaders in this study placed decision-making powers as a critical part of demonstrating leadership. Therefore, the lack of decision-making power was interpreted as not being a 'real leader', rather a figurehead. Leadership teams in organisations tended to make decisions when consensus was reached. According to Mokoena (2020), the majority status of their White counterparts reinforced White power and limited the power of Black leaders. Kanter (1977) explained that skewed numerical dominance created certain dynamics in the relations between the dominants and the minority. It may lead to assimilation of the dominant culture, as a coping mechanism to ensure that minorities survive the environment. The danger of assimilation of the dominant culture is that it may not necessarily be a healthy one for the organisation (Kanter, 1977).

In an effort to have decisions made in their favour within their senior leadership teams, Black leaders may need to assimilate to the dominant culture to maintain good

relationships for support. Myeza and April (2021) suggest that the political and social power that Black people have in South Africa is overtaken by the power of oppression gained from the country's history. The majority status that comes with power outside their organisations is something that Black leaders do not have inside their organisations.

6.4.2.2. Relationships with colleagues

Relationships with colleagues was also an important consideration for the participants. All noted that having good relationships with the colleagues was important and influential to their organisational commitment. This is colleagues at their level, above and also their subordinates, as this affects the quality of life within the organisation. Partly, it had to do with gaining favour with colleagues and also with the quality of the experiences in the workplace. Minorities have to put in more effort in order to be accepted by those in the dominant position (Kanter, 1977).

Nzukuma and Bussin's (2011) research revealed that Black leaders value having a trust relationship with their immediate senior managers. They value it because it provides them with the sufficient social capital to practice their positional power. Participants explained that it was critical at their level of leadership to maintain good relationships with their White colleagues at their level, to ensure that they were still effective in their role. Their minority status limited their ability to fully practise their positional power.

Worsley and Stone (2015) suggest that minorities struggle to have good relationships with White males, who are dominant in the workplace and experience more inequalities. This was an influential factor to their commitment to their companies in the long term, as it also affected their career progression.

In relation to good relations with subordinates, a study by Myeza and April (2021) reveals that Black female professionals are more lenient towards staff members who look like them, as opposed to White staff members. This can be attributed to homosocial reproduction. However, the participants of this research did not feel that they treated their subordinates differently based on their race, contrary to Myeza and April's (2021) findings.

6.4.2.3. Lack of an inclusive culture

The last factor that was presented as having a negative influence on organisational commitment was the lack of an inclusive organisational culture. Shore et al. (2018) describe inclusion as involving equal opportunity for all employees from different social

identity groups. Employees who perceive their organisation's environment to be fair and inclusive respond by increasing their commitment to the organisation (Li, 2019).

The participants of this research emphasised that it is the corporate culture of the organisation that influences their commitment, not necessarily the organisations themselves. They felt that most organisations were intrinsically good, the problems came from the experience of exclusionary organisational cultures. Mor Barak et al. (2016) describe an inclusive environment as one where employees feel included in decision-making processes. This is aligned with the results of this study, as Black leaders placed great importance to decision-making, given their roles as leaders. Within such environments, individuals are more likely to experience higher engagement levels, which then leads to greater organisational performance (Mor Barak et al., 2016; Shore et al., 2018; Nishii, 2013).

Because individuals perceive that the exclusionary challenges stem from the organisational culture, organisations face the challenge of embedding inclusive cultures, so that employees do not perceive that they are limited by their social identities at work (Nishii, 2013; Bernstein et al., 2020). When employees perceive that their social identity limits their career progression, it negatively affects their commitment. This ultimately leads to them leaving the organisation. This was a very strong finding among the Black leaders in this study.

Vohra et al., (2015) argue that a culture of inclusion means that assimilation of the dominant norms is not a prerequisite to career advancement. This therefore makes it easier for minorities to experience a sense of belonging, and they can imagine a fruitful future in the organisation, and thereby enhance their organisational commitment. Black leaders in this study were highly attractive in the market because of their high skills levels. Their interpretation of an inclusive culture meant that they wanted to be seen not as an EE appointment, but be taken seriously for their competence.

