

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

**Leadership role in setting the pace  
of transformation in the  
telecommunications industry –  
boldly building the next leader or  
conforming to status quo**

Shreshini Singh

16391642

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degree of Master of Business Administration

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## **ABSTRACT**

The world is rapidly evolving, in a fundamental manner, moving from the Third Revolution to the Fourth Revolution, standing at the brink of a digital technological revolution in an aggressively competitive environment. Literature on leadership, barriers inhibiting change and organisational culture have been extensively researched. However, research limitations exist in the new millennium, where boundaries have blurred and theories have been intertwined. The purpose of this research study seeks to establish the role of leadership in influencing the pace of transformation at senior executive level, by either strategically driving change or conforming to status quo, in a male dominated environment.

A qualitative research study was conducted based on 12 in-depth interviews with members of leadership from South African based telecommunications companies. The exploration study was to gain insights on the current state of the role of leadership in setting the pace of transformation, by understanding the priority status that it is given on the strategic agenda, where hard-coded barriers, such as stereotyping and societal gender preconceptions, continue to exist.

The findings of the research study indicate that although some advancement has been made, albeit at a slow pace, the resounding lack of progressive organisational change, despite a strong business case for a diverse workforce, needs to be addressed with concerted effort. This can only be achieved, in a sustainable manner, if the benefits of transformation truly resonate with leaders, organisations and the telecommunications industry thereby enabling the overhaul of the system with the revolutionary change demanded.

## **KEYWORDS**

Leadership, Diversity/Inclusion, Transformation, Stereotypes, Change, Culture

## 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.

Shreshini Singh

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# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>ABSTRACT .....</b>	<b>ii</b>
<b>KEYWORDS .....</b>	<b>ii</b>
<b>DECLARATION .....</b>	<b>iii</b>
<b>LIST OF TABLES .....</b>	<b>vii</b>
<b>LIST OF FIGURES.....</b>	<b>vii</b>
<b>LIST OF APPENDICES .....</b>	<b>vii</b>
<b>CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION TO RESEARCH PROBLEM .....</b>	<b>1</b>
1.1 Introduction .....	1
1.1.1 A slow start – 50 years of conforming and evolution .....	1
1.1.2 Current landscape and looking ahead – transformation revolution .....	3
1.2 Purpose .....	7
1.3 Research problem.....	8
1.4 Research objective.....	8
1.5 Conclusion .....	8
<b>CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW .....</b>	<b>9</b>
2.1 Introduction .....	9
2.2 Leadership theory .....	10
2.2.1 What is leadership? .....	10
2.2.2 A traditional evolution approach .....	10
2.2.2.1 <i>Introduction</i> .....	10
2.2.2.2 <i>Authentic leadership</i> .....	11
2.2.2.3 <i>Transformational leadership</i> .....	13
2.2.2.4 <i>Servant leadership</i> .....	15
2.2.3 A transformational revolution approach .....	16
2.2.3.1 <i>Introduction</i> .....	16
2.2.3.2 <i>Inclusive leadership</i> .....	17
2.2.3.3 <i>Effective leadership</i> .....	18
2.3 Operating environment.....	20
2.3.1 Conforming to status quo.....	20
2.3.1.1 <i>Legislation: Target quotas</i> .....	20
2.3.1.2 <i>Workplace initiatives: Diversity programs</i> .....	21
2.3.1.3 <i>Barriers inhibiting advancement: Gender stereotypes, old boys' club and institutional mind-set</i> .....	22
2.3.2 Strategic change for the 21st century .....	26
2.3.2.1 <i>Change management</i> .....	26
2.3.2.2 <i>Strategic change</i> .....	28
2.4 Organisational behaviour, culture and values.....	29
2.4.1 Introduction .....	29
2.4.2 Consistent evolution.....	30
2.4.2.1 <i>Leadership and culture</i> .....	30
2.4.2.2 <i>Individual, Group and Organisation</i> .....	31
2.4.3 Rapid revolution .....	34

2.4.3.1 Inclusive workplace model.....	34
2.5 Conclusion .....	36
<b>CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH QUESTIONS .....</b>	<b>37</b>
3.1 Introduction .....	37
3.2 Research questions .....	38
<b>CHAPTER 4: METHODOLOGY.....</b>	<b>39</b>
4.1 Introduction .....	39
4.2 Research method and design .....	39
4.3 Population and unit of analysis .....	40
4.4 Sampling method and sample size .....	41
4.5 Data collection.....	42
4.5.1 Data collection tool and interview guide design.....	43
4.6 Data analysis.....	46
4.7 Data validity and reliability.....	47
4.8 Research limitations.....	47
4.9 Summary.....	48
<b>CHAPTER 5: RESULTS .....</b>	<b>49</b>
5.1 Introduction .....	49
5.2 Observations during the interview process .....	49
5.3 Presentation of results .....	50
5.4 Results for research question 1 .....	50
5.5 Results for research question 2 .....	53
5.6 Results for research question 3 .....	57
5.7 Results for research question 4 .....	60
5.8 Results for research question 5 .....	63
5.9 Results for research question 6 .....	66
5.10 Conclusion .....	71
<b>CHAPTER 6: DISCUSSION OF RESULTS .....</b>	<b>72</b>
6.1 Introduction .....	72
6.2 Discussion of results for Research Questions .....	72
6.2.1 Research Question 1: What influences today's leadership trends in the telecommunications industry? .....	72
6.2.1.1 Findings .....	72
6.2.1.2 Conclusion.....	74
6.2.2 Research Question 2: What does a 21 <sup>st</sup> century leader look like and what drives building this leader? .....	74
6.2.2.1 Findings .....	74
6.2.2.2 Conclusion.....	76
6.2.3 Research Question 3: What motivates leadership to pursue transformation and inclusivity in the telecommunications industry? .....	76
6.2.3.1 Findings .....	76
6.2.3.2 Conclusion.....	78
6.2.4 Research Question 4: How does the fast pace of transformational change demanded in the telecommunications industry compare to the organisational design changes being implemented? .....	79

6.2.4.1 Findings .....	79
6.2.4.2 Conclusion .....	80
6.2.5 Research Question 5: For an organisation operating in the 21 <sup>st</sup> century – what are the risks of not driving transformation and inclusivity and what are the opportunities to drive transformation and inclusivity? .....	81
6.2.5.1 Findings .....	81
6.2.5.2 Conclusion .....	82
6.2.6 Research Question 6: Is there alignment between organisational values and culture in the telecommunications industry and what is needed to build an inclusive culture for the 21st century? .....	83
6.2.6.1 Findings .....	83
6.2.6.2 Conclusion .....	87
6.3 Summary of results and conclusion .....	87
<b>CHAPTER 7: CONCLUSION .....</b>	<b>92</b>
7.1 Introduction .....	92
7.2 Synthesis of research findings .....	92
7.3 Value of the research .....	94
7.4 Recommendations to organisational leaders and the telecommunications industry .....	94
7.4.1 Industry recommendations.....	94
7.4.2 Organisation recommendations .....	95
7.4.3 Leadership recommendations.....	95
7.5 Future research .....	95
7.6 Research limitations .....	96
7.7 Conclusion .....	97
<b>REFERENCES.....</b>	<b>99</b>
<b>APPENDICES.....</b>	<b>108</b>

## LIST OF TABLES

Table 4.1 <i>Participants in the research study</i> .....	42
Table 4.2 <i>Research questions and Interview questions alignment to theory</i> .....	44
Table 5.1 <i>Results for influences of today's leadership trends</i> .....	51
Table 5.2 <i>Results for 21<sup>st</sup> century leader</i> .....	53
Table 5.3 <i>Results for whether organisational efforts were personal or forced by legislation</i> .....	55
Table 5.4 <i>Results for strategic agenda drivers regarding transformation</i> .....	57
Table 5.5 <i>Results for measurement of transformation</i> .....	59
Table 5.6 <i>Results for organisational design changes to promote transformation demanded in the telecommunications industry</i> .....	61
Table 5.7 <i>Results for implications of not driving transformation</i> .....	63
Table 5.8 <i>Results for action to drive transformation</i> .....	65
Table 5.9 <i>Results for alignment of values to culture</i> .....	67
Table 5.10 <i>Results for inhibitors and enablers of transformation</i> .....	69
Table 6.1 <i>Recap of leadership theory</i> .....	73
Table 6.2 <i>Summary of results</i> .....	88

## LIST OF FIGURES

<i>Figure 4.1. New codes creating during analysis process</i> .....	42
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## LIST OF APPENDICES

Appendix 1: Interview introduction.....	108
Appendix 2: Consent form .....	109
Appendix 3: Interview schedule .....	110
Appendix 4: Ethical clearance letter .....	111

# CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION TO RESEARCH PROBLEM

## 1.1 Introduction

*“As we advance deeper in the knowledge economy, the basic assumption underlining much of what is taught and practiced in the name of management are hopelessly out of date ... Most of our assumptions about business, technology and organization are at least 50 years old. They have outlived their time” (Drucker, 1998, p.162).*

### 1.1.1 A slow start – 50 years of conforming and evolution

The industrial revolution era fundamentally revolved around the theme of manufacturing and industrialising the European and American societies, thereby changing the economic landscape of society. If one had to type the words “inventors of the industrial revolution” in the Google images search engine, 99% of the images returned are male – and white male to be specific. If one had to type the words “female inventors of the industrial revolution” in the Google search engine, the search result returns five female inventors and 11 forgotten women who have improved the world we live in. If the famous quote by Mao Zedong held true that “women hold up half the sky”, then the results from Google search engine would have referenced the significant contribution of women inventors changing the world in equal proportion to contributions made by male inventors, thereby upholding their part in the sky.

In the 1800s, female social reform role models were already trying to challenge the status quo, for example, Jane Austen and Florence Nightingale. It is said that the former was born 150 years ahead of her time, where social conformity was ordered and where she broke the traditional mould by rejecting marriage proposals and instead focused on publishing novels using a pseudonym. The latter also refused marriage proposals, heeding her higher purpose in life and, against strong opposition, led a group of nurses to the battlefields in the Crimean War. Armed with authority and the ability to institute reforms needed in war conditions, she improved standards of hygiene, reduced the number of soldier deaths and brought attention to women’s rights with the training of nurses. Females faced immense challenges and were told: “be ever cautious in displaying your good sense. It will be thought you assume superiority over the rest of the company. But if you happen to have any learning, keep it a profound secret, especially from the men” (Gregory, 1774).

As the skillset required during the Industrial revolution was physical strength, males were more suited to these positions due to their physique, with race separating ranking levels

feeding into career limitations. Females were allocated menial tasks that ranked a very low level of importance and were excluded from decision making in the organisation, forcing them to adopt a passive role in the workplace.

Females rose from the ranks of factory floor worker to secretarial worker to perhaps the highest career ceiling as a team leader of women office administration workers. Although this could have brought a slight improvement in their economic status, their careers were severely limited due to the patriarchal society system – a legacy that continues to impact women’s careers today. For example, women may only be expected to work until they get married or have children, to fulfil their role of wives or mothers respectively. This was further aggregated by domestic chores. It was not uncommon for these decisions not to be made by the females themselves but instead by their fathers or husbands – feeding in to the societal expectation of the female being inferior to the male, enhancing the asymmetrical relationship and further exacerbating the preconceptions of women’s roles and abilities.

In the early 1970s, 2% and 13% of organisational managerial positions were held by females in the UK and US, respectively (Leimon, Moscovici, & Goodier, 2011). By 2016, 21% and 23% of organisational senior managerial positions were held by females in the UK and US respectively (Catalyst, 2017). Some of the reasons cited for the increase in the curve are the Equal Pay Act of 1970 and the Sex Discrimination Act in the UK and the US features positive discrimination law (Leimon et al., 2011). Positive action in the 1990s also contributed to the increase in the curve with the realisation by organisations that half of the population was being excluded from the senior leadership talent pool, with the rise of knowledge workers, due to a lack of women-friendly, family-friendly working environments.

This then led to the development of policies and initiatives such as maternity leave, flexibility in working hours and work-life balance. Although these examples can be seen as progressive practices, they were created for, what seems to be largely a specific demographic in mind – a married woman with motherly and domestic duties. This demographic has now evolved rendering some of these support practices meaningless, as highly qualified career women in senior management positions are actively choosing not to get married or have children. Therefore, different support policies and initiatives need to address the preconceived role of women taking into account evolutionary changes.

### **1.1.2 Current landscape and looking ahead – transformation revolution**

In the war for talent, there is an underutilisation of diverse knowledge workers' talent (Barsh & Yee, 2012) that could potentially provide a competitive advantage needed to compete globally in today's volatile, uncertain, complex and ambiguous (VUCA) times. The problem with managing today's diverse workforce does not stem from a diverse workforce but from the inability of managers to fully comprehend its dynamics, disengage their preconceptions, and intentionally unlock the potential from a diverse workforce through empowerment and collaboration (Barak, 2017).

According to the World Economic Forum (2016), the business case for change shows a strong correlation between the gender composition of the customer base and the gender composition of the workforce. In the telecommunications industry, skills shortage is a critical challenge and 37% of organisations encourage improving female workforce participation as an opportunity to address the skills shortage (World Economic Forum, 2016). Women form an integral link in the consumer value chain and currently control 64% of the household spending with the associated purchasing power figure expected to increase within the next few years (World Economic Forum, 2016).

Most large organisations fall under the category of multinational corporations thereby representing today's globalised economy with diverse stakeholders. The diversity in the economic power of organisational stakeholders should be acknowledged as a key driver of organisation change, empowering the organisation to fully utilise and maximise talents of its diverse workforce. The benefits of diversity management are being realised and the acceptance of "diversity of business sense" may help equal opportunity recruitment for all groups, grow the purchasing power of all societal groups, enhance innovation, enable global competitiveness and develop a positive corporate image, contributing towards the organisation's bottom line (Barak, 2017). The global trend towards responsible consumerism conveys a clear message to organisations that all stakeholders should be treated in a fair and just manner, with respect and bound by ethics. If this is not followed, the organisation could be severely punished, not only with a backlash from the local community, where social media transparency rules the day and, in turn, quickly informs the global community, but also through government sanctions and disassociation with reputable organisations.

According to the Global Gender Gap Report (World Economic Forum, 2016), it will take 83 years to close the gender gap that currently exists, which is measured by health, education, economic participation and political activity. However, the economic gender gap will not be closed for another 170 years. Although South Africa is ranked as one of

the 15 most equal economies out of 144 countries, the significant differential category is economic participation and opportunity where the country ranks a low 79. Some of the factors contributing to the economic gap are gender pay disparity, longer working hours than male counterparts and limited opportunities to be promoted to senior leadership positions (World Economic Forum, 2016).

As progress continues in a changing world, new challenges will emerge and will coexist with challenges that are still in existence, thereby hindering change and maintaining the status quo, which is the “belief in the enduring correctness of current organizational strategies and profiles” (Bickel, 2012; Tlaiss & Kauser, 2010; Geletkanycz, 1997, p.615). Organisational stakeholders are no longer passively making organisational decisions but are instead actively seeking good corporate governance by insisting on congruency between organisational leaders’ values and behaviour (Walumbwa, Avolio, Gardner, Wernsing, & Peterson, 2008). South Africa has achieved much success in competing in the global landscape since the rise of a democratic nation in 1994. Although the country ranks 61 out of 137 countries in the 2017/2018 Global Competitiveness Index (World Economic Forum, 2017), the ranking position dropped a significant 14 positions from the 2016/2017 index, with corruption being cited as a key contributor for the decline.

Today, organisations seem to operate in a crisis mode with the harsh realities of the collapse of economies and the meltdown of organisations, showing that leadership lies at the helm of these organisations. The 2008 economic crises unravelled unscrupulous lending practices in the financial industry. The demise of Lehman Brothers, Enron and Bear Sterns, the disgraced banker Bernie Madoff and the successful sex discrimination lawsuits against three major Wall Street corporates, namely, Morgan Stanley, Citigroup and Merrill Lynch, portrayed strong masculinity in the financial domain during the height of these scandals. This inexorable trend progressed with Volkswagen’s Dieselgate scandal that cost the organisation billions of dollars as well as the ban of Sepp Blatter, former president of FIFA, from soccer activities caused by bribery and corruption, once again showing upheavals faced by organisations primarily led by men.