6.4.2. Summary of the discussion for research question 3

In summary, the results for research question 3, which sought to understand whether perceptions of an exclusionary organisational environment leads to a lack of commitment to the organisation, generated themes that could be placed into two groups: positive influences and negative influences. The results of the themes were validated by the theory

(Mor Barak et al., 2016; Shore et al., 2018; Nishii, 2013; Holder et al., 2015, Myeza & April, 2021; Kanter, 1977).

6.5. Conclusion

This chapter presented a discussion of the findings of the study supported by literature. The findings revealed that Black leaders experience exclusion far more in the workplace in the form of micro-aggressions (Scott et al., 2013). These covert racial acts of discrimination were far more difficult to address directly. As a minority, they already stood out as being different within their leadership teams. This exposure or visibility is based on their race, which creates a situation where they cannot hide (Kanter, 1977). They may not want their salience to be caused by their race, and may prefer that they are noticed for their competence.

Black leaders' perceptions on exclusion are aligned with other research of ethnic minorities in the workplace, for example, the work of Myeza and April (2021), Mokoena (2020), Hudson et al. (2017), Holder et al. (2015), and Alleyne (2006). Some of their perceptions are described by them as exclusion, but according to the literature, are a demonstration of other phenomena such as homosocial reproduction.

Booysen (2007) argued that in times of social change, people undergo an identity crisis. Black leaders can be described as experiencing some of the elements of an identity crisis, as their roles as senior leaders in organisations makes them elite in-group members. However, their race also places them in the out-group. Because of this, they need to constantly work at proving themselves as being worthy of being part of the in-group (Kanter, 1977). Leigh and Melwani (2019) note that individuals activate their work identities when they are in the workplace. Black leaders have to dial up and down aspects of their work and personal identities related to their race, depending on situations.

Black senior leaders seem to have a need to be perceived as colour blind by others, choosing to purposefully not see race or address it directly within the workplace. This finding is in line with Myeza and April (2021) in their research on the experience of Black professionals, in that White colleagues resort to colour blindness as a strategy to avoid speaking about issues of race.

Black leaders displayed stigmatic stress, as their coping mechanisms placed them in a constant state of hyper vigilance (Alleyne, 2006). This hyper vigilance was demonstrated

in some of their coping mechanisms such as working harder. They demonstrated both adaptive and maladaptive coping mechanisms in order to survive exclusion in the workplace.

The adaptive coping mechanisms that they utilised displayed problem-solving predispositions such as seeking emotional support (DeCuir-Gunby et al., 2019). The adaptive coping mechanisms that were utilised by the Black leaders in this study were working harder, and having strong support systems. Maladaptive coping mechanisms are associated with disengaging and increase stress levels, such as the suppression of feelings (DeCuir-Gunby et al., 2019). The maladaptive coping mechanisms that the Black leaders in this study demonstrated were their behaviour of conforming, and their thinking pattern of subordinating race in the workplace and associating this to their level of maturity. Although cognitive reframing is considered to be an adaptive coping mechanism, it does not increase stress levels. The avoidance of race and racism in the workplace is something that increases anxiety not only for themselves as senior Black leaders, but also for other Black professionals who may be in more junior ranks.

Hewlin (2003) argued that employees received subtle cues about what is and is not acceptable for their particular work contexts. This may activate the need to conform or put on a façade that one is conforming. Exclusionary work environments place minorities under the pressure of putting on facades of conformity (Hewlin, 2003; Ramarajan & Reid, 2013).

The next chapter presents the conclusions of this research paper.

CHAPTER 7: CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

7.1. Introduction

This chapter reflects on the study's conclusions by summarising the findings and their implications for business, government / regulators; and theory. It starts off with a summary of the findings, followed by the contribution to theory, then implications for business, then for government. Following this, the limitations of the research will be provided, and suggestions for future research, and lastly the conclusion.

The primary aim of this study was to explore how Black leaders cope with exclusionary organisational environments, given their paradoxical role of being part of a majority outside their organisations, and at the same time being a minority inside their organisations.