In 2010, Christine Lagarde from the International Monetary Fund stated, “If Lehman Brothers had been Lehman Sisters, today’s economic crisis clearly would look quite different” (Palvia, Vahamaa, & Vahamaa, 2015, p.592). Upon scrutiny following the aftermath of the financial crisis, masculinity and male irresponsibility were identified as the primary drivers of the crisis (Prugl, 2012). Given the well documented behavioural differences between the genders, such as risk tolerance, diligence, conservatism, overconfidence, information processing, Palvia et al. (2015) found that banking

organisations that promote inclusiveness and are led by female chief executive officers (CEOs) and board chairs, held higher levels of equity capital, more conservative strategies and less risky financial decisions and were therefore less likely to fail during a financial crisis. Changes to the long-standing male macho domination tradition are now accelerating as organisations are forced to overcome biases during catastrophic economic conditions that highlight the importance of diversified knowledge (Sun, Zhu, & Ye, 2015). Reihan Salam, an American political commentator, explains the movement towards inclusiveness that is now being demanded: “For years, the world has been witnessing a quiet but monumental shift of power from men to women. Today, the great recession has turned what was an evolutionary shift into a revolutionary one” (Prugl, 2012, p.25).

Barsh, Nudelman and Yee (2013) learnt that the passion for gender diversity of CEOs and the senior leadership team, goes beyond logic and economics, it is also emotional. The CEO becomes a primary role model by staying involved, even though the CEO cannot single-handedly change the face of gender diversity. Leaders of top performing companies make their commitment visible as well as verbal. As organisations evolve into multinational organisations with global footprints, through mergers and acquisitions, streamlining of organisational centres of excellences, consolidation of businesses and the acceleration of long term private equity, this results in the rejection of the traditional corporate, highly leveraged economy (Leimon et al., 2011). The global trend towards diversity and inclusion becomes a top priority and this needs to be met with leadership commitment.

According to Day, Fleenor, Atwater, Sturm, and McKee (2014), the development of women leaders should focus on achieving authenticity as trends toward participative decision making and transformational leadership may increase the likelihood of women and other minority groups to be successful in organisational leadership positions. There is an opportunity for the past trend of the “old boys’ network” (Hamel, 2009) culture that did not support women in the leadership positions to be refuted. Meta-analysis by Banks, McCauley, Gardner and Guler (2016) revealed that women were more transformational than men as leaders and that transformational leadership was associated with greater effectiveness.

Gender, race and ethnicity, discrimination based on sexual orientation, physically and mentally disabled workers as well as the implications of cultural diversity continue to be significant concerns in workforce diversity management where the depth of organisational commitment is questionable (Cummings & Worley, 2015). Daft (2015)

noted that culture is the persona of an organisation. It is an important human resource element and that there is a strong correlation between a strong culture, influenced by leaders and their vision, and higher financial performance.

Diverse policies, programs, and quota targets have been introduced in the workplace as measures to increase the presence of marginalised groups intentionally in the organisational workforce. However, the challenge remains that greater gender disparity exists at senior leadership positions, where males are twice as likely to be appointed to senior leadership positions, at the C-suite level, than females (Yee, Krivkovich, Kuther, Epstein, Thomas, Finch & Konar, 2016; Carter & Silva, 2010), thereby contributing to the slow gender transformation (Ezzedee, Budworth & Baker, 2016) of these organisations.

South Africa is steeped in legislation that prevents and prohibits unfair discrimination. The 1996 Constitution of South Africa (chapter 2, section 9) promotes the achievement of equality and this is reinforced by the Gender Equality Bill that strengthens the provisions of the Commission on Gender Equality Act (1996), the Skills Development Act (1998), the Employment Equity Act (1998) and the Promotion of Equality and Prevention of Unfair Discrimination Act (2000). The Broad-Based Black Economic Empowerment (BBBEE) Act provides financial incentives for companies to advance black women onto boards and into senior leadership positions.

Despite these legislative requirements, South Africa is still without adequate representation of women in leadership positions at JSE listed organisations. Studies suggest that, for minorities to feel truly included in organisations, there needs to be representation of 30% or higher of that group. According to the latest census on women in leadership from Businesswomen's Association of South Africa (2015), just under 2.5% of South African companies listed on the Johannesburg Stock Exchange (JSE) have women chief executive officers (CEOs), despite more women graduates than men emerging from universities and the fact that "46% of people entering the workplace are women" (Bain & Company, 2017, p.3). The deep-rooted inequality, injustices and discrimination that were exacerbated during the apartheid era continue to divide the country economically – by race and gender.

The King Report on Corporate Governance for South Africa (known as King IV), published in November 2016, includes the principle of "comply and explain" in which companies must achieve a greater level of gender diversity or explain why they have not done so in their annual reports. According to the Department of Labour (2017), 68.5% and 78.0% of top management level positions in South Africa are held by the white race group and males respectively, thereby controlling decision making in organisations as

well as shaping the economic landscape of the country. This is despite the Employment Equity Commission for South Africa 2016/17 skilled workforce report that shows that 41.5% of the professionally qualified middle management workforce consists of black South Africans.

The African Development Bank (2015) report showed that, as at 31 December 2013, the telecommunication industry had a 9.9% representation of women board directors in Africa's top listed companies. This represents a ranking of 14 out of 18 industries and 2.8 percentage points below the continent's average percentage of women directors. The statistically male dominated industries, for example, agriculture, mining and transportation, continue to lag behind the other industries, for example, financial services, consumer goods, food and beverage, health care and pharmaceuticals, and real estate. According to Statistics South Africa (2015), the male to female ratio in the telecommunication industry is 60:40.

## **1.2 Purpose**

Although leadership research has been developed, limitations still exist in research in the new millennium and the integration of universal theories with novel research. Past leadership theory had a core focus on a leader's role within an organisation in enabling, rather than controlling, the future (Dinh, Lord, Gardner, Meuser, Liden, & Hu, 2014). How are the lessons produced from event-level activities, for example, apartheid, introduced into complex formal pre-existing organisational structures and systems (Uhl-Bien & Marion, 2009)? How are leaders altered by transitory processes that impact their leadership behaviour (Dinh, et al., 2014)? Organisations operate within an ecosystem. How do evolving micro-economic indicators, macro-economic indicators, political and social-environmental factors impact leadership (Dinh, et al., 2014)?

The purpose of this research study was to critically evaluate the role of leadership in influencing the pace of transformation at senior executive level, more especially in a male dominated industry, for example, telecommunications. It is predicted that the pace of change in the 21<sup>st</sup> century will accelerate compared to that of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. The world is evolving at an exponential speed from the Third Revolution into the Fourth Revolution, with the fusion of digital revolution technologies influencing the breadth and depth of all spheres of life in VUCA times. Do organisational transformational changes, driven by leadership, occur in a tightly driven timeline or is it a long drawn out process over an extended period?

The research study, therefore, sought to understand if organisations are boldly entering or leading into a state of empowering the transformational revolution that is required for

the 21<sup>st</sup> century by strategically driving it or whether organisations are conforming to the status quo in traditional linear thinking and acting on the memories of the past. The words “transformation” and “inclusivity” are used synonymously and the concepts of diversity and minority groups are branches of the tree.

The relevance of this research study is to gain knowledge that is intended to benefit current and future organisational leaders in driving activism towards building competitive, relevant 21<sup>st</sup> century transformational organisations by consciously aligning their leaders to strategic decisions impacting the operating environment and culture. If this is not done at a strategic decision-making level, then organisations will run the risk of becoming irrelevant instead of grasping at opportunities to enhance competitiveness.

### **1.3 Research problem**

“One of the great themes in the human experience is the idea of transformation” (Nag, Corley, & Gioia, 2007, p.821). This research aimed to gain insight into the journey from evolution to revolution leading to transformation in the areas of:

- Leadership
- Operating environment
- Organisational behaviour, culture and values.

### **1.4 Research objective**

The research objective of this study helped to achieve the research aim, mentioned above, by using a qualitative research method to determine the role of leadership within the telecommunications industry on influencing the pace of transformation at a senior leadership level within organisations.

### **1.5 Conclusion**

An overview of this chapter is represented by an introduction to the research problem, together with the purpose and objectives this study seeks to address. In the chapter that follows, the literature review is presented. Three forces form the basis of the literature review – an understanding of leadership theory, the operating environment, consisting of legislative, initiatives and barriers, as well as organisational behaviour, culture and values. Gap analysis is performed with contrasting academic views provided.

## CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

### 2.1 Introduction

*“We’re in a knowledge economy, but our managerial and governance systems are stuck in the Industrial Era. It’s time for a whole new model” (Manville & Ober, 2003, p.48).*

The previous chapter introduced the research problem; provided context as well as the relevance of this research. This chapter will present the literature review, provide the foundation of the research study by reviewing prior research and present the gap analysis in the existing body of knowledge to the research problem (Boote & Beile, 2005, p3). The source for the literature review included academic peer-reviewed journal articles, textbooks, global and national reports and research from academic electronic databases.

The intention of the literature review was to establish the basis to address the research problem and to demonstrate the researcher’s understanding of the subject matter. This was done, firstly, by identifying the traditional theories of leadership to the approaches needed for the Fourth Revolution. Secondly, by focusing on the operating environment that enables conforming to status quo in comparison with the changes needed to transform in the 21<sup>st</sup> century and, thirdly, by examining the consistent evolution of leadership and culture required for the promotion of transformation and inclusivity needed for revolutionary times.

Statistically, the telecommunications industry is a male dominated environment where certain positions are still viewed as male jobs, for example, technicians and engineers whilst other positions are viewed as jobs to be done by females, for example, receptionist and administration (Miller & Hayward, 2006). As the world moves from the industrial revolution into the digital revolution, the focus is now on “knowledge workers”. This study seeks to understand the factors that enable leaders to accelerate the pace of transformation at the senior leadership level, including marginalised or diverse individuals or groups, thereby enhancing organisational economic sustainability and competitiveness in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

## **2.2 Leadership theory**

*“Leadership is a process of adaptation and of evolution; it is a process of dynamic exchange and the interchanges of value. Leadership is deviation from convention ... Leadership is a process of energy, not structure” (Burnes & By, 2012, p.239).*

### **2.2.1 What is leadership?**

The commonly accepted definition of leadership is that it is a process whereby an individual influences a group of individuals to achieve a common goal. According to Northouse (2013), leadership scholars agree that there is no absolute definition of leadership, as it is a complex concept. Leadership will have different meanings for different people, through different periods of time, brought upon by global influences and generational changes. Two people may act differently when put in the same circumstance, and the same person’s behaviour may change in a different situation (Robbins & Judge, 2015). “Good leadership is not a one-size-fits-all proposition” (Snowden & Boone, 2007, p.1).

Judge, Piccolo and Kosalka (2009), expanded by Holtbrugge, Baron, and Friedmann (2015), developed a personal traits model positively linking the following traits with leadership emergence and effectiveness: conscientiousness, extraversion, agreeableness, emotional stability and openness to experience. In contrast to this, Daft (2011) argued that leadership means more than merely having a set of skills as it encompasses powerful, subtle personal qualities such as genuine concern for people, integrity, courage, listening ability and truly understanding themselves and their principles.

### **2.2.2 A traditional evolution approach**

#### **2.2.2.1 Introduction**

Social identity theory is the degree to which a person feels that they belong to a group and is accepted within the group as a whole (Hogg, 2001). Leadership strategies that support the perception of shared identity, where the values, attitudes, goals and practices are aligned to the vision, enable organisational members to benefit from an effective social identity (Hogg, 2009). “Avolio, Gardner et al. (2004), Avolio, Luthans et al. (2004), Gardner et al. (2005), and Illies et al. (2005) each describe personal and social identification processes whereby followers come to identify with authentic leaders and their values” (Avolio & Gardner, 2005, p.325).

Different theories of leadership have been developed over time from trait, behavioural, contingency, transactional, transformational and full-range leadership approaches (Robbins, 2003). Northouse (2013) found that the trait approach suggested that certain people were born with distinctive traits that made them great leaders because they had characteristics of being extroverted, agreeable and open to change (Jin, Seo, & Shapiro, 2016). The behavioural approach explained how task and relationship behaviours aligned in a manner that allowed a leader to influence a group of individuals to reach a goal. Contingency theory focused on the contextual factors that influenced the style and situation but not necessarily the level of leadership (Northouse, 2013). Bass (1999) described transactional leadership as an exchange relationship between leader and follower. Transactional managers seek control through uniformity whilst transformative leaders are open, forward looking and include new and different techniques. A full-range leadership approach that supports various leadership needs, developed by Bass and Avolio (1994), incorporates trait, functional and situational theories as well as the skills, attitudes and behaviours.

#### **2.2.2.2 Authentic leadership**

Avolio and Gardner (2005) stated that “being an authentic leader does not necessarily mean that the leader is transformational” (p.329). Authentic leaders influence and develop their followers through emotional contagion and positive social exchanges (Avolio & Gardner, 2005). “A leader’s positive emotions may be particularly infectious and create positive upward spirals in organizational learning and transformation” (Avolio & Gardner, 2005, p.326). Kernis (2003) believed that authenticity, through self-awareness and relational transparency, brings about positive affective states for organisational members. Illies, Morgeson and Nahrgang (2005) showed that authentic leaders tend to establish positive social exchanges with followers through reciprocity and value congruence, bringing in the element of influence in order to pursue shared goals.

Avolio and Gardner (2005) suggested that authentic leadership represents the root construct of other forms of leadership theories, for example, charismatic, transformational, spiritual and servant. Their premise was centred on self-awareness, an emerging process brought upon by understanding and developing their self-regulation of values, cognitions regarding identity, emotions and motives/goals, of authentic leaders. Authenticity develops in followers contributing to outcomes of trust, engagement and well-being, which, in turn, leads to organic growth – “sustainable and veritable performance”. The positive modelling drawn from Luthans and Avolio (2003) advanced well-being as an outcome of authenticity. Kernis (2003) identified “self-awareness, unbiased processing, relational authenticity and authentic behaviour/action”

as the vital components of authenticity. Avolio and Gardner (2005) asserted that leaders and followers are not free of cognitive biases but they are more able to assess information in a relatively balanced manner using relational transparency, that is, to share information in an open and transparent manner. As cited in Avolio and Gardner (2005), this is aligned with the model by Rogers (1963) and Maslow's (1971) principle of self-actualised persons – "individuals who are 'in tune' with their basic nature and clearly and accurately see themselves and their lives. As fully function persons are unencumbered by others' expectations for them, they can make more sound personal choices" (p.319).

Avolio and Gardner (2005) noted that authenticity involves being true to oneself whilst authentic leadership refers to the leader's relations with others. According to Erickson (1995, p.124), the concept of authenticity refers to "one's relationship with oneself" and therefore

"owning one's personal experiences, be they thoughts, emotions, needs, wants, preferences, or beliefs, processes captured by the injunction to 'know oneself' ... further implies that one acts in accord with the true self, expressing oneself in ways that are consistent with inner thoughts and feelings" (Harter, 2002, p.382).

Avolio and Gardner (2005) cited that Erickson and Heidegger (1962) explained that "people are never entirely authentic or inauthentic – instead, they can more accurately be described as achieving levels of authenticity" (p.320).

Avolio, Luthans and Walumbwa (2004, p.4 as cited in Avolio & Gardner, 2005, p.321) defined authentic leaders as

those who are deeply aware of how they think and behave and are perceived by others as being aware of their own and others' values/moral perspectives, knowledge, and strengths; aware of the context in which they operate; and who are confident, hopeful, optimistic, resilient, and of high moral character.

Authentic leadership in organisations was defined by Luthans and Avolio (2003, p.243 as cited in Avolio & Gardner, 2005, p.321) as

"a process that draws from both positive psychological capacities and a highly developed organizational context, which results in both greater self-awareness and self-regulated positive behaviours on the part of leaders and associates, fostering positive self-development".

The model of Illies et al. (2005) centred on the eudaemonic well-being of leaders and followers brought upon by authentic leadership. Shamir and Eilam (2005) and Gardner et al. (2005, as cited by Avolio & Gardner, 2005) introduced the construct of authentic followership. Avolio and Gardner (2005) noted that

“authentic leadership development involves ongoing processes whereby leaders and followers gain self-awareness and establish open, transparent, trusting and genuine relationship, which in part may be shaped and impacted by planned interventions such as training” (p.322).

Shamir and Eilam (2005) described a life stories approach – how “leader’s life stories provide insight into the meanings they attach to life events to guide followers, and in turn to develop themselves over time through reflection.” This self-awareness is then assessed by followers for leader authenticity by characteristics of being true to themselves, their personal convictions, leading from their own personal point of view and having actions based on personal values and convictions. This is complemented by Sparrowe and Olin’s (2005) perspective where a leader’s authentic self emerges through a narrative self-process in which interactions with followers play a role in determining oneself. Michie and Gooty (2005) differed from the above and mentioned that cognitive focus, through arguing positive other-directed emotions (for example, gratitude and appreciation), motivate self-transcendent values (for example, universal and benevolent values) and behaviour reflection of authentic leaders.

### **2.2.2.3 Transformational leadership**

Leadership and change are the two most critical aspects that organisations need to contend with. Through adaptation of leadership style within the organisational operating context, leaders with a strong ethical value system can bring about transformational change (Burnes & By, 2012). According to Avolio and Gardner (2005), transformational leaders have a strong vision and a clear sense of purpose thereby transforming the organisation and its members. Leadership is a complex moral relationship between people, which is based on trust, obligation, commitment, emotion and a shared vision of the good.

Moral values are the crux of transformational leadership, which seeks fundamental changes in society, for example, the increase in equal opportunity. Prior research shows that transformational leadership mobilises the followers’ organisational commitment to change, work engagement and motivation, as they can identify with the values and standards of the leader, who also then acts as a role model (Burnes & By, 2012). Ciulla

(2014) noted that the ethical and moral values of leadership have strategic consequences for the organisation.

Change is a process and followers need to feel that a participatory, open, ethical and non-judgemental environment has been created to facilitate and optimise learning (Burnes & By, 2012). This engaging leadership style encourages commitment to the ideation program by enabling confidence in the followers that, with their involvement, the change can be achieved (Deichmann & Stam, 2015). The leaders' own experiences that include pleasant feelings and positive job attitudes, leads to the individual variability of transformational leaders (Jin et al., 2016). As leaders may be monitored and measured during the process of transformational change, the interests of all stakeholders are taken into account and not just the individualistic-egotistical needs of the leader, as this could result in an abuse of trust (Burnes & By, 2012).

Eagly (2007) suggested that transformational leaders mentor and empower their followers and develop their potential in the organisation which, in turn, increases their contributions by exhibiting "idealised influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation and individualised consideration" (Jin et al., 2016). Idealised influence is effected through mentoring which is shown by supportive leadership behaviours. Intellectual stimulation presents the followers with challenging meaningful opportunities that gives them opportunities to gain knowledge (Burnes & By, 2012).

When they are led by transformational leaders, introverted followers may also feel more secure in thinking outside of the box, challenging the status quo and striving for continuous improvement thereby increasing their contribution. This happens due to the trust and respect exhibited by the leader (Guay & Choi, 2015). This, in turn, will give them the confidence to help others to accomplish or overachieve, indirectly increasing the followers' job satisfaction leading to higher organisational performance (Banks et al., 2016).

Although these dimensions of transformational leadership inspire and develop followers to challenge the status quo and go above and beyond the minimum requirements (Guay & Choi, 2015), these leadership dynamics could be detrimental to the followers by negatively impacting the followers' networking skills. As trust, respect and reciprocity form a foundation of the leader-follower relationship, the followers may be drawn to their leaders' social or professional network. This may place an over-reliance on the leader thereby overlooking opportunities for the followers to enhance their networking skills and to build connections with other diverse individuals (Anderson & Sun, 2015).

#### **2.2.2.4 Servant leadership**

As business environments evolve to a knowledge-based economy, leaders must understand the employees' critical needs to deliver long-term success (van Dierendonck, Stam, Boersma, de Windt, & Alkema, 2014). Academics argue that there is much overlap between servant leadership and transformational leadership, as both styles focus on the follower and provide visions of the future, as well as promote authenticity and a strong moral compass, there are also differences between the styles. For example, servant leadership positions itself to preserve the status quo as opposed to transformational leadership that challenges the status quo. The organisational goals of servant leadership seem to be a secondary outcome after fulfilling the follower's needs as opposed to being the primary focus in transformational leadership (Van Dierendonck et al., 2014).

From the discussion above, transformational leadership can be described as a leader-follower relationship with the leader emphasising the vision and performance goal of the organisation. Servant leadership however can be described as "the humility and spirituality of leaders, mutual power, visions of a way of life for the leader and followers, emulation of the leader's service orientation, and the autonomy and moral development of followers" (Van Dierendonck et al., 2014, p.544).

Seven dimensions of servant leadership were identified with a review of the past literature. They are: forming relationships with followers, empowering followers, helping followers grow and succeed, behaving ethically, demonstrating conceptual skills, putting followers first and creating value for others outside the organisation (Hunter, Neubert, Perry, Witt, Penney & Weinberger, 2013). Servant leaders possess genuine concern for their followers' well-being and not only invest time and energy in understanding their followers' needs but, once the needs have been established, servant leaders then ensure that these needs are satisfied (Van Dierendonck et al., 2014). Higher collaboration and empowerment of followers, gained by satisfying their needs, may provide organisations with a competitive advantage, which is needed in the evolving workplace (Hunter et al., 2013).

As organisations operate within a broader ecosystem, servant leadership not only empowers the followers within the organisation but also adds value for the wider society by encouraging community building, by clearly distinguishing the servant leader from other types of leadership and by promoting their calling to help others with genuine concern (Sun, 2013). This shows true alignment between organisational words and actions by "doing the right thing" that leads to more satisfied organisational stakeholders as well as the potential of having an influence over organisational stakeholders "to make

a positive difference in others' lives through service" (Sun, 2013, p. 545). Servant leaders act as credible role models and followers' may mimic the leaders' state of humility or reciprocity in which a "pay it forward" system is used by showing kindness as a gesture (Hunter et al., 2013).

### **2.2.3 A transformational revolution approach**

#### **2.2.3.1 Introduction**

Leimon et al. (2011) suggested that many models of leadership are predominantly male constructed and are therefore rooted in male design. Women who do not identify with these leadership styles are unlikely to succeed or enjoy a leadership position. The challenge, as stated by Sullivan (1999), is whether theories developed by models with a majority male sample are generalisable to women, given the unique experiences of women in the workplace, for example, "gender splitting" that may consist of sexism, stereotyping and cultural bias, as well as the complex lives of women. Eagly (2005) suggested that achieving relational authenticity by marginalised groups may be a challenge as these groups are not given the same level of legitimacy as leaders which implies boundary conditions for authentic leadership theory.

According to Gerzema and D'Antonio (2013), Generation Y and Millennials suggest that skills needed and valued to thrive today are: collaboration, honesty, empathy, communication and morality which may be considered feminine traits because "across age, gender, and culture, people around the world feel that feminine traits correlate more strongly with making the world a better place" (p.14). The world has increasingly become frustrated with the traditional masculine behaviour and characteristics that have led to the collapse of economies and organisations through scandals, reckless risk-taking, overt control and aggressive competition (Gerzema & D'Antonio, 2013). The Athena Doctrine, which was proposed as the model for today's organisations entering tough economic conditions whilst transitioning into the digital era of technology, believes that "both men and women need to meet the challenges of life with a predominantly feminine set of skills, traits, and attitudes" (Gerzema & D'Antonio, 2013, p.14).

### **2.2.3.2 Inclusive leadership**

Shore, Randel, Chung, Dean, Ehrhart and Singh (2011) noted that two antecedents of inclusion are inclusive leadership and inclusive practices. Tapia (2013) felt that 21<sup>st</sup> century inclusive leadership requires a deep understanding of similarities and dissimilarities and that the inclusion paradox is that difference makes one stronger. Leaders send a powerful message when diversity and inclusion are a priority on the strategic agenda especially when it is approached as a personal mission led by a business imperative which is the need to stay competitive and a moral imperative which is made up of personal experiences and values (Groysberg & Connolly, 2013). Self-awareness, insight and empathy that come from personal experiences often results in leadership commitment, as it has shaped leaders' attitudes, towards diversity and inclusion (Groysberg & Connolly, 2013).

According to Johnson, Christensen and Kagermann (2008), maintaining a flourishing organisation is due to recognising when a fundamental change is needed. The gap between self-awareness and authenticity allows leaders to develop their competencies thereby consciously becoming aware of the strategy to become diverse and to become inclusive. CEOs need to break the rules, identify new competencies, show commitment towards a tolerance for individuality and diversity and enable each organisational member to perform to his or her own ability thereby creating competitive advantage. Becoming a leader "involves a fundamental identity shift" (Ibarra, Ely & Kolb, 2013, p.4).

The pivotal argument of tipping point leadership theory is that, once the organisation's key players, change agents, are engaged and committed, then fundamental change can be brought about quickly as a learnable action (Kim & Mauborgne, 2003). If CEOs can make a case for change by consistently communicating and insisting that the organisation overcomes hurdles, then turnaround can be mobilised. Avolio and Gardner (2005) quote Bill George who said "we need leaders who lead with purpose, values, and integrity; leaders who build enduring organisations, motivate their employees to provide superior customer service, and create long-term value for their shareholders" (p.316).

A famous quote by Albert Einstein is that "the significant problems we face cannot be solved at the same level of thinking we were at when we created them." According to Covey (2013), a new level of deeper thinking – a principle-centred, character-based, "inside-out" approach to personal and interpersonal effectiveness – is needed to solve fundamental problems that cannot be solved on the superficial level on which they were created.

“No one is born hating another person because of the colour of his skin, or his background, or his religion. People must learn to hate, and if they can learn to hate, they can be taught to love, for love comes more naturally to the human heart than its opposite” (Mandela, 1994, p.542).

Day et al. (2014) stated that the development of leaders who focus on authenticity and Sherbin and Rashid (2017) found that one expends energy in actions and decisions towards inclusivity, participative decision making and transformational leadership. These actions and decisions may increase the likelihood of women and other minorities becoming successful in organisational leadership positions. The benefits of authentic leadership on organisational performance are well documented (Illies et al. 2005, Banks et al., 2016). Dezso and Ross (2012) argued that female representation in the senior leadership team brings informational and social diversity opportunities, enhances the behaviour of management and encourages females in middle management. This leads to improved organisational performance, as a by-product of improved managerial task performance. On average, at least one woman on the senior leadership team leads to one percent more bottom line value.

### **2.2.3.3 Effective leadership**

A famous quote in the writing of Shakespeare, which has roots in Greek philosophy, is “to thine own self be true.” Knowing oneself together with “developing a sense of purpose” (Ibarra, Ely, & Kolb, 2013) allows one to assert leadership. Ibarra et al. (2013) found that “effective leaders develop a sense of purpose by pursuing goals that align with their personal values and advance the collective good ... such leaders are seen as authentic and trustworthy” (p.5). One can transition into becoming an effective leader with practice, as it is a learnable, although complex, skill. If a leader of an organisation has the ability to make a substantial difference to stakeholders, then he/she requires the ability to execute a good strategy, which consists of coherent, coordinating actions, policies and resources to achieve an important goal (Rumelt, 2012).

If leaders want an organisation to achieve organic growth targets, a superior product or service needs to be offered showing the organisation’s competitive advantage through innovation, efficiency and entrepreneurship. Romero (2015) explained that a “growth mindset” results in organisational agility with employees who adopt a learning attitude attracting individuals from marginalised groups versus a “fixed mindset” that results in an organisation that is not responsive to challenges and has a focus on inborn traits and stereotypes of employees that discourages individuals from marginalised groups. Rumelt (2012) argued that leadership dysfunctions include the failure to face challenges,

the illusion of high-level thinking, statements of desire rather than a plan for overcoming obstacles and poor strategic objectives that do not address critical issues.

Leadership behaviour and decision-making needs to have flexibility that enables it to evolve with contextual changes (Snowden & Boone, 2007). As today's organisations transition into less hierarchical systems with more cross-functional teams and complex strategies, effective execution, through leader influence, is required for organisational success (Pfeffer, 2010; Hogg, 2009). To succeed with a new agenda, a leader has to build and wield power to influence the successful execution of the agenda (Pfeffer, 2010). Decision makers lie at the heart of execution problems, and not solely the organisational structure, as top management can be linked to the execution of the end-to-end process, thereby driving strategic effectiveness through operational decisions (Neilson, Martin, & Powers, 2008). Avolio and Gardner (2005) focused on positive modelling where authentic leaders influence followers and where both the leader and followers develop because "for leaders and followers to be effective, leaders must promote an inclusive organizational climate that enables themselves and followers to continually learn and grow" (p.327).

Technology has redefined organisational ecosystems, nature of business growth and success thereby eroding the traditional business model (Wacksman & Stutzman, 2014). Gerzema and D'Antonio (2010) found that today's younger generation has the flexibility to easily adapt and reorder priorities and to take responsibility for the sustainability of their lifestyles, as the shift moves from individual status (self-focussed) to community (cause focussed) as "this generation places a premium on friendships, ethical behaviour and diversity" (Gerzema & D'Antonio, 2013, p.5). This empowers them not only as individuals but also collectively as a group to tackle and influence large organisations by driving value based consumerism (Gerzema & D'Antonio, 2010). Conscious consumers recognise that they can impact organisational behaviour through their purchasing power, aligning spend to values thereby supporting responsible organisations (Gerzema & D'Antonio, 2010).

According to Baur, Ellen III, Buckley, Ferris, Allison, McKenny and Short (2016), leadership is a "language game" where charismatic leadership, intentionally applying a configuration approach, provides an important tool to influence members within the organisation to support and accept their vision (Avolio & Gardner, 2005). This is done via behaviour and communication that is structured to the audience. Some of the most effective tactics to do this have been found to be "rational persuasion exchange, inspirational appeal and apprising" which is in contrast to the least effective influence

tactics of “ingratiation, consultation and collaboration” (Lee, Han, Cheong, Kim, & Yun, 2017). Social identity theory of leadership reveals that leaders who align to the prototypes of the collective group appear to be more influential over their followers thereby making them more effective leaders (Lee, Martin, Thomas, Guillaume, & Maio, 2015; Hogg, 2009).

## **2.3 Operating environment**

### **2.3.1 Conforming to status quo**

#### ***2.3.1.1 Legislation: Target quotas***

Intervention initiatives were designed to reduce boundaries created in organisational structures, for example, around gender, race, culture and social status (Berrey, 2014). In 1998, affirmative action was introduced in South Africa to bring about employment equity (EE) in the workplace (Burger & Jafta, 2010) by promoting a more diverse workforce (Employment Equity Act Number 55 of 1998). Affirmative action comprises policies, processes and procedures in the human resources function relating to, not only recruitment, but also the development and promotion of employees (Human, 1996).

The Broad-Based Black Economic Empowerment (BBBEE) Act Number 53 of 2003 and the Women Empowerment and Gender Equality Bill were introduced in South Africa for organisations to address the racial and gender inequality gaps brought about under the apartheid regime. The Act seeks to increase organisational ownership of black people and to increase the number of black employees and females represented in organisations (Department of Trade and Industry, 2016). According to the Department of Labour (2017), the legislated EE and BBBEE Acts have been ineffective at significantly improving labour force participation, as shown by the unemployment rate of 27.7%, youth unemployment rate of 38.6%, female unemployment rate of 29.8% and women workforce participation rate of 44% which has not shifted since 2002 (Statistics South Africa, 2017).

Research conducted on the impact of progressive policies on marginalised groups (Kaiser & Spalding, 2015) shows that limited research has been done on determining the factors that have enabled marginalised groups to access the C-suite level. Organisations are measured on their BBBEE rating and non-compliance could result in being unsuccessful in securing tenders thereby negatively impacting the financial bottom line of an organisation. This may encourage tick-box behaviour in order to mitigate financial risk in the organisation thereby hampering true inclusiveness. Hurn (2013) found that female leaders preferred to earn their seat at the table through merit instead of having their talent and skills undermined by target quota appointment to a leadership position.