7.2. Summary of findings

This research addressed the research problem, as outlined in Chapter 1 regarding the effects of Black leaders' exclusion in South African organisations. They key findings can be divided into three main areas, based on the research questions outlined in Chapter 3. First, Black leaders utilise both adaptive and maladaptive coping strategies in order to manage being in exclusionary work environments (DeCuir-Gunby et al., 2019). Second, exclusionary work environments influence intentions to leave for Black leaders (Kim et al., 2021; Oprea et al., 2020). Third, the perception of exclusionary organisational environment influences organisational commitment for Black leaders (Meyer et al., 2018; D'souza et al., 2017).

7.2.1. First main research finding

Black leaders use both adaptive and maladaptive coping strategies in order to manage being in exclusionary work environments.

a) Most Black leaders experience social exclusion, as opposed to job-related exclusion (Köllen et. al., 2020; DeCuir-Gunby et. al., 2019; Robinson et. al. 2013; Kanter, 1977).
b) Black leaders' positioning as members of the majority outside their organisations does not serve to protect them from workplace exclusion inside their organisations as minorities (Holder et. al., 2015; Myeza & April, 2021)

c) Senior Black managers are more inclined to utilise adaptive coping strategies such as working harder and making use of their strong support systems. They are less inclined to use maladaptive coping strategies (Holder et. al., 2015; DeCuir-Gunby et. al., 2019; Myeza & April, 2021; Worsley & Stone, 2015)
d) C-suite executives are more inclined to utilise both adaptive and maladaptive coping strategies. The maladaptive coping strategies they are inclined to use are subordinating their race as a demonstration of their high level of maturity, secondly conforming to the dominant culture or subculture. (Holder et. al., 2015; Myeza & April, 2021; DeCuir-Gunby et. al., 2019; Worsley & Stone, 2015)

7.2.2. Second main research finding

Exclusionary work environments influence intentions to leave for Black leaders

a) Most Black leaders have left organisations in the past where they were experiencing exclusion, would do so again (Köllen, at. al. 2020; Kim et. al. 2021; Holder et. al., 2015)
b) Black leaders perceive that there are different expectations set on them, compared to leaders of other races. This influences their intentions to leave (Myeza & April, 2021; Worsley & Stone, 2015)
c) Black leaders value the freedom to leave organisations which they perceive to have exclusionary cultures. Their high levels of skill, coupled will the smaller pool of senior Black leaders in the market allows them the freedom and independence to leave organisations which they choose to (McGinley & Martinez, 2018; Nzukuma & Bussin, 2011).

7.2.3. Third main research finding

The perception of an exclusionary work environment influences organisational commitment

a) Black leaders distinguish between commitment to their jobs and commitment to the organisation. They are always committed to their jobs due to their work ethic, however organisational commitment is influenced by organisational culture (Kanter, 1977)
b) The perception of an exclusionary work environment negatively influences organisational commitment. This creates organisational commitment to dwindle,

ultimately leading to them leaving (Oprea et. al., 2020; D'souza et. al. 2017; Zulu & Parumasur, 2009)

c) Black leaders feel a sense of responsibility to break negative stereotypes about Black employees as they feel they are representations of all Black people. They feel that their individual success or failure can either have the effect of opening or closing doors for other Black people in the future (Holder et. al., 2015; Worsley & Stone, 2015; April & Blaas, 2010)
d) Black leaders consider decision making to be a key component of a leadership role. The lack of decision making power as leaders negatively influences their organisational commitment, making them feel they are only figureheads in line with Mokoena (2020); Zulu & Parumasur, 2009)
e) As minorities in leadership teams, Black leaders value good relationships with colleagues in order to gain favour and buy in when they need it (Kanter, 1977; Holder et. al., 2015; Worsley & Stone, 2015)
f) Lastly, the lack of an inclusive organisational culture strongly influences feelings of not belonging, making Black leaders less committed to their organisations (Köllen, at. al. 2020; Cha & Roberts, 2019; Bernstein et. al., 2020; Worsley & Stone, 2015; Myeza & April, 2021).

7.3. Contributions to theory

The majority of the research conducted in the field of diversity and inclusion has been outside of the African context and most of it only at managers and non-managers (Li, 2019; Shore et. al., 2018, Nishii, 2013). In South Africa, the existing research has focused on minority managers (Carrim, 2019; Köllen et. al., 2020; Wöcke & Sutherland, 2008). This research has focused on Senior Black leaders in organisations in South Africa, as there has been on them as an occupational level group has bene sparse (Nzukuma & Bussin, 2011). Further to this, previous research has had a strong focus diversity and inclusion, not just inclusion (Köllen et. al., 2020). The research also responded to the call for more research on the impact of exclusion, termed as ostracisation by Robinson et. al. (2013). A significant contribution has been made by focusing on the experience of Black leaders at C-suite and senior management level in South African organisations and exploring the coping mechanisms which they utilise. The research also revealed perceptions that contribute to Black leaders' intentions to leave organisations, as well as influences of their organisational commitment.

7.4. Implications and recommendations for business / organisations

7.4.1 Implications for business / organisations

In South Africa Black people are the majority, making up 79% of the economically active population (Commission for Employment Equity, 2020). Holder et. al. (2015) assert Black professionals are at higher risk of experiencing racism and exclusionary practices in the workplace. Mokoena (2020) suggests that if organisations that want to attract and retain Black professionals, they should concern themselves with addressing racism, as it impacts employee satisfaction. Given that Black people are a majority in South Africa, organisations have a larger pool of people that can contribute to business. If they are perceived as exclusionary by the majority of the population, it will hamper their ability to attract the best skilled people. When employees perceive that they are valued for their contribution, and have the potential to grow their careers, their commitment levels are higher. A strong element to developing this is by building an inclusive environment (Meyer et. al., 2007; D'souza et. al., 2017; Virick, et. al., 2004).

The effects of exclusion is that these cultures create barriers for Black talent and makes it difficult to retain them (Booysen, 2004). The results of this research revealed that Black leaders leave organisations that they perceive to have exclusionary cultures. Cultivating a culture of inclusion for all employees, those who are in the minority and those in the majority can go a long way in attracting the best talent in the market (Köllen et. al., 2020; DeCuir-Gunby et. al., 2019). Employee commitment has multiple benefits for organisations, including increasing loyalty which makes them stay longer (D'souza et. al., 2017). Although McGinley & Martinez (2018) argues that talent is mobile, there is still benefit to long term tenure, which allows employees to grow and contribute to business. South African organisations must consider the cues that are sent to the Black professionals when high profile resignations of Black senior leaders, potentially creating the perception that Black professionals do not belong in these organisations.

In South Africa Black professionals continue to experience workplace exclusion, despite the legal frameworks which have been developed to protect their rights to equality (Myeza & April, 2021; April, 2020). There is potential to learn from what is being implemented in the international market, as Romansky et. al. (2021) explain that diversity and inclusion efforts grew 1,8 times in 2020. Companies are becoming more transparent in reporting on diversity and inclusion (Romansky et. al., 2021).

7.4.2. Recommendations for business / organisations

a) Organisations have the challenge of engaging their entire workforce, including Black leaders in the minority. Support systems were a strong element of coping mechanisms for Black leaders. Organisations can formalise these networks to create these support systems, whilst at the same time fostering culture of opening up mentorship and sponsorship opportunities to Black leaders and Black professionals in the pipeline for leadership
b) Organisations in South African report on diversity annually to the department of Labour, these figures are also used when B-BBEE scorecards are updated annually. However, there is an opportunity for organisations to be more transparent on their levels of inclusion when they release their annual results and annual reports to drive further accountability
c) Inclusion measures can be included in the non-financial aspect of performance balance scorecards within organisations.