There is also debate regarding the principle “once-empowered, always-empowered” as organisations create short-term initiatives through BEE deals to ensure compliance with regulations as well as to maintain ratings. Currently MTN, a South African telecommunications company, is being investigated to find out whether the organisation’s BBBEE schemes have complied with regulations and have met the requirements for black ownership in terms of the codes of good corporate governance. A notice gazetted on 9 June 2017 confirms that ownership transactions with a R25 million or higher threshold must be registered with the BBBEE Commission. The transactional value has significantly been reduced from the draft proposal of R100 million, which raises many questions.

### **2.3.1.2 Workplace initiatives: Diversity programs**

Human (1996) recognised that diversity skills programs encourage individual awareness of stereotypes by allowing these individuals to understand themselves better and enabling communication skills to address their behaviour. A diversity management program proposed by Gilbert, Stead, and Ivancevich (1999) explained that diversity management is not a once-off initiative instead it is a process that should be driven by the organisation’s top management team through strategy. Although case studies show that diversity programs promote institutional transformation through organisation metrics that force employees to conform (Berrey, 2014), today’s organisations seek long-term sustainable inclusiveness as “most diversity programs aren’t increasing diversity” and “a number of studies suggest that it can activate bias or spark a backlash” (Dobbin & Kaley, 2016, p.54).

Legislation targets and diversity programs could be perceived as “token appointments” thereby increasing stereotype bias. Elstad and Ladegard (2012) contended that “token appointments” are more heavily scrutinised thereby adding further pressure resulting in

minor situations being blown out of proportion in order to support preconceived notions of the marginalised group or individual. Polarisation means that the dominant group feels undermined or uneasy around “token appointments” thereby raising their barriers against the marginalised group or individual and overstating the difference of the “token appointment” (Elstad & Ladegard, 2012) thereby not fully embracing the opportunity of diversity.

Ibarra, Ely and Kolb (2013) argued that, despite significant amounts being spent on diversity programs, it appears that these programs operate in a vacuum without the necessary organisational change required for success. Underlying issues and strategic drivers of change should simultaneously be identified in order to ensure sustainability (Derby, 2013). For example, where there is an opportunity for organisations to create a diverse leadership pipeline by encouraging females to pursue leadership roles, there is also an opportunity to create bias awareness programs. The modern sophisticated organisation of Unilever acknowledged that its 50% representation of senior women managers decreases from 50% to 6% at senior executive leadership level (Leimon et al., 2011).

### ***2.3.1.3 Barriers inhibiting advancement: Gender stereotypes, old boys’ club and institutional mind-set***

-Gender stereotypes

Stangor, Lynch, Duan and Glass (1992) found that gender categorisation was most frequently used over other categories like race or age. Glick and Fiske (2009) suggested that the trait of intelligence is often used in gender-related judgements and Behm-Morawitz and Mastro (2009) believed that women are “stereotypically judged to be less intelligent ... than men” (p.811). “In sociological theories, gender is a social construction rather than a biological given” and “the sources of gender differentiation lie more in social and institutional practices” (Bussey & Bandura, 1999, p.683). Theorists argued that the nature and extent of gender differences encourages social ordering, a created societal construction that seeks to justify gender inequality and situates women in lower status positions thereby imposing restraints (Bussey & Bandura, 1999).

Golombok and Fivush (1994) found that gender stereotypes represent “culturally shared beliefs in the values associated with male- and female-typed traits” (p.20) which then leads to the labelling of certain characteristics which are “information about physical appearance, attitudes and interests, psychological traits, social relations, and occupations” (p.17). For example, males tend to take action and are therefore

considered agentive or instrumental whilst females take into account social interaction and emotions and are therefore considered relational.

Mendelberg and Karpowitz (2016) and Hekman, Johnson, Foo, and Yang (2017) noted that there are gender gaps in societal status and power between groups where males are given higher status than females, by mere virtue of their gender. Glass ceilings, unequal pay for comparable work, exclusion from networks and under-representation in top leadership positions have been well documented as forms of gender bias barriers that exist in the corporate world. However even in the classical music world, gender biasness exists, as evident with the “blind” auditions experiment where a female’s chance of successfully being chosen to join the orchestra increased by 50 per cent when musicians played behind a screen. “Perceptions are guided by preconceptions” (Bussey & Bandura, 1999, p.687) and “people’s perceptions of female advantage must be framed by the well-known history of concrete walls and glass ceilings that have restricted women from positions that carry substantial authority” (Eagly & Carli, 2003, p.824).

The societal gender gap shows that a female’s status affects her level of assertiveness thereby impacting on her perceived influence (Mendleberg & Karpowitz, 2016). The traditional gender norm favours the stereotypical male in top leadership positions, such as chief executive roles, resulting in “glass ceilings” although, recently, female characteristics, for example, a collaborative leadership style, were valued in times of crisis and therefore females were more likely to be appointed as CEOs in high-risk organisations (Glass & Cook, 2016). The strategy of seeking out these risky positions has led to females quickly creating credibility and building a reputation as effective leaders in challenging situations therefore, “greater respect for the feminine in culture is essential to improved societal structures as well as market recovery around the world” (Gerzema & D’Antonio, 2013, p.12).

Bussey and Bandura (1999) found that gender schema suggests that there is variability in gender conduct depending on different situations and Hekman et al. (2017) discovered that where non-White and female leaders engaged in diversity-valuing behaviour, which can also be seen as socially competitive, they violated the expectation “that minorities should play a supporting rather than a leading role in society” (p.772). According to Eagly and Carli (2003), career aspirations of female university students, female values of freedom, challenge, leadership, prestige, power and characteristics of assertiveness, dominance and masculinity are ever increasing in today’s world. Therefore, as women change to succeed in new roles, social perception is moving towards the view that “women are becoming more masculine, particularly in agentic attributes, although not

decreasing in feminine qualities” (p. 826). This could be seen as adapting to the white male dominated environment (Eagly & Johannesen-Schmidt, 2001).

-“The old boys’ club or network”

Groysberg and Connolly (2013) found that “the old boys’ club or network” is “a single barrier that affects all women [through their] exclusion from networks and conversations that open doors to further development and promotion” and that “this kind of discrimination is often unintended, unconscious, and embedded in a company’s culture” (p.71). This institution encourages solidarity amongst males in an organisation, marginalising females and contributing to the fact that men still hold the power to appoint females thereby ensuring that the status quo is maintained (Broadbridge & Simpson, 2011). “The blunt truth is that men still run the world” (Sandberg, 2015, p.5). Invisible barriers built into the organisational culture and everyday practices may unintentionally favour males over females (Ellemers, 2014) and these persistent invisible barriers “serve to reinforce gendered workplaces and gendered norms for human behaviour” (Diehl & Dzubinski, 2016, p.197).

Broadbridge and Simpson (2011) explained that strategic management and measurement of key performance indicators with targets places control over others that can be linked to the masculine dominant form. Leimon et al. (2011) said that the unwritten rules of organisational behaviour and performance are dictated by white men. It was also suggested that macho management practices have intensified, “[a]s an exemplar, the recent financial crisis has been reported widely as ‘excessive masculinity’ with men portrayed as taking part in overly risky and ‘maverick’ behaviours” (Broadbridge & Simpson, 2011, p.474).

Networking and relationships are important drivers of an individual’s path to success in an organisation (Leimon et al., 2011). Networks can act as a support system and can reduce the loneliness and lack of inclusion felt by marginalised groups. Therefore, dedicating time, prioritising and making requests to build, maintain and utilise powerful relevant networks with people of influence within the organisation can be seen as a strategic tool in overcoming barriers when entering the senior leadership level and climbing the corporate ladder (Leimon et al., 2011).

Women’s literature seeks to “redress the neglect of gender in organizational and management research, to hear accounts of women’s experiences and to incorporate women’s interests and values” (Broadbridge & Simpson, 2011, p.472). Descriptive studies have been conducted on “glass ceilings”, a term coined in 1986 that described invisible inhibitors that prevent females from attaining success in the workplace at a

senior leadership level. This led to the term “glass cliff”, created in 2007, that described women in senior leadership positions who were at a high risk of failure as minorities who were given a chance at leadership when others had failed. More recently, the concept of “glass labyrinth” (Leimon et al., 2011) proposed that the goal of achieving leadership success by marginalised organisational members is attainable albeit through a very challenging route. However, strategies that sought to break through the ceilings show that “less work has examined how the glass ceiling is maintained despite the fact that so many organizational and societal programs have been put in place to remove it” (Hekman et al, 2017, p.788). Leimon et al. (2011) suggested that attaining a bird’s eye view by rising above the labyrinth in seeking alternatives may achieve success. Gender in management research has progressed over the past five decades and has evolved into a contemporary perception that the gender issue has been solved, especially with the younger age group, Generation Y. This perception poses a challenge to future gender research. “Key characteristics of Generation Y individuals include confidence, independence, faith in the ability to shape their own lives – and a strong belief that gender equality has been achieved” (Broadbridge & Simpson, 2011, p.475).

-Institutional mind-set

As cited by Mavin, Grandy and Williams (2014) “the gendered nature of organizational contexts means that women, as well as men, hold women accountable to normative gendered expectations” (p.441).

“In responding to the ambivalence of their presence in organizations, women use masculine normative frameworks in the absence of alternatives. This can be seen when women suppress other women’s potential, denying opportunities and constraining opportunities” (Mavin, Grandy & Williams, 2014, p.449).

Eagly and Carli (2003) believed that incongruity exists between the expectations of female gender roles and leadership roles. This describes discrimination where females are perceived to be more communal in contrast to the agentic qualities associated with masculine leadership roles. “Ample evidence exists that managers (and undergraduate and graduate business students) link management ability with being male and possessing masculine characteristics” (Eagly & Carli, 2003, p.819).

Eagly and Carli (2003) felt that females face discriminatory barriers in masculine work environments with male evaluators. This is further exacerbated in male-dominated industries. According to Diehl and Dzubinski (2016), despite organisational interventions and policies, there has not been a corresponding increase in the numbers of females in

leadership positions as there has been an organisation approach to focus only on meso-level barriers – as opposed to also including micro- and macro-level barriers – that would encourage sustainable transformation. Diehl and Dzubinski (2016) agreed with the sociotechnical systems change theory presented by Swanson and Holton in 2009 that states, “in order for change to succeed, the technical aspects of work as well as the social system that connects employees need to change” (p.198). They suggested that this could be done by creating equal opportunities, celebrating differences and revising work culture. “Also critical is a clear message from executives at the top of the organization endorsing equitable opportunities” (Eagly & Carli, 2003, p.827).

An increase in female human capital investments over the years has led to females being more educated and changing societal male roles by augmenting female advantage to leadership roles (Eagly & Carli, 2003). The organisational practices of today are creating demand for “female advantage” leadership because “women are more skilled at inclusiveness, interpersonal relations, power sharing, and the nurturing of followers; and as a consequence, women should be superior leaders” (Vecchio, 2002, p.647), thereby making roles more accessible and symbolising progressive organisational change.

“From an ideology of tolerance, the idea is that companies are independent organisations which operate in a society and try to resist the interference of social phenomena; the ideology of respect considers that companies are a substantial part of society and that they have to respond to social challenges with moral legitimacy” (Lozano & Escrich, 2017, p.693).

### **2.3.2 Strategic change for the 21st century**

#### **2.3.2.1 Change management**

Change is constant, permeates all levels and is a complex process (Lawrence, 2015). In recent years, the global arena has featured a drastic change revolution trend in a leaderless environment with the Arab Spring Revolutions and the Occupy Wall Street Movement (Markham, 2012). The claim that “70% of all change initiatives fail” was discredited by Hughes in 2011 (Todnem, Hughes, & Ford, 2016, p.8). The opinions of past research are that the core function of organisational leaders is “to bring about change [and] to maintain and enhance organisational success” (Burnes & By, 2012, p.239). As seen by recent financial scandals, leadership and change need a strong ethical foundation to be successful. Kotter’s eight steps model is seen as the orthodoxy for change management (Todnem, Burnes, & Oswick, 2012). Although leadership and

change can be described as “two of the most important issues facing organisations”, these terms can also be described as the two most controversial elements that an organisation faces (Burnes & By, 2012, p.239).

Lawrence (2015) explained that previous research, for example, work done by Burnes, described change using a traditional approach that has characteristics of being linear and sporadic and where change agents guide a predetermined outcome based on certain actions. More recent research however suggested that change should be described as developing and continuous (Lawrence, 2015).

It is acknowledged that the role of leadership plays an important part during organisational change and that transformational leadership is effective in helping followers to adapt to change and in inspiring followers to achieve the new vision (Stoker, Grutterink, & Kolk, 2012). Nohe, Michaelis, Menges, Zhang, and Sonntag (2013) confirmed that, when leaders themselves establish change-promoting behaviours, linking the new vision to future relevance and removing challenges to achieve the vision, then followers show commitment to change and team performance. This is one of the balancing acts to be performed by the leader who is “not wanting to appear inconsistent with prior actions” (Hambrick, Geletkanycz, & Fredrickson, 1993, p.404). “Commitment to change refers to a mind-set that binds an individual to a course of action deemed necessary for the successful implementation of a change initiative” (Nohe, et al., 2013, p.379).

Some authors argued that transformation leadership is not a core component for translating a new strategy to manage change effectively for organisational performance (Stoker, et al., 2012). “Charismatic leadership is closely tied to turbulence and change” (Nohe & Michaelis, 2016, p.886). During periods of uncertainty, it is often believed that the status quo is no longer effective and followers seek an offer for a better future. Therefore, followers will more easily buy into the vision of a charismatic leader as these leaders convey social information and, due to high levels of trust as leaders, find it easier to navigate the change (Nohe & Michaelis, 2016).

There is also debate that the top management team, that consists of organisational decision makers and the CEO, can also be seen as change agents, encourage organisational change with strong commitment. The top management team has a strong influence on outcomes within the organisation due to its significant impact on the specific operating environment, where the members could be viewed as role models leading to effective change management and organisational performance (Stoker et al, 2012).

### **2.3.2.2 Strategic change**

*“Strategy formulation and strategy implementation are not two separate activities; indeed, the line between what counts as one activity versus the other becomes increasingly blurry the more we pay attention to how materiality enables and constrains the materialization of strategy” (Leonardi, 2015, p. 18).*

In today’s VUCA world, strategic change can lead to competitive advantage and higher organisational performance (Herrmann & Nadkarni, 2014).

Although the CEO is ultimately responsible for strategy formulation and implementation within the organisation (Herrmann & Nadkarni, 2014), the top management team is reliant on all employees within the organisation to implement the “top-down” strategy created by them while recognising the multi-agent multi-layered structure and systems (Lee & Purnam, 2016). However, this inhibits “bootleg innovation” where employees choose to ignore top-down instructions and instead pursue their own organisational innovation decisions – “bottom-up”. Although this may represent a failure of strategy implementation, it could ironically result in better organisational performance, as lower level employees are the closest knowledge workers to the operational management within the organisation thereby directly driving performance (Lee & Purnam, 2016).

The “cognitive lens” approach suggests that strategy formulation by the top management team includes “how executives subjectively make sense of their environments and use these interpretations to identify concrete change options” (Herrmann & Nadkarni, 2014, p.1320). More value should therefore be placed in “bottom-up” exploration throughout the organisation, which could lead to better strategies and better performance (Lee & Purnma, 2016). As cited by Lee and Purnam (2016) a model proposed by Posen and Levinthal had four elements: the task environment, the agent’s representation of the task environment, a process for transforming the agent’s representations (i.e. learning) and choice process through which the agent selects actions within the representation.

The model distinguished that the leaders who hold the belief of the new strategy and the employees who execute the new strategy are not the same and therefore the action could deviate from the intention. The shifting nature of the external environment as well as the legacy challenges within the organisation also need to be taken into account, thereby recognising that the CEO cannot single-handedly alter the direction of the organisation (Lee & Purnam, 2016; Fitza, 2014).