7.5. Implications and recommendations for government

7.5.1. Implications for government

South Africa's political power that the majority gained 1994 has not translated into economic power, as the Black majority remains in lower economic status compared to the White minority. Myeza & April (2021) argue that both political and social power have failed to "unseat the patterns of economic power and historic practices embedded over centuries of oppression in South Africa" (p. 2). Wöcke & Sutherland (2008) agree with this by suggesting that Black professionals are frustrated with the continual wait for transformation. Government has the challenge of policy making and legislating an environment conducive for business and investment in the country, which ultimately benefits the Black majority. However the same time there is a need to place more pressure on business to transform and reflect the demographics of the country.

Most recently, out of the 79% of the Black economically active population, only 15,2% of them are represented in top management positions according to the Commission for Employment Equity (CEE), which is a statutory body established by the EE Act and reports annually on the progress of employment equity in South African organisations that voluntarily make the information available to the Department of Labour (Commission for

Employment Equity, 2020). These statistics show a slow pace at diversifying the workforce at a senior management level. Employment equity has been used in South Africa to diversify workforces and allow more people from historically marginalised groups, which is defined by the EE Act (1998) as previously disadvantaged groups, or designated groups.

7.5.2. Recommendations for government

The pace of transformation in South African has been criticized to be too slow by some but is considered too fast for others, generating some polarizing views on its tactics (Booysen, 2004). The role of government in creating a legal and regulatory framework that incentivizes organisations to voluntarily invest in inclusion would be the best option. Organisations are microcosms of their larger societies (Kofman & Senge, 1993). Therefore, in order to change organisations, Kofman and Senge (1993) argue that effort needs to be placed on changing the society.

South Africa already has a very strong regulatory framework which requires organisations to periodically report on their levels of diversity through the submission of employment equity stats (Oosthuizen et. al., 2019). However, there is a lack of reporting when it comes to inclusion.

April and Blaas (2010) suggest that an inclusion index which measures the rate of inclusion, can be utilised for governments similar to what is used by the Australian government. Implementation of such an index could also provide indications of where resources are required (April & Blaas, 2010). Another similar index is the Gartner Inclusion Index, which is utilized in the USA (Romansky, 2021).

Recommendations:

a) The use of the B-BBEE scorecard: Reporting on B-BBEE needs to include stats on retention of Black senior managers
b) Inclusivity can also include a process of sharing so that people get to know each other

7.6. Limitations

Over and above what was articulated in chapter 4 of this report, the following are some limitations which were inherent in producing this report:

a) The study focused on coping mechanisms of Black leaders in South African organisations with a sample that was limited to Black African senior leaders. The sample did not include senior leaders that are classified as Black by the EE Act and historically marginalised groups during apartheid, those are Indian and Coloured individuals. The focus on Black people was relevant due to the literature (Hudson et. al., 2017; Alleyne, 2004; Nkomo, 1991; Booysen, 2007; Holder et. al., 2015). The literature also revealed that significance of exclusion towards Black Africans (Myeza & April, 2021; Mokoena, 2020; Carrim, 2019). Due to the specific context the study is placed, generalization with other historically marginalised groups should be approached with caution
b) All participants worked in the private sector
c) The use of semi-structured interviews meant that the participants described the phenomenon based on their own experiences. Subjective interpretations were made by the researcher
d) The research found coping mechanisms on the basis of social identity which is permeable, not categorisation is not.

7.7. Suggestions for future research

Future research can focus on understanding the coping mechanisms of Black leaders, including the broader definition of designated members, including African Black, Indian and coloured, who are also considered as historically marginalised groups in South Africa (Zulu & Parumasur, 2009). Researchers can also qualitatively conduct focused research to solicit the influencing factors for the resignation of some high profile senior Black leaders in the last five years.

7.8. Conclusion

South Africa's transition to democracy brought many positive changes in the form legislation, policy and more civil liberties. These laws resulted in the diversification of people in leadership positions within South African organisations (Carrim, 2019; Booysen, 2007). This research has revealed that although leadership teams have more Black leaders, these leaders still find themselves within the minority. This places them in membership of an in-group in leadership (Tajfel & Turner, 1979; Kanter, 1977). This, while at the same time out-group due to the minority or token status placed on them as a result of their racial social identity (Kanter, 1977). The skewed majority of their White

counterparts creates relational dynamics between them as minorities and dominants which create an exclusionary work environment (Kanter, 1977; Khumalo, 2018; Mokoena, 2020; Myeza & April, 2021)

As a result of this, Black leaders use both adaptive and maladaptive coping mechanisms in dealing with exclusionary work environments (DeCuir-Gunby et. al., 2019). This research validates existing literature (Myeza & April, 2021; Carrim, 2019), whilst creating an opportunity for further research to be made on Black leaders in South African organisations.

Nzukuma & Bussin (2011) argue that Black leaders seemingly appear as though they have made it, but in reality they "walk a tight rope in the corporate world where they are expected to blend in with a culture that never fully accepts them" (p. 10). The role of homosocial reproduction cannot be taken for granted in the creation of barriers to growth and promotion for Black professionals (Worsley & Stone, 2015).

Leaders of organisations face the challenge of embedding inclusive organisational cultures, which go beyond diversity management, towards creating cultures of inclusion (Nishii, 2013; Bernstein et.al., 2020). This challenge remains relevant and pertinent as many times internal organisational cultures reflect the cultural societal norms (Nkomo, 1991; Yıldırım et. al., 2020; Carrim, 2019).

Although Black leaders find themselves within the in-group elite, as members of leadership, and out-group due to their social identity, Haslam and Reichter (2006) demonstrate that the permeability between social identities creates opportunities for the paradox to work to their advantage. This is because they can use it for cultural boundary spanning within and outside their organisations (Ernst & Yip, 2009). This places them also within responsible for driving inclusive organisational cultures that will attract and retain talent of different social identity groups.

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APPENDIX 1: Ethical Clearance

Move to... Search

Masters Research
Ethical Clearance Approved
To: 20807466@mygibs.co.za, Cc: Masters Research

Inbox - 208...66@mygibs.co.za 02 August 2021 at 15:48
Details

Gordon Institute of Business Science
University of Pretoria

Ethical Clearance Approved

Dear Kholofelo Mothopeng,

Please be advised that your application for Ethical Clearance has been approved.
You are therefore allowed to continue collecting your data.
We wish you everything of the best for the rest of the project.

Ethical Clearance Form

Kind Regards

This email has been sent from an unmonitored email account. If you have any comments or concerns, please contact the GIBS Research Admin team.

Masters Research

Gordon Institute of Business Science, University of Pretoria

Main Tel: +27 11 771 4000

APPENDIX 2: Informed Consent Letter

Gordon Institute of Business Science
University of Pretoria

Dear participant

I am currently a student at the University of Pretoria's Gordon Institute of Business Science and completing my research in partial fulfilment of an MBA.
I am conducting research to understand how Black leaders cope with exclusionary organisational environments given the paradoxical role of being part of the majority outside their organisations, while being a minority inside their organisations.

Our interview is expected to last about 45 minutes to 1 hour (maximum) and will help us understand these coping mechanisms.

Your participation is voluntary and you will not be paid for participating. Furthermore, you can withdraw at any time without penalty. *The relevant data will be destroyed should you choose to withdraw from the research study.*

With your permission, the interview will be recorded to ensure that no information is missed. All information will be kept confidential and all data will be reported ***without identifiers****. The results of the research will be reported on in such a way that it will not be possible for people to know that you were part of the study. If you have any concerns, please contact my supervisor or me. Our details are provided below.*

Researcher name: Kholofelo Mothopeng
Email: 20807466@mygibs.co.za
Phone: 0829325137