Herrmann & Nadkarni (2014) found that the CEO’s determination to change was intertwined with organisational success. Information processing, innovation, tolerance

for ambiguity and resilience to overcome failure are abilities that enable CEOs to recognise and encourage strategic change. Strategic change can also be a “double-edged sword” for organisations as it has adaptive and disruptive elements (Hermann & Nadkarni, 2014). Whilst on the one hand, it enables interruption of inertia through adaption and innovation and on the other hand, it can also lead to uncertainties, inefficiencies and wastage of time and resources thereby hindering performance (Hermann & Nadkarni, 2014).

## **2.4 Organisational behaviour, culture and values**

### **2.4.1 Introduction**

An organisation is a group of individuals who, in a coordinated effort, try to reach a common goal. Organisational behaviour focuses on the actions, attitudes and performance of individuals (Champoux, 2017). Organisational development is the application and transfer of behaviour science knowledge and practice (Cummings & Worley, 2015). These concepts lead to organisational effectiveness through changes in strategy, structure and process and need to be flexible to adapt to market changes (Cummings & Worley, 2015; Sull, 1999). An organisation has a purpose that the leader and members strive to achieve.

Daft (2015) defined culture as “the set of key values, assumptions, understandings, and norms that is shared by members of an organisation and taught to new members as correct” (p. 429) and Robbins and Judge (2015) defined organisational culture, a descriptive term, as a system of shared meaning or core values perceived by the majority of members within an organisation which differs from another organisation. The characteristics of organisation culture are “innovation and risk taking, attention to detail, outcome orientation, people orientation, team orientation, aggressiveness and stability” (p. 497). A strong culture is not necessarily highly formalised as the majority of members of the organisation have internalised their behaviour to match the accepted norms. As organisations now operate in a global context, local subcultures may also develop (Robbins & Judge, 2015).

Groysberg and Connolly (2013) defined organisational inclusive culture as “one in which employees can contribute to the success of the company as their authentic selves, while the organisation respects and leverages their talents and gives them a sense of connectedness” (p.73). Culture is defined by an explicit and implicit set of core standards, expectations and norms that is integrated amongst all in the organisation, not

only at a surface level, but also at a deeper fundamental level. It is aligned with the organisational strategy, enables the organisation to adapt to the external operating environment and contributes towards organisational collective identity and employee commitment (Daft, 2015). Leimon et al. (2011) described organisational culture as based on pre-dominantly “white male heritage” from which it stemmed (p.53). However, women now also form an integral part of the culture and therefore could take responsibility for a culture change even though the complexity still exists with the absence of adequate female representation at senior leadership levels to drive the change.

Pless and Maak (2004) suggested that effectively managing an increasingly diverse workforce requires transformation and the seven foundation principles that are needed for building a culture of inclusion. These are, “principle of recognition, reciprocal understanding, standpoint plurality and mutual enabling, trust, integrity, building relationships and intercultural moral point of view” (p.131). Transformational change in organisations involves learning that is supported by values and norms and innovation with key organisational players committed to learning how to enact new behaviours in order to implement new strategic initiatives. This may involve “unlearning” in order to improve and move in the direction of the new paradigm of the future organisation envisioned that encompasses inclusivity (Cummings & Worley, 2015). Reflecting on barriers that inhibit diversity can translate into management practices by adapting systems and processes to promote the vision of an inclusive diverse culture (Pless & Mark, 2004). This is in contrast to active inertia, which is continuing with established patterns of organisational behaviour despite there being changes to the environment (Sull, 1999).

## **2.4.2 Consistent evolution**

### **2.4.2.1 Leadership and culture**

Hogg (2009) explored social identity theory, which is “the psychological relationship between self-conception and the behaviour of people within and between groups”, with a focus on social identity theory of leadership that describes “how leaders who are considered by the group’s members to best embody the group’s defining attributes are most effective” (p.3). According to Daft (2015), a leader influences culture by communicating the organisational cultural vision that is acceptable to all members. The leader also reinforces the cultural vision by living it in a model way, through definitions and by using signals in the day-to-day operations of the organisation therefore embedding governance of corporate responsibility. Individuals in leadership positions should agree on a normative approach in addressing an issue that includes the

standards of behaviour of the organisation and the industry, based on moral values of an individual and the organisation, together with ethical value concepts such as fairness and justice. Two measurement dimensions of culture are strength of strategic focus and flexibility of the competitive external environment (Daft, 2015).

Cummings and Worley (2015) noted that institutionalisation reflects the degrees of persistence used to implement organisational change with the following factors that indicate the degree of institutionalisation: knowledge, performance, preferences, normative consensus and value consensus. Institutionalised organisational culture, which is a liability, can result from a top-down approach. Should there be a dysfunctional top management team, as the origin of an organisation's culture is the founders, its personality becomes entrenched in the culture. The words and behaviour of top management establishes the norm because leadership is the independent variable in organisational behaviour (Robbins & Judge, 2015). "Nearly half the CEOs said their most important role was to set the tone for the organisation's culture by demonstrating a commitment to inclusion" (Groysberg & Connolly, 2013, p.76).

#### **2.4.2.2 Individual, Group and Organisation**

-The individual

The commonly used personality-job fit theory that was famously developed by John Holland in 1959, indicates that individuals will stay in a position depending on the alignment between their personality characteristics and their job in the workplace. More recently, researchers proposed that, with the frequently changing environment, it is imperative that individuals' personalities are congruent with the organisation's culture rather than with characteristics of the job – the person-organisation fit. This model argued that individuals will stay in an organisation that is aligned to their values and personalities. For example, individuals who rank agreeableness high will prefer a supportive organisational culture over an aggressive one and individuals who rank openness to experience high will prefer an innovative organisation culture over standardisation. These guidelines can then be used during the recruitment process (Robbins & Judge, 2015). Sabharwal (2014) also supported perceptions of inclusion that predict job commitment and performance. Leimon et al. (2011) proposed that organisations are not only failing at retaining the talented, diverse, marginalised workforce streams but also at engaging with marginalised workforce streams in a manner that is motivational thereby facilitating productiveness of the workforce.

The commonly accepted model of the five value dimensions of national culture, that was presented by Hofstede in the late 1970s, are "power distance, individualism versus

collectivism, masculinity versus femininity, uncertainty avoidance and long-term versus short-term orientation”. However, this model has been criticised as the world has changed in the past 40 years and will continue to change at a faster pace in the future. Therefore, caution should be taken when using the generally accepted Hofstede model that assumes that all people from a particular country have the same values. Differences in generational values in the workforce now exist. For example, Generation Xers value flexibility, are sceptical of authority, are less willing to make personal sacrifices for organisations and rate true friendship and happiness high. The Millennials, or Generation Y, in contrast, see themselves as the socially responsible generation, are at ease with diversity, are electronically networked and want frequent feedback and communication (Robbins & Judge, 2015).

Kanter (2003) advocated that effective organisational leaders need to provide a source of energy for change by performing a series of balancing acts in order to create a winner’s attitude in members of the organisation. Robbins and Judge (2015) stated that there are three components of attitudes, which are cognitive, affective and behavioural. Job satisfaction, job involvement, organisational commitment, organisational support and employee engagement are some examples of work-related attitudes. Affective events’ theory suggests that “workplace events cause emotional reactions on the part of employees, which then influence workplace attitudes and behaviours” (p.134). For example, people in positive moods tend to have sound decision-making skills, perform better, offer better customer service that leads to customer satisfaction and are more creative.

-The group

“An authentic leader energises followers by creating meaning and positively socially constructing reality for themselves and followers” (Avolio & Gardner, 2005, p.330) and “the great challenge of leadership is in being an effective intergroup leader” (Hogg, 2009, p.2). Hogg (2009) argued that the identity function of leadership is to provide followers with a shared identity – “a sense of who they are, what they should think, how they should behave, and how interaction with other groups will go” (p.2). Collective identity is developed through internal integration, which helps members of the organisation relate to each other thereby making it easier to work effectively together (Daft, 2015, Chapter 14).

Some motivational theories towards attaining a goal presented by Robbins and Judge (2015) suggested that, within the groups of an organisation, leaders can use Maslow’s hierarchy of needs, represented by lower levels of physiological, safety, social and

higher levels of esteem and self-actualisation needs, McClelland's theory of needs, which includes three needs, which are "need for achievement, need for power and need for affiliation" or more contemporary theories of motivation such as self-determination, job engagement and goal-setting. There is an expectation by the group for the leader to communicate effectively, whether verbally or non-verbally, with members of the organisation as this serves to control, motivate and provide emotional expression and information. Influence and impression management are also techniques that leaders can use to attain their goals (Robbins & Judge, 2015).

-The organisation

Cummings and Worley (2015) suggested that organisations need to adapt to uncertain technological, economic, political, global and cultural changes. Change management and organisational change form part of organisational development and help an organisation to create effective responses and influence strategy, structure and processes. A large group intervention, that can consist of 50 to 2 000 organisational members of balanced representation and that lasts between one and five days, for example, reflects the core values of inclusion, participation and learning. "Changing the organisation's vision, structure, strategy, or work therefore requires the deliberate, face-to-face coordination of these groups" (Cummings & Worley, 2015, p.309).

"In the end, the only way a CEO can reverse a corporate decline is to change the momentum and empower people anew, replacing secrecy and denial with dialogue, blame and scorn with respect, avoidance and turf protection with collaboration, and passivity and helplessness with initiative" (Kanter, 2003, p.62).

Robbins and Judge (2015) proposed tactics to reduce resistance to change that are: education and communication, participation, building support and commitment, developing positive relationships, implementing changes fairly, manipulation and co-optation, change agents and coercion. Organisational development can try to improve organisational effectiveness and employee well-being through respect for people, trust and support, power equalisation, confrontation and participation. This can be done via training, feedback, process consultation, team building, intergroup development and appreciative inquiry. A learning organisation has the capacity to adapt and change (Robbins & Judge, 2015).

Pless and Maak (2004) argued that creating an inclusive organisational environment is a long-term commitment that requires significant transformation, which can be accommodated through raising awareness, creating understanding and encouraging

reflection, developing a vision of inclusion, rethinking key management concepts and principles, and adapting systems and processes.

“Culture change requires the willingness and desire to reassess existing value systems, mindsets and habits, to change ingrained ways of thinking, behaving and interacting, to probe and rethink seldom-questioned basic assumptions and to follow new paths” (Pless & Mark, 2004, p.135).

Organisations need to design strategy, structure, work design, human resource systems and management processes that embrace a diverse workforce, for example, Generation X and Generation Y, in order to transform and optimise the competitive advantage. Diversity programs that have been successfully used focused on structure of responsibility, educational programs as well as networking and mentoring programs. Employee assistance programs and health facilities may act as a supportive organisational stress and wellness intervention thereby increasing job satisfaction, productivity and quality (Cummings & Worley, 2015, chapter 17).

### **2.4.3 Rapid revolution**

#### ***2.4.3.1 Inclusive workplace model***

According to Barak (2017), the inclusive workplace model is defined as one that

“values and utilises individual and intergroup differences within its workforce; cooperates with, and contributes to, its surrounding community; alleviates the needs of disadvantaged groups in its wider environment and collaborates with individuals, groups and organisations across national and cultural boundaries” (p.7).

Sherbin and Rashid (2017) argued that a diverse workplace, which is “a source of creativity and inclusion” (Groysberg & Connolly, 2013, p.70), equates to a range of organisational stakeholders, which is different to inclusion. Inclusivity is defined as “an organizational environment [that] allows people with multiple backgrounds, mind-sets and ways of thinking to work effectively together and to perform to their highest potential in order to achieve organizational objectives based on sound principles” (Pless & Maak, 2004, p.130). The conventional headcount indicator, for example, is a measurement of workforce diversity whilst quantifying feelings of inclusion is a more complex dimension. CEOs believe that it is important for an organisation’s workforce to reflect the diverse customers they serve in order to remain relevant in the broader societies in which they operate (Groysberg & Connolly, 2013; Hekman et al., 2017).

Barak (2017) found that an increasingly diverse workforce, which is the global trend, frequently experiences the challenge of a lack of inclusion in the workplace, where the members are accepted as valued members and are encouraged to participate fully in the organisation. The perception of marginalised groups, for example, based on differences in gender, race, ethnicity, age, religion, social class, sexual orientation and disability status, is that they do not form an integral part of the organisation but instead that diversity reflects at a surface level in contrast to deep level. The experience of exclusion, whether implicit or explicit, acts as a barrier in promoting an inclusive workplace that acknowledges its responsibility to a larger audience. Organisational leaders have not been able to successfully divest their personal biases to take advantage of the potential value in the dynamics of a diverse workforce, instead of being seen as problematic, and capitalising on the competitive advantage (Shore, et al., 2011) (Robbins & Judge, 2015).

“Without inclusion, however, the crucial connections that attract diverse talent encourage their participation, foster innovation, and lead to business growth wouldn’t happen” (Sherbin & Rashid, 2017, p.2). Shore et al. (2011) argued that the inclusion framework proposes that feelings of inclusion consist of the employees’ perceptions of being a valued member through positively experiencing belongingness and uniqueness. These two themes need to be balanced in order to promote an inclusive environment (Sherbin & Rashid, 2017).

According to Burrell (2016), the choice architecture approach supports mitigating biases by “deliberately structuring how you present information and options” through “altering the environment in which decisions are made” as “it’s extraordinarily difficult to rewire the human brain” (p.74). Although this process encourages individuals to make more rational decisions, it could also be seen as organisational manipulation (Burrell, 2016) and studies show that “force-feeding can activate bias rather than stamp it out” (Dobbin & Kalev, 2016, p.54). Instead of implementing strategies that focus on controlling biases, for example, diversity training, hiring test assessments, performance ratings and grievance procedures, more positive results are achieved by methods that are not forced, for example, engagement in solving the problem through mentoring, diverse intergroup contact and transparent social accountability (Dobbin & Kalev, 2016).

Sherbin and Rashid (2017) suggested that the levers that drive inclusion that can bring about change and opportunities are “inclusive leaders, authenticity, networking and visibility as well as clear career paths.” Humphreys (2016) proposed: “be diverse in your

own thinking, reject labels/biases, pass the mic by giving others an opportunity to speak, model others' focused behaviour and use specificity.”

## **2.5 Conclusion**

The literature review showed the relevance of the evolution stage to revolution stage in leadership, the operating environment and organisational behaviour, culture and values. The literature was reviewed to understand how the leadership styles of the CEO and the top management team influence the operating environment and organisational culture in a male dominated environment. Different theories of leadership were discussed to provide a background using a traditional lens and then altering the lens for the current 21<sup>st</sup> century landscape. Similarly, the operating environment inhibitors that enable conforming to the status quo were contrasted with the change expected from today's CEO and the top management team to accelerate transformation, thereby contributing to organisational financial performance that is needed in today's aggressive 21<sup>st</sup> century competitive environment. Lastly, we glimpsed at organisational behaviour, culture and values as managing a diverse workforce requires transformational change – from an individual, group and organisation levels. The constant evolution of leadership and culture now requires revolution towards transformation and inclusivity.

The literature review provided shows evidence that the foundation of past research was not pursued in the context of the 21<sup>st</sup> century digital revolution knowledge workers, but had a core focus of the 20<sup>th</sup> century Industrial Revolution labourer workers. The literature reviewed also identified limitations of the research conducted, being researched on majority male leaders and mostly white male leaders. Therefore, the lack of research on the influence of diversity of the senior leadership level on the pace of transformation, with inclusivity of the diverse workforce of today, contributes to the literature review limitations. An opportunity arose for further research to be conducted, more specifically, within a South African context.

The next chapter will give rise to the research questions that arose out of the gap analysis from the literature review.

## CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH QUESTIONS

### 3.1 Introduction

Chapter 3 is an integration of the purpose of the research explained in Chapter 1 coupled with the literature review themes that emerged from Chapter 2.

Chapter 2 shows the varied views of traditional leadership and organisational approaches versus that which is required for the 21<sup>st</sup> century. The literature review showed that slow progress has been made on the pace of transformation at a senior leadership level to include marginalised groups in organisations. In order to compete aggressively and remain relevant in the Fourth Industrial Revolution, organisations need to utilise their diverse knowledge-based workforce fully. Current approaches used by organisations are not capable of taking organisations to the next level to compete in today's fast evolving world (Robertson & Byrne, 2016). If organisations continue at the current pace, then it would take decades longer than the World Economic Forum (2016) expectation of 84 years before significant levels of change towards true organisational inclusiveness of marginalised groups are achieved (Robertson & Byrne, 2016). This may result in a missed opportunity to maximise organisational performance.

Despite extensive research conducted on organisations showing that diversity at senior leadership level positively affects organisational financial performance, it is surprising that a significant leadership deficit towards marginalised groups still exists in the workplace, with white males still holding the top leadership positions (Dworkin, Maurer, & Schipani, 2012). Bierema (2016) revealed that, although women are certainly empowered to lead organisations, women may be disregarded for top leadership positions due to powerful stereotypical bias barriers that exist.

This research study intends to provide insight by answering the questions below. By interpreting the findings, organisational leaders can understand the key enablers and inhibitors for transforming the senior leadership team in a predominately male dominated environment. A diverse senior leadership can then, in turn, make the necessary changes required in organisational structure, processes and culture. Organisational leaders can determine which approach is best suited to their organisation as a progressive way forward thus leading to organisational performance improvement and the maintainance of relevance in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

## 3.2 Research questions

### Research question 1:

What influences today's leadership trends in the telecommunications industry?

### Research question 2:

What does a 21<sup>st</sup> century leader look like and what drives building this leader?

### Research question 3:

What motivates leadership to pursue transformation and inclusivity in the telecommunications industry?

### Research question 4:

How does the fast pace of transformational change demanded in the telecommunications industry compare to organisational design changes being implemented?

### Research question 5:

For an organisation operating in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, what are the risks of not driving transformation and inclusivity and what are the opportunities to drive transformation and inclusivity?

### Research question 6:

Is there alignment between organisational values and culture in the telecommunications industry and what is needed to build an inclusive culture for the 21<sup>st</sup> century?

## CHAPTER 4: METHODOLOGY

### 4.1 Introduction

The previous chapter introduced the research questions for this research study, interlinking them to the main research question on the role of leadership in actively pursuing transformation needed for today's diverse VUCA organisational world or conforming to the status quo of the past. This chapter explains the research methodology that was selected to answer the research questions and the main research question of this research. This chapter includes research design, population and unit of analysis, sampling method and sample size, data gathering process, data analysis approach as well as the limitations of the research.

### 4.2 Research method and design

The research design chosen was qualitative and an exploratory study in nature which led to an inductive approach that followed a bottom-up method. A qualitative research method was chosen for this research study as the researcher was trying to understand the context, by speaking to leaders who belong to the top management team in their natural environment, emphasising the human element aspect and enhancing the interpretation experience (Myers, 2009). Exploratory research was conducted to “seek new insights, ask new questions and to assess topics in a new light” (Saunders & Lewis, 2012, p.110) seeking general information to answer the research questions and to attain further knowledge and understanding (Saunders & Lewis, 2012). The inductive approach was used to test the theoretical proposition through a research strategy that has been designed for testing purposes (Saunders & Lewis, 2012). “Inductive reasoning is described as the logical process of establishing a general proposition on the basis of observation of particular facts” (Zikmund, Babin, Carr, & Griffin, 2012, p.44).

The researcher was fundamental in the qualitative research process as she received information and had to understand the context of the information in order to interpret the meaning (Suter, 2011). The use of semi-structured questions allowed the researcher to ask questions by following up on the conversation, thereby enhancing insight and meaning. The use of prompts helped to focus the discussion and enabled engagement with the participant through a two-way conversational flow.

The interpretivist research philosophy, based on reflection, was used. According to Williams and May (1996), the world is interpreted through schemas of the mind. As the researcher wanted to understand leadership and organisational culture in today's organisations, observation of the phenomena in their natural environment was important.

The researcher needed to be mindful of the manner in which the research was conducted as the researcher's systems of values, by which the researcher lives, may have influenced her point of view (Saunders & Lewis, 2012).

The mono-method was applied. Due to time and resource constraints, a cross-sectional study was performed. Saunders and Lewis (2012) suggested that this style be followed if data is collected from participants in only one short period in time.

Semi-structured face-to-face and one-on-one interviews were conducted as this allowed the researcher to engage with the individuals, to obtain their view or explanation as well as to observe their behaviour, which allowed the researcher to add meaning to the process (Yin, 2011). To increase validity and transparency as well as reduce bias, the interviews were recorded with permission and the interviews were then transcribed.

### **4.3 Population and unit of analysis**

#### **-Population**

Population refers to an entire collection of group members (Saunders & Lewis, 2012). The population for this research study consisted of the top management team members (C-suite) and senior management members, who are involved in organisational decision-making. The population, from the telecommunications industry, was based in Gauteng, as most of the head offices of telecommunications organisations are based there. The population was considered to be of high quality as it represented senior members of the top leadership team, who are highly respected within the industry, who possess vast knowledge and valuable experience, for example, group CEO, group chief financial officer, group chief strategy and transformation officer, group digital executive, subsidiary CEO, subsidiary chief strategy officer. The group organisations that participated in this research study represent organisations listed on the JSE.

According to South African Women in Leadership Census, South Africa is still without adequate representation of women in JSE listed organisations. Executive manager positions held by women could be surface level numbers that do not necessarily translate into influence. (Businesswomen's Association of South Africa, 2015). As white males still dominate the top management team of organisations, it was important to include the views of both males and females, to represent the differences in the top management team fully.

#### **-Units of analysis**

The units of analysis were the top management team members and senior management members in the telecommunications industry who are decision makers or who influence decisions in the organisation.

#### **4.4 Sampling method and sample size**

##### **-Sampling method**

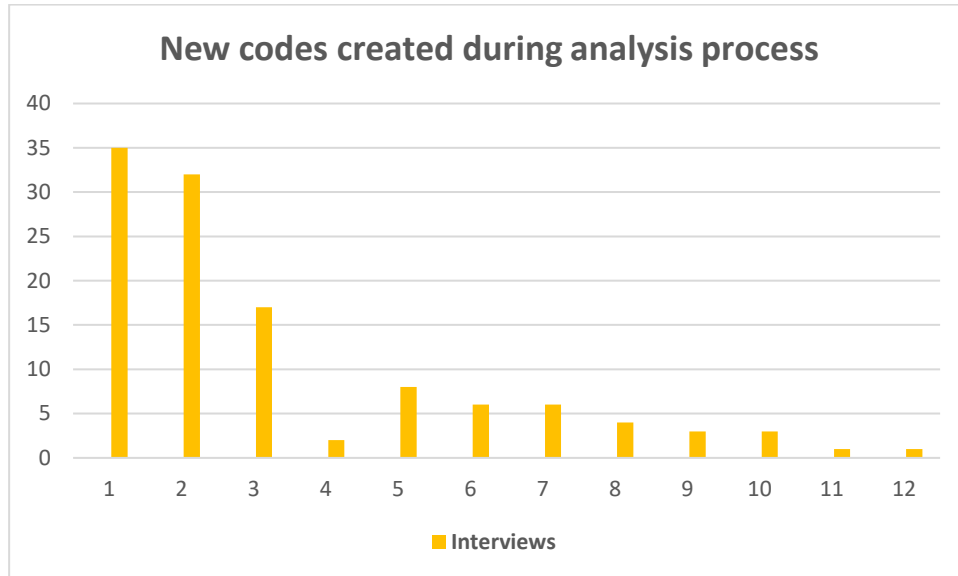
The sampling technique used was purposive sampling, a non-probability sampling method, as the researcher did not have access to the entire population. Purposive sampling enabled the use of judgement in selecting the sample, allowing choice for the participants to assist in answering the research question thereby meeting the objectives of the research study (Saunders & Lewis, 2012). Purposive sampling was used to obtain input to the research questions to understand the research topic, so that logical generalisations could be made (Saunders & Lewis, 2012).

The researcher had access to top management team members and senior management members in the telecommunications industry. The researcher has well established professional and personal networks in the telecommunications industry, as the researcher has been employed in the telecommunications industry for almost nine years and works directly with top management team members as well as senior management members.

##### **-Sample size**

There was a sample quota of 15 interviews due to time, cost and resource constraints however the quota was reduced to 12 interviews, after the researcher considered the redundancy of ideas as data saturation was reached with no new substantial insights further being developed during the interview process, as shown by Figure 4.1 below. According to Guest, Bunce and Johnson (2006), a minimum sample size of 12 interviews is suggested.

**Figure 4.1. New codes creating during analysis process**



#### 4.5 Data collection

**Table 4.1**

***Participants in the research study***

No.	Participant	Designation
1	Tumo	Group Chief Executive Office
2	Caren	Group Executive: Digital
3	Divya	Group Executive: Corporate Affairs
4	Mandisa	Executive: Consumer
5	Yusuf	Group Chief Financial Officer
6	Manoj	Chief Strategy Officer
7	Albert	Group Chief Strategy Officer
8	Sameera	Group Head of Internal Audit
9	Morris	Group Head of Finance
10	Layla	Group (Acting) Executive Finance
11	Raj	Group Head of Treasury
12	Bongani	Chief Executive Officer

The qualitative research was done through a combination of exploratory, semi-structured probing, open-ended questions in 11 face-to-face (one-on-one) interviews and one telephonic interview. Table 4.1 above lists the participants in the sample and their positions within the organisation. As confidentiality was assured, the names of the participants have been replaced with pseudonyms. Semi-structured interviews allowed for improvisation thereby contributing more meaning during the conversation (Myers, 2009). All interviews were held at a location and time convenient to the participants to reduce any inconvenience to them. Previously arranged interviews were rescheduled

upon the requests of the participants. One interview was conducted telephonically due to time constraints, as the researcher was unable to meet physically with the participant at the participant's head office during the allocated time slot due to work obligations. Confidentiality was offered to all participants in line with ethical conduct.

The entire interview process occurred over an eight-week period. The interview duration ranged from the shortest interview of just under 20 minutes to the longest interview of just over 70 minutes, with an average interview duration of 47 minutes.

The researcher contacted the identified candidates using established professional and personal networks, as the researcher has almost nine years' experience working with top management team members and senior management members within the telecommunications industry. The researcher built rapport with the candidates to ensure that an enabling environment supported the sharing of information for best results. This was done before, during and after the interview process as the researcher had access to the participants and either previously worked or currently works with them. The researcher was aware of the candidates' body language, tone, emotional state and language used. The researcher knew how to respond to the candidates' behaviours thereby building trust.

#### **4.5.1 Data collection tool and interview guide design**

The use of an interview schedule (Appendix 3) guided the interview process that ensured consistency in the data collection process (Zikmund, 2003). According to Myers (2013), "primary data adds richness and credibility to qualitative manuscripts" (p.120). The measurement instrument used was observation and responses to in-depth probing open-ended questions from interviews, which flowed from an interview schedule generated with a purpose to offset interview bias limitations. The questions asked in the interview stemmed from the research questions and the main research question to ensure consistency of the topic and the literature reviewed. The interview questions were aligned to the research questions, as shown in Table 4.2 below:

**Table 4.2**  
***Research questions and Interview questions alignment to theory***

Research question	Interview question	#	Theory
1. What influences today's leadership trends in the telecommunications industry?	What model of leadership fits your organisation well, for example, transformational, transactional or servant? Why is this leadership style important?	1	Leadership
2. What does a 21st century leader look like and what drives building this leader?	What will it take to be the CEO or Board Chair of this organisation in five years and how are you building this leader?	3	
	Do you think that there could be any other factor, besides legislation and business mandate, that drives your behaviour? For example, do you have a personal passion for transformation or gender diversity that goes beyond policy pressures, logic and economics?	6	
3. What motivates leadership to pursue transformation and inclusivity in the telecommunications industry?	What priority does promoting an inclusive transformative environment take on the strategic agenda? For example, promoting women and people of different races to positions of leadership	4	Target quotas and Diversity programs
	Who gets measured on the progress of this and how is this done?	5	Target quotas and Diversity programs
4. How does the fast pace of transformational change demanded in the telecommunications industry compare to organisational design changes being implemented?	If you are committed to change, what design changes have you implemented and how are they being measured?	8	Leadership; Diversity programs; Change management
5. For an organisation operating in the 21st century, what are the risks of not driving	What do you think are the implications of not driving transformation and inclusivity in your organisation and for the industry?	9	Leadership; Change

transformation and inclusivity and what are the opportunities to drive transformation and inclusivity?	What do you believe your organisation and the industry should be doing to drive transformation and inclusivity?	10	management and strategic change
6. Is there alignment between organisational values and culture and what is needed to build an inclusive culture for the 21st century?	How do you perceive the alignment of the organisational values to the current organisational culture?	2	Organisational behaviour and culture; Barriers
	As a C-suite leader, you are the primary role model and must stay involved in driving an inclusive environment. Statistically, the telecommunications industry is male dominated. How does this impact building an inclusive culture?	7	

The researcher avoided compartmentalising the interviewee's responses as the interview guide was developed in a manner that encouraged open discussion and enabled sharing. According to Denzin and Lincoln (2005), use of an interview guide ensures consistency throughout the process and this improves the quality of the research. A high level brief was shared with all participants prior to the interview.

Each interview commenced with the researcher explaining the purpose of the research and obtaining the participants' written consent (attached as Appendix 2) that was done voluntarily, and confidentiality was ensured. The participants were aware that they had the option to withdraw from the interview at any stage without any penalty. Permission was requested to record each interview and two recording devices were used throughout the interview process. The recorded interviews were checked for audio quality after each session. All interviews were stored electronically, as records, immediately after the interview.

The use of an outsourced transcription service provider, to convert the audio record into a verbatim text record, was used to assist during the transcription process. The typed records in Microsoft Word were then stored electronically immediately after being received. According to Carcary (2011), transcribed data improves validity and enhances transparency of the researchers' interpretation. The transcriptions, which went through a first quality control check by the outsourced transcription service provider, were then proof-read and checked by the researcher, as a second quality control check. This was done by listening to each of the audio recordings against the transcriptions, recalling the interview to mind as well as consulting notes taken by researcher during the interview process. Spelling errors, for example, were corrected and any discrepancies were identified. The researcher listened to the audio recordings several times to transcribe sections that were labelled inaudible by the transcriber. In a few instances, the researcher was unsuccessful in meaningfully transcribing the inaudible section and therefore left it marked as inaudible in the transcripts. As the researcher listened to the audio recordings, sections identified as important were highlighted in Microsoft Word transcriptions, due to the tone of the participant and reflection of the interview.

#### **4.6 Data analysis**

Qualitative data was gathered during the interview stage. Once the groundwork process was completed as mentioned above, the data mining process of the transcripts commenced with analysis using ATLAS.ti software, a computer aided qualitative data analysis software. Via editing and coding was used to organise the data into codes and themes, ensuring that suitable data was converted into a comprehensive format. The

data gathered was analysed in a manner that required the researcher to be reflective and interpretative, identifying common insights and themes.

The transcribed data was reviewed line-by-line and words, phrases or concepts were meaningfully coded in relation to the research questions, which is a process of defining data (Suter, 2011). Using ATLAS.ti, an initial list of 176 codes was established and this was finally refined to 118 codes by merging codes that were similar and deleting duplicated codes. Saldana (2015) found that coding is affected by the researcher's subjectivities and this influence made the process judgemental.

The finalising and sorting of the codes led to the emergence of themes. The coding process was a time intensive exercise that required much refinement. The coding process consisted of numerous reviews to refine the raw data into meaningful data and the creation of themes (Saldana, 2015). The themes were evaluated against the research questions.

#### **4.7 Data validity and reliability**

According to Saunders and Lewis (2012), research validity is defined as “the extent to which (a) data collection method or methods accurately measure what they were intended to measure and (b) the research findings are really about what they profess to be about” (p.127) and research reliability is defined as “the extent to which data collection methods and analysis procedures will produce consistent findings” (p.128).