Research supervisor: Jabu Maphalala
Email: maphalalaj@gibs.co.za

Signature of participant: _____

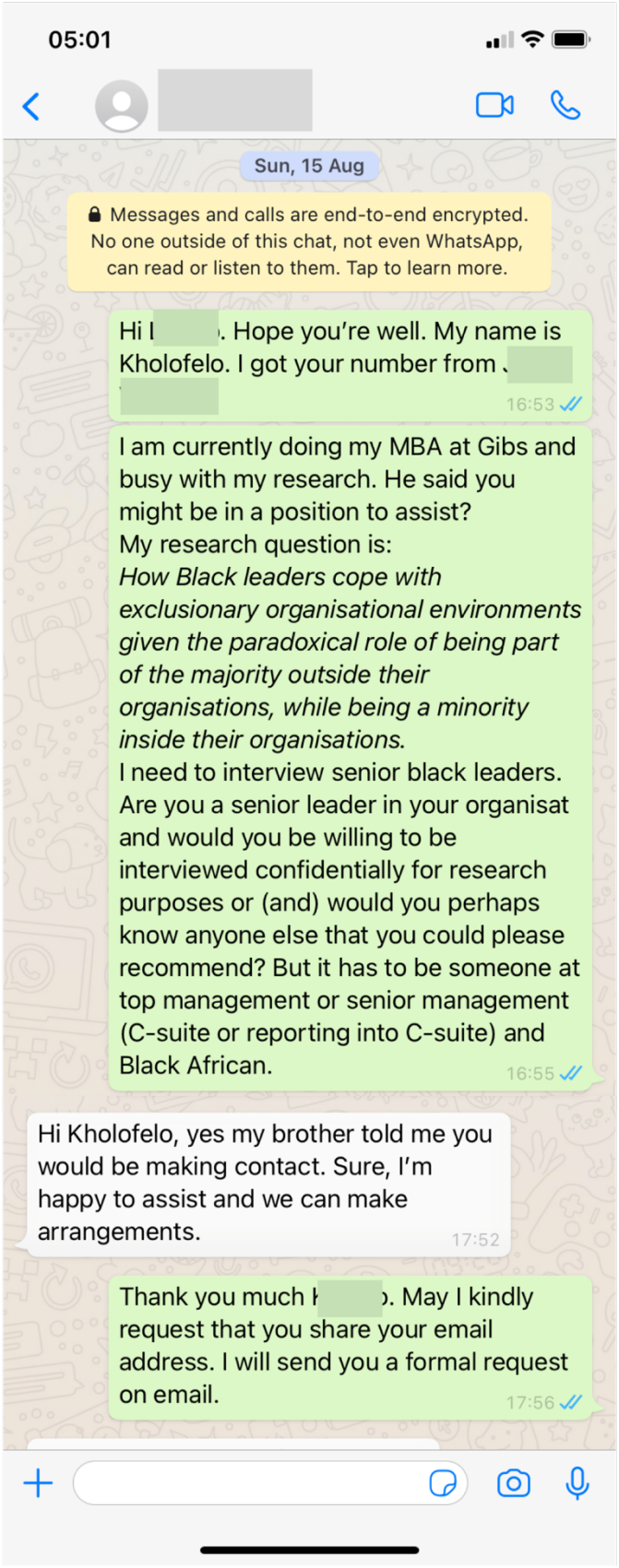
Date: _____

Signature of researcher: _____

Date: _____

APPENDIX 3: Invitation to participate in research

WhatsApp invite



Email Invitation

Subject: MBA Research interview
Attachments: Consent Form

Dear X

Hope you're well. Thank you for agreeing to form part of my research project. As discussed, I am currently a student at the University of Pretoria's Gordon Institute of Business Science (Gibs) and completing my research in partial fulfilment of an MBA. *My research topic will help me understand:*

How Black leaders cope with exclusionary organisational environments given their paradoxical role of being part of the majority outside their organisations, while being a minority inside their organisations.

Although this is the main overarching research question, the following three questions are the supporting research questions: 1. Do exclusionary organisational environments influence intentions to leave the organisation? 2. Does the perception of a non-inclusive / exclusionary organisational culture lead to lack of commitment to the organisation? 3. How do you cope with exclusionary work environments? All the questions asked during the interview will be based on these three supporting research questions. You do not need to prepare for the interview, your honest views and perceptions based on your personal experiences will be appreciated.

Your participation will be **confidential** and the data collected will be used for research purposes. Any direct quotations will be anonymised. With your permission, the interview will be recorded so that all the information is captured accurately. The only personal information that will be recorded will be demographic, such as race, age, gender, qualifications and business industry (I do not need to know which company you work for).