The nature of qualitative research is subjective and open to bias. To mitigate some of the risk, the interview guide was designed to enable a semi-structured approach, allowing for ease of discussion and addressing any points that needed clarification or greater understanding.

#### **4.8 Research limitations**

The sample size may not have been representative of the population and the researcher acknowledges that the selection was based on purposive sampling, which may have led to bias on part of researcher and the participants (Saunders & Lewis, 2012). The sample was limited to the major telecommunications industries in South Africa, with a preference for Gauteng location based organisations due to resource, time and cost constraints. Heterogeneity of the sample could have brought about more differences.

A qualitative study may lead to subjectivity due to the interpretation of the researcher, past experience and frame of reference. The researcher is familiar with most of the participants as the researcher either previously worked or continues to work with some

of them. The researcher may have had some element of bias as she discontinued employment at one telecommunications organisation in March 2017 and commenced employment at another telecommunications organisation in April 2017. Conversation may have been influenced by the researcher's experiences at these organisations.

The researcher does not have in-depth experience in conducting interviews for a qualitative research study, which may have resulted in sub-quality data extraction from the participants.

Due to the sensitivity of the topic, bias and defensiveness may have occurred. Candidates could have portrayed "politically correct" images, considering the country in which the organisation is registered and because the state is a shareholder in each of the companies listed on the JSE. The participants may inadvertently have portrayed the organisation they work for, or even themselves, in a more positive manner or, alternatively, the participants may have been wary of being completely open and honest, knowing that the information will be made available and shared in the public domain.

The outcome of the research was dependent on the quality of the information provided by the interviewees. Trustworthiness is paramount in qualitative research and therefore also poses as a limitation if the character of the candidate comes into question. Short interviews, of less than an hour's duration, can be described as an initial interview, therefore a more comprehensive study should be undertaken.

Resource, cost and time constraints could have led to distortion of the researchers' interpretation of responses as well as impact the responses received, thereby leading to incomplete data.

#### **4.9 Summary**

The research methodology and design chosen for the research study was discussed in this chapter. Information regarding the selection of participants, the rationale of the participants, the data collection process, the data analytics performed as well as limitations of the research study was provided.

The next chapter presents a detailed description of the research study findings. Insight is provided on the pace of transformation in the top management team in the telecommunications industry on the elements of leadership, the operating environment and organisational culture.

## CHAPTER 5: RESULTS

### 5.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the results of the research study in accordance with the research questions introduced in Chapter 3. The interview questions were mapped to the research questions ensuring consistency between literature, research methodology and the research questions. The research sample consisted of 12 participants in a top or senior management team in the telecommunications industry. The analysed research findings of the data obtained in the in-depth one-on-one interviews, 11 face-to-face and one telephonic interview are provided in this section.

### 5.2 Observations during the interview process

In the shortest interview of just under 20 minutes, the researcher noted that the participant was visibly tired. The researcher then enquired if the participants' health was compromised to which she acknowledged that there was a possible health concern as she had relocated back to South Africa from a country within Africa eight weeks prior to the scheduled interview, moving from a hot climate to the South African winter. The researcher then enquired whether the participant would like to reschedule the interview to allow her time to rest and heal to ensure that she was fully engaged in the interview. The participant however declined the researcher's suggestion as the interview had already been rescheduled at least four times previously by the participant. This led the researcher to observe that the participant, as well as her family, consisting of school-going age children, was still adjusting to settling in South Africa. It was also observed that the participant had recently been appointed as the only female member on the executive committee team and that she does not merely work Monday to Friday, 8am to 5pm, as meetings were arranged at 7:30am or 5:30pm at the participant's head office. The participant's engagement is evidenced by the number of new codes generated in Figure 4.1 in Chapter 4.

The researcher noticed that another participant also looked visibly tired but the participant's health did not seem compromised. The researcher then enquired, as per the previous experience, prior to the commencement of the interview, if the participant would like to reschedule the interview to ensure that he was fully engaged, but the participant declined. He acknowledged that, although he was tired, this was mainly due to just completing a challenging meeting with his manager, a top management leader. The participant then stated that he would spend another weekend working, yet again. This led the researcher to observe that the participant has a heavy workload that cannot

be completed in normal Monday to Friday, 8am to 5pm traditional working conditions, supporting the VUCA working environment for knowledge workers, as well as the amount of energy consumed during change.

Meetings had to be rescheduled on more than three occasions for four participants, due to urgent work deliverables required at the last minute, once again supporting the VUCA working environment.

The researcher also observed that, although all organisations verbalise the inclusion of disabled workers in the workforce, not all organisations have fully embraced or adapted for the inclusion of disabled workers. For example, the main toilets of the some of the organisations were standard toilets and were not modified to accommodate disabled workers, with the disabled toilets being placed at a different location to the main toilet. All organisations visited were multi-levelled. Other than the lifts and stairs, there were no visible ramps for wheelchair access, inhibiting access of movement from one floor level to another for disabled workers other than the lifts, which, the researcher observed, occasionally underwent maintenance during the traditional office working hours. Not all the lift buttons showed braille writing for the visually impaired nor did all the lifts have sound features for the hearing impaired. It was observed that disabled workers consisted mostly of the cleaning staff or junior administration staff.

Although the organisations verbalise promoting options of workplace flexibility, for example, work from home, it was observed that the large parking areas of the organisations were occupied at full capacity, supporting physical presence at the office for the majority of the workers.

### **5.3 Presentation of results**

The research question results presented in Chapter 3 have been mapped to the interview questions as shown in Table 4.2 of this document. In most quotations, the actual words spoken by the participants are used in text and therefore may not be grammatically correct. Themes emerged from the codes, or constructs, however the focus of the interpretation was on the topped ranked constructs, based on interview frequency, as well as unique codes or themes that emerged from the data.

### **5.4 Results for research question 1**

**Research Question 1: What influences today's leadership trends in the telecommunications industry?**

Research question 1 was intended to ascertain from leadership members the style of leadership that is used in their organisation and why this style of leadership is important. The interview question was designed to reflect on the current leadership status as well as what drives it.

**Table 5.1**  
***Results for influences of today's leadership trends***

Rank	Construct	Interview frequency	Theme
1	Design changes	12	Environment
2	KPI	10	Influence leadership
2	Transformational leadership	10	Leadership
3	Change management	9	Environment
3	Changing environment	9	Environment
3	Diversity opportunity	9	Importance of transformation
3	Tick box	9	Influence leadership
4	Authentic	8	Leadership
4	Alignment - values, culture, strategy	8	Enablers of transformation
4	Employee engagement - participation, collaboration, inclusion	8	Enablers of transformation
4	Financial impact	8	Importance of transformation
4	Relevance	8	Importance of transformation
5	Combination of leadership styles	7	Leadership
5	Servant leadership	7	Leadership
5	Energy	7	Enablers of transformation
5	Generational	7	Generational gap
5	Legislation	7	Influence leadership
5	Live the values	7	Enablers of transformation
5	Misalignment - between values and actions	7	Inhibitors of transformation
6	Apartheid	6	Apartheid
6	Employee engagement - communication	6	Enablers of transformation
7	Customer centric	5	Model
7	Right thing to do	5	Importance of transformation

Participants responded in different ways in answering the question. For example, a newly appointed Group CEO used a form of a narrative, detailing the state that the organisation was in when the participant recently joined the organisation in comparison to the way that the participant wishes to transform the organisation. Participants who have been in organisations for a long tenure described their journey in relation to organisational changes.

The views of the participants were mixed, with transformational leadership, authentic leadership and servant leadership ranking 2, 4 and 5 respectively, with an interview frequency rate of 83%, 67% and 58% respectively. However, having a combination of leadership styles also featured prominently in discussions, with an interview frequency rate of 58%.

Yusuf: *“Look, I think that there are different leadership styles for different organisations and different levels of maturity. I **don’t think to expect and pretend that one leadership style is applicable and relevant in all circumstances, I think that would be naïve.**”*

Mandisa: *“For example where we are, definitely the **transformational** would be more important - but ultimately what we need to be **aiming towards is service, which is really what servant leadership speaks about.**”*

The changing environment of the telecommunications industry was acknowledged by 75% of the participants.

Caren: *“Let me just say in telecommunications I think one of the biggest things we deal with is transformation and it’s almost that you don’t have a choice, if you just think of **digital disruption** now or digital disruptive technologies now, for you to stay relevant you have to transform. Having said that, I think it is very difficult for an organisation to transform.”*

Three participants mentioned that a differential factor is what leadership should exhibit versus what leadership does exhibit.

Morris: *“I think you know, the issue for me is clearly in any environment, **employees will have views** about how things should be done and those views would be divergent and diverse in nature and I think the question you are asking is, **are those views being heard by the leadership and what do they do when they hear those views?**”*

This confirmed that leadership is a complex relationship between a leader and the followers and it is not a static relationship as the organisation matures into the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

## 5.5 Results for research question 2

### Research Question 2: What does a 21<sup>st</sup> century leader look like and what drives building this leader?

Research Question 2 encouraged participants to share their views on the future leader of the organisation and to obtain insights on whether this leader was being built internally. The two interview questions were designed to encourage the participants to be forward looking as well as to ascertain the root cause of what drives the behaviour of leadership in promoting transformation.

**Table 5.2**  
**Results for 21<sup>st</sup> century leader**

Rank	Construct	Interview frequency	Theme
1	Changing environment	6	Changing environment
2	Business acumen	4	Characteristic traits for 21 <sup>st</sup> century leader
2	Embrace change	4	Characteristic traits
2	Lack of succession planning	4	Lack of building future leader internally
3	Digital disruption	3	Changing environment
3	Dynamic	3	Characteristic traits
3	Energy	3	Characteristic traits
3	Lack of building leadership pipeline	3	Lack of building future leader internally
3	Servant leader	3	Characteristic traits
3	Authentic	3	Characteristic traits
4	Balance	2	Characteristic traits
4	Competitive advantage	2	Characteristic traits
4	Customer centric	2	Characteristic traits
4	Ecosystem	2	Characteristic traits
4	Education	2	Characteristic traits
4	Ethics	2	Characteristic traits
4	Inspire	2	Characteristic traits
4	Lead by example	2	Characteristic traits
4	Share info	2	Characteristic traits
4	Technical skills	2	Characteristic traits
4	Take risks	2	Characteristic traits

4	Transformational	2	Characteristic traits
4	Visionary	2	Characteristic traits

Fifty percent of the participants acknowledged that organisations operate in a changing environment. A combination of many diverse characteristic traits is required for the 21<sup>st</sup> century leader, as evidenced by the views below, one of which included the response of the Group Chief Strategy Officer:

Albert: *“The new leader or CEO would have to face a lot of challenges and it’s always different inheriting or being appointed at a company that is kind of very stable and things are working well and it’s a well organised, well-oiled machine versus a company that is maybe slightly in distress, having to transform itself, having to reinvent itself, having to change its workforce, having to become more productive, efficient, customer focused, taking old legacy system costs out. So the leader itself, whether it’s a him or a her, has to be very **dynamic and able to fully embrace change**, and have the ability to deal with that, and be inspirational because you can’t change an organisation if you’re not really **inspirational and lead by example.**”*

Divya: *So, I think in the next five years, the CEOs need to really be more **principle based and be genuine and authentic**. And what does that mean? For me, an authentic leader will be someone as, I said earlier, inside the room. Someone who is confident, but deeply humble. Someone who is assertive but not arrogant. Someone who has got the **vision**, is **courageous** to make the tough calls and someone who is connecting and who can **connect with people**, and to connect with people you have got to show your vulnerable side too.*

Manoj: *“The next person who comes would have to be at least **ambidextrous**, so understanding the business well, how you increase growth, and understanding the network because that’s what we sell.”*

It was interesting to note that 25% of the participants, of which two-thirds were female, mentioned energy as a factor that will play a part in a description of the future leader. The two participants that the researcher observed to be tired and who acknowledged their state, as mentioned above, did not mention energy as a factor.

The participant responses for specifically stating the lack of succession planning and lack of building a leadership pipeline were 33% and 25% respectively, contributing to whether the future leader was being built internally.

**Table 5.3**

**Results for whether organisational efforts were personal or forced by legislation**

Rank	Construct	Interview frequency	Theme
1	Personal passion/mission	6	Individual influence
2	Authentic	5	Individual influence
2	Tick box/compliance/legislation	5	Legislative influence
3	Stereotypes	3	Barriers of transformation
3	Actively try to break stereotypes	3	Change management
3	Right thing to do	3	Importance of transformation
3	Transformational leadership	3	Individual influence
4	Tokenism	2	Barriers of transformation
4	Financial impact	2	Importance of transformation
4	Diversity opportunity	2	Importance of transformation
4	Design changes	2	Change management

From the results displayed in the table, the highest frequency construct indicates that 50% of the participants have a personal passion for promoting transformation, closely followed by the second highest construct of authenticity, with an even split between male and female participants. Of the male participants, 75% were represented by CEOs, and their views are articulated below. Forty-two percent of participants believe that authenticity plays a role in driving behaviours. It is interesting to note that 42% of the participants believe that legislation is a key driver of organisational behaviour promoting transformation.

Tumo: *“Being born in South Africa, it has a lot of influence on me and it comes from an environment where, in the world that I live in, **nothing much is expected from people like me, black people**, there is nothing much. Whether you go to Europe, whether you go to the US, or elsewhere, it is just the same, there is very little that is expected from us. We are expected to be the takers, the consumers, not producers, you know. So because of that, **I have my own personal mission in life** ... I want to always be that person who, when people look at me, you can never really know, **because I exist, you cannot generalise about black people**, because I exist, you know what I mean.”*

Bongani: *“It goes back to what I was saying, if it’s legislation we just tick. If it’s strategic we just know it’s going to be measured ‘cause those that look into how I perform they will actually check it. Remember **legislation, we tick for the authority and then strategic imperative, we tick for the board** and everybody else so we still complying a little bit. **But for it to succeed, there’s got to be that personal passion, it’s got to resonate with you as a leader.**”*

Albert: "... the **business imperatives** and the **legislative requirements**, like I said, are **not necessarily mutually exclusive**, and the more you can find a way of **connecting it to each other**, in other words, comply with legislation but in a manner that is sustainable, and promote your own commercial objectives. I think it becomes, I'll call it, a **competitive advantage**. Again, I think one must go beyond the letter of the law of just mere compliance. I think if there's a culture of **empowerment**, of diversity and sharing of skills and knowledge, if that is the culture, which, again, stems from the top often, it's better than just mandatory requirements, and like I said, I **embrace it**."

Forty-two percent of the participants made reference to the tick box, compliance and legislation driving behaviour.

Yusuf: "... I think, **as a country** and as an economy, we have too many people who **don't see it as a priority** or play lip service to it as a priority and I think until ... I don't think we must expect it to become the number one priority, I think what we must be pushing for is that **it must become a share priority, it must become as important at EBIDTA margin**, as important as the share price because if it becomes on that level, I think it's a major step forward as compared to what it is now ..."

Two-thirds and 100% of the participants who referenced stereotypes and tokenism were female. Their views are expressed below:

Caren: "Sometimes **at exco, I was the only woman present. So I'm used to having a fight** for my place in the sun."

Layla: "One thing I need to point out, on that point right, something that's interesting; based on my interactions with them and what I've noticed, even though there's three females on that level, I think, in my opinion **they are still very passive, in yielding to the existing system**. 'Cause what I've picked up is that they are still hesitant to actually go against, to raise them frankly and to go against what is being driven down from the existing culture. So that also, it goes back to sustainability, you can't just get females there, however we need to get the right type of females, not just females who are just going to assimilate into the existing system. But you need females who are actually strong and committed to changing the system, to transforming the system, and who aren't scared to drive that change. That's important, ja."

## 5.6 Results for research question 3

### Research question 3: What motivates leadership to pursue transformation and inclusivity in the telecommunications industry?

Research question 3 allowed participants to transparently engage on the current drivers of what advances transformation to the organisational strategic agenda and who is ultimately responsible for transformation. The interview questions were intended to link the verbalised organisational responses regarding the state of priority given to the element of transformation driven by leadership action to the next research question, regarding design changes implemented to ascertain congruency.