I have attached a consent form. May I kindly request that you sign and return the consent form to me. The university's policy is for us to gain signed consent prior to conducting an interview.

The time commitment that I am requesting from you is about 45 minutes to 1 hour (maximum). I can set aside the time based on your availability and calendar, however I am also proposing the following options for the interview. Kindly advise if any of these options would work for you:

Option 1: Thursday, 5 August 17:30 - 18:30
Option 2: Friday, 6 August 17:30 - 18:30
Option 3: Monday, 9 August 16:00 - 17:00

If you would prefer any other time outside of these proposed times, please let me know. I will send a Teams / Zoom request following your confirmation. Please feel free to call or WhatsApp me if you have questions or seek further clarity on 082-932-5137. Many thanks for your assistance.

Kind regards
Kholofelo Mothopeng

APPENDIX 4: Interview guide

Research Topic: Coping mechanisms of Black leaders in South African organisations

1. Research question

Primary: How do Black leaders cope with exclusionary organisational environments, given their paradoxical role of being part of a majority outside their organisations, and at the same time being a minority inside their organisations.

Sample Supporting questions:

1. How do Black leaders cope?
2. Do exclusionary organisational environments influence intentions to leave the organisation?
3. Does the perception of a exclusionary organisational culture lead to lack of commitment to the organisation?

My Name is Kholofelo Mothopeng. I am currently a student at the University of Pretoria's Gordon Institute of Business Science and completing my research in partial fulfilment of an MBA degree. I am conducting research on how Black leaders in South Africans cope with exclusionary work environments, given their paradoxical role of being part of a majority outside their organisations, and at the same time being a minority inside their organisations.

Thank you for agreeing to this interview.

The interview is expected to last for a duration of 45 min – 1 hour (maximum), and will help me understand how Black leaders cope.

Your participation is voluntary and you can withdraw at any time without penalty. All data will be kept confidential and where direct quotations may be used, the data will be anonymised.

2. Interview opening

Demographic information In this opening section, demographic information will be asked which will be used as part of the analysis. This includes confirmation of:	○ Confirm Race, Gender ○ Would you describe your current company as small, medium or large based on number of employees: d) Small - under 100 employees e) Medium – Over 100 – under 1000 employees f) Large – over 1000 employees ○ Business Industry ○ Public sector or private sector? ○ Are you at c-suite level or are you reporting into the c-suite? ○ Are you a minority at your level?

3. Interview questions

Note: When I refer to your social identity, I am referencing specifically your race as a Black African individual. You are welcome to reference any other factors of your social identity like gender, class or sexual orientation that you feel are relevant for you

Research Question	Interview Questions
1. How do you **cope with exclusionary work environments?**	1. Please give examples of what exclusion looks like from your experience at your level as a leader 2. What are the coping mechanisms that you utilise to mitigate being a minority as a leader? 3. How are you able to mitigate the 'disempowerment' inside the organisation 4. Are you able to be your authentic self in the organisation? 5. [How do you drive a culture of authenticity as a leader, if you are unable to be authentic] 6. Do you conform to the current culture in order to survive? 7. What are the factors that influence conformity at your level given your sphere of influence as a leader?
2. Do exclusionary organisational environments influence **intentions to leave the organisation?**	1. How does your social identity influence your perceptions on exclusion? 2. How does your position as a minority at your level affect how do conduct your day to day duties and decision making? 3. Does your race have any bearing on your ability to practice your positional power as a leader? (do you perceive different expectations for you as a black leader as opposed to other leaders of other social ident) 4. Has this ever influenced thoughts of leaving the organisation? 5. Have you ever left an organisation because you felt excluded?
3. Does the perception of an exclusionary organisational environment lead to a **lack of commitment to the organisation?**	1. How is your social identity influential on how you relate to peers at your level and above your level? 2. Does the way you relate with your peers and those above your level influence your commitment to your current company? 3. What factors influence your commitment to your organisation? 4. How is your social identity influential to how you relate to subordinates? Is there a difference in how you practice your positional power?