**Table 5.4**

***Results for strategic agenda drivers regarding transformation***

Rank	Construct	Interview frequency	Theme
1	Combination - legislation, business, personal	4	Combination
1	Legislation	4	Legislation
2	BBBEE	3	Legislation
2	EE	3	Legislation
2	Should be strategic	3	Ideally drive
2	Tick box/compliance	3	Legislation
2	Should have genuine desire	3	Ideally drive
2	Tokenism	3	Barriers
3	Balance	2	Ideally drive
3	Stereotype	2	Barriers
4	Last leg should be legislation	1	Ideally drive
4	Macro-economic indicators	1	Ideally drive
4	Socio-economic indicators	1	Ideally drive
4	Quality feeder into industry	1	Ideally drive
4	Not on the strategic agenda	1	Not on the agenda
4	Global example	1	Global examples
4	Old boys' club	1	Barriers
4	Apartheid	1	Apartheid
4	Clone	1	Barriers
4	Diversity opportunity	1	Ideally drive

Although 8% of participants acknowledged that the last leg of pursuing transformation should be driven by legislation, 33% and 25% of participants acknowledged that legislation and compliance currently drives transformation in their organisations.

Divya: “I think it is **now taking more space on their strategic agenda** but I think partly **driven because of legislation** as opposed to being driven because it is the right thing to do.”

Yusuf: “**I still think it’s window dressing**, I don’t think it’s as yet seen as an imperative priority that can potentially be transformational. I think that’s where the opportunity is.”

Layla: “I do think that there is an approach to drive the promotion or the appointment of previously ... disadvantaged individuals, like women. More specifically, African women, ja. But it needs to be implemented properly, I think, as well. It should not just be a tick boxing, tick boxing exercise ... you’ve been brought in as a, you know, to, to get the statistics right as a, as a black female, to promote the diversity so that a box can be ticked. But overall, **the whole system is not really accommodative to you ... whole system is still based on very patriarchal, westernised, white male system**. And you have to like adjust yourself, and bend yourself in order to flourish in a system like that.”

Stereotypes, the clone concept and tokenism featured in the participants’ responses by 25% and 17% respectively. The window dressing, as referenced above by a participant, was further elaborated by a Group CEO providing deep insight on the highly successful yet superficial level of transformation driven by legislation versus true organisational transformation, with a reference made to living during apartheid days.

Tumo: “I mean our score, look at **our BEE score is looking great**, we are BEE level 2, but you have this horror that I just shared with you, how does that connect with that. So you have a BEE level 2 with a company that has really not changed. So it is really not about that, we have ticked that box, we are looking fantastic – **but you come here you think you are in Free State**.”

Bongani: “We know that telecommunications is predominantly **dominated by males** and, in the process, it’s historically been **white males** and in the process we started including **black males** and you find that the women aspect of other marginalised groups, whether they are people with disabilities or whatever, has been coming out slowly in trickles. So if you want to have the inclusive transformation, you need to prioritise those groupings that have been marginalised because, for argument’s sake, if we’re predominantly male and bring in one woman and we just do it as a box ticker and say we have one woman, the one thing that we’re going to do because we don’t prioritise it is that the environment that we’ve created for that one woman to operate, **is still**

*predominantly a male environment and we want this person to be a male. Maybe they tell you, you are a female but you need to be hard core, be hard, or whatever and what we have done to create that is that we've taken away some of those values and skills that could have liberated this person because **we want them to be a clone** of what they are not."*

**Table 5.5**  
**Results for measurement of transformation**

Rank	Construct	Interview frequency	Theme
1	KPI	10	Measurement
2	Exco gets measured	5	Responsibility
3	CEOs get measured	3	Responsibility
3	Intangible asset monitor	3	Measurement
3	HR gets measured	3	Responsibility
4	Uncertain	2	Responsibility

Eighty-three percent of participants acknowledged that organisational key performance indicators (KPIs) was a measurement of transformation, as shown below by a response of a CEO, with a combination of responses that the executive committee (exco), CEOs or the HR executive in the top management team are ultimately responsible for transformation within the organisation. Seventeen percent of the participants, represented by members of the senior management team, were uncertain who is ultimately rated for the transformation.

Bongani: *"If you don't put it in the strategic agenda, and you don't put measurements, then it's not going to be done. For me, I still believe in the old adage that if you can't measure it, then don't do it because then it becomes something that we talk about but we don't measure frequently like your sales and your cost so it's got to be measured as well ... you've got to link it with some of the things that drive people with things like rewards because, if it's strategic, we all share the benefit and the pain as well so **it's got to be measured even at exco level** – there needs to be linking."*

However, there were conflicting views of whether tangible KPIs were the best measure as transformation contains intangible elements, as shown by a response by the Group Chief Strategy Officer:

Albert: *"I think it's measured in different ways. I think all leaders are assessed against these measures and what is your transformational agenda and what*

*your contributions are, and just, by the way, I think there are different levels of it. There is stuff that is maybe you're more visible or transparent. It's very easy to say I've got so many Black females, I've got so many White males, Coloureds, Indians, whatever, that is easy, quantifiable and measurable. I think **what is more challenging is the attitude of leaders and their behaviours towards this diversity**. Are they progressive in the sense that they encourage transfer skills and empowerment, what is their role in terms of coaching and mentoring? So these are the kind of soft things, if I can put it like that, that are often **not as tangible and visible**, but probably, in my mind, should carry more because that is ultimately how you shape a new generation of leaders...It's not through appointing somebody in leadership position but it's really the empowerment, the coaching, giving them ownership and accountability."*

## **5.7 Results for research question 4**

**Research question 4: How does the fast pace of transformational change demanded in the telecommunications industry compare to organisational design changes being implemented?**

This question allowed participants to reflect on their independent actions as leaders in promoting transformational design changes at the rapid pace required in the telecommunications industry thereby aligning with the organisational agenda.

**Table 5.6**

**Results for organisational design changes to promote transformation demanded in the telecommunications industry**

Rank	Construct	Interview frequency	Theme
1	Design changes – e.g. reverse mentoring, induction programme, female leadership development program, ENPS, recruitment, female appointments to exco by CEO, women network forum, women in waiting program	6	Design changes
2	Change management	3	Design changes
2	Not been prioritised/Not done anything substantial	3	Design changes
3	Diversity opportunity	2	Business case
3	Changes made to operating model	2	Design changes
3	Stereotypes	2	Barriers
4	Strategy break-away session	1	Design changes
4	Open discussions	1	Design changes
4	Employee engagement	1	Design changes
4	Authentic	1	Leadership

A combination of design changes implemented were mentioned by 50% of the participants, for example, an induction program, a female leadership development program, the recruitment process, female exco appointments made by the CEO, employee net promotor score, women in network forum and women in waiting program. However, 25% admitted that design changes have not been prioritised, of which 75% represented the top management team, whilst another 25% of participants admitted that change management was a key leadership skill needed for sustainable design changes.

Divya: “I headed a **women network forum**, and we set this up because we wanted to see what we can do around making value propositions for women in the work environment. Work for them and get feedback from them, for women who are in those positions where, they, you know, they want to be heard, they want to have a voice and an opportunity. Ehhhhm, similarly the company is doing a quick programme on looking at women who are not in the organisation, to see how they can bring them into the organisation. it is called **Women-in-waiting** programme.”

Caren: “I believe very, very strongly in **behavioural change management**. I think it’s a key skill any leader should have and any C-suite or executive or senior manager should have. I was fortunate to be trained formally in behavioural

*change management and I still use the principles, even in my day-to-day engagement with the team and in my day-to-day management.”*

Yusuf: ***“I’m as guilty as everybody else, I don’t think I’ve done anything demonstrably different or seismic that’s made a massive change ... I would not pretend to be ahead of the curve.”***

Mandisa: ***“To be honest the design implementations are something that I have not prioritised in the last month. They were actually not upheld as priorities.”***

Yusuf: ***“I don’t want to say things like programmes, because those are not necessarily sustainable”***

Raj: ***“... I mean leadership have recognised in order to drive the organisational change, they need the type of people that can do that – meaning that they are not people biased by their legacy ...”***

Bongani: ***“The previous years we had people saying we need diversity, so we need to have a female exco member, what do we do? We go and recruit someone and we make them our exco member chief of capital, you understand, and after a while, we look at ... so what I’m saying is that we tend to classify certain functions and we believe that women can only do better in those functions and that, in itself, is not right ... being at a co-ed school sitting at the same next desk as a lady who actually beats me at mathematics and getting higher grades and because they’re clever and they work hard or whatever and then when I get into the leadership, I think that they can only be confined to these things, it’s inappropriate, it’s not right. All these people, when I was in class with them, they showed certain capabilities of why they’re capable of doing certain things, it’s not like they only passed English literature and they couldn’t pass physical science and pass mathematics and all that, they still all those things and in flying colours then you go and get into an engineering class or whatever class and you find that they still do the same. What makes us think that when they come to the organisation they’re going to be confined to certain functions? Why do we say these are hard core functions like you are the head of engineering or design and it’s only males and then we get an HR person or a marketing person to be female? I don’t think it’s right.”***

The researcher went to the organisation’s website to follow up on the diversity on the exco team as referenced by the CEO. It was noted that two out of eight exco members

are female, which equates to 25%. However, the positions held by the two female exco members represent Human Capital and Marketing.

## 5.8 Results for research question 5

**Research question 5: For an organisation operating in the 21<sup>st</sup> century – what are the risks of not driving transformation and inclusivity and what are the opportunities to drive transformation and inclusivity?**

This research question sought to determine the views of leadership on the implications of not driving transformation in the telecommunications industry. The follow-on question then sought to establish if leadership understood the risk of not driving transformation within their organisation then conversely what action did leadership acknowledge was key to actively drive the demanded transformation within their industry.

**Table 5.7**

***Results for implications of not driving transformation***

Rank	Construct	Interview frequency	Theme
1	Financial impact	8	Negative consequence
1	Risk of becoming irrelevant	8	Negative consequence
2	Stakeholders	3	Stakeholders
2	Diversity opportunity	3	Positive consequence
3	Customer centric	2	Stakeholders
3	Misalignment between values and culture	2	Inhibitor of transformation
4	Purpose	1	Positive consequence
4	Relevance	1	Positive consequence
4	Open discussions	1	Enablers of transformation
4	Sharing best practice with the industry	1	Enablers of transformation
4	Consumerism	1	Stakeholders
4	Competitive advantage	1	Positive consequence
4	Global examples	1	Global examples

67% of the participants agreed that the organisation will be negatively impacted financially with the risk of becoming irrelevant. This was followed by second ranked indicators where 25% of participants agreed that stakeholders will be negatively impacted and the diversity opportunity, that could provide competitive advantage, will be foregone. 8% of the participants referenced consumerism, as organisational stakeholders now have choice and can easily influence the local and global communities through social media, and referenced positive international initiatives, such as Google

beginning to build their sustainable diverse talented pipeline at the recruitment phase and the SAP CEO also trying to initiate sustainable change.

Divya: *“I think we are a fast changing world, in a fast changing world, **social media is very, very active, everyone is a journalist.** People will start making decisions on whether they will buy your products or not ... so I think if you don’t drive transformation, **you are going to be left out** and ultimately customers will start making choices. And why would customers make these choices today? Because there is more information available to them, and **they can make more informed decisions about** who they want to, you know, **who’s products and services they want to be part of.**”*

Mandisa: *“**I think that is huge**, hey, because, over time, you are needing to see a growth trajectory for digital services and if we didn’t have something like a pull and push, **you wouldn’t actually have the capability.**”*

Raj: *“**We run the risk of becoming obsolete, we become irrelevant** and, as a result, business declines, we might not have a business one day.”*

Yusuf: *“I think this industry runs the **risk of becoming less relevant** if it’s not careful because I do see other industries potentially starting to transform because they are having to transform because they’ve run out of growth quicker than this industry has. So this industry runs the **risk of being left behind** and having to play catch up in this important space if it doesn’t get its act together on this thing quite quickly.”*

**Table 5.8**  
**Results for action to drive transformation**

Rank	Construct	Interview frequency	Theme
1	Open discussions	6	Enablers
2	Design changes	5	Design changes
3	Authentic	4	Enablers
3	Change management	4	Design changes
3	Genuine desire	4	Enablers
4	Sharing best practice with the industry	3	Sharing best practice
4	Quality feeder into the industry	3	Education
4	Education	3	Education
5	Apartheid	2	Apartheid
5	Right thing to do	2	Enablers
5	KPI	2	Inhibitor
5	Misalignment between values and actions	2	Inhibitor
6	Lack of openness to discuss impact of apartheid	1	Inhibitor
6	Tokenism	1	Inhibitor
6	Accountability	1	Enablers
6	Fair pay	1	Design changes
6	Training	1	Design changes
6	Capability building	1	Education
6	Public-private partnership	1	Education
6	Live the values	1	Enablers

50% of the participants agreed that open discussions need to occur and that in South Africa sensitivity still exists in openly discussing the impact of apartheid. 42% agreed that design changes need to be more aggressive to actively drive transformation within the industry. 33% believe that sustainable transformation will only truly be attained if there is a genuine desire to actively drive sustainable transformation. Best practice, which does not currently occur, should also be shared and promoted within the industry. 25% believed that a collaborative focus on education within the country was needed to transform the industry, as the secondary school student feed into tertiary education which then feeds into the industry workforce.

*Tumo: "I think, for me, the fact that we are having these **openly discussions**, I think that's the first thing. I just don't have a problem to have these discussions, **I stand up there, I have it, I talk about it**. And people are starting to become more comfortable, **I also refer to myself as the 'darkie'**, so for me as a 'darkie' they were laughing, how can you refer to yourself like that? I mean, when I look that, they have never said, but when I look at their faces they are starting to*

*become comfortable, there is nothing, I am black, he is black, so what is the problem in having that discussion? And then we are **starting to have that openness and that is important in starting to move us forward**. The problem is that we are not moving forward because we are not creating the spaces to discuss these things and why these things are important.”*

Manoj: *“I’m giving a talk in MyBroadband, I did one at GIBS as well, and we talked about capability building and there’s this thing about build and buy. I’m very, very clear about this, you have to have a good balance between **how do you buy the right skills for today, while you invest in the skills for tomorrow**, and pointing a finger at government only or public only or private only, I think it doesn’t work ... **Education** is another important thing and I think it’s important to understand, do we have the right teachers teaching the students, and is the curriculum still relevant to what they need for tomorrow? As industry, I think we need to play a part in it, we can’t just leave it to the educators.”*

Sameera: *“**There needs to be acknowledgement that we aren’t driving transformation and inclusivity**... I think if there isn’t that desire to drive transformation and inclusivity, I think that needs to be communicated, because then you know the organisation that you are working in, you can’t be having this confused identity. It’s either you want to drive or you don’t. If you don’t want to, that is fine.”*

Raj: *“**Drive it! Go and do it!** We can talk about policies but the policies ... we can all reference BEE but if you’re sitting in a country that doesn’t have the past that we have, if you’re in Europe or England, you don’t have a BEE code to guide you and then the question is what do we do and it comes down to doing the right thing and by that I mean, don’t be held hostage to your past prejudices, your prospectus from which the previous generations came from and there’s always an element of that because these people were your parents so you are shaped like them. But if you see someone who’s the right person for the job, irrespective of whether they are male or female or gender classification, if they’re right for the job they’re right for the job, get them in there and drive that change.”*

## 5.9 Results for research question 6

**Research question 6: Is there alignment between organisational values and culture in the telecommunications industry and what is needed to build an inclusive culture for the 21<sup>st</sup> century?**

This research question consisted of two interview questions with the first question inclined to engage with leadership their views on the alignment within their organisation of values to culture. The second interview question then attempted to probe the participants on their views of what inhibited and enabled transformation, as demanded by their industry.

**Table 5.9**  
**Results for alignment of values to culture**

Rank	Construct	Interview frequency	Theme
1	Misalignment between values and culture	9	Misalignment
2	Values are written on the wall	7	Misalignment
3	Need to live the values	6	Change management
4	Accountability	5	Change management
5	Change management	4	Change management
6	Transformation is a journey	3	Change management
6	Employee engagement	3	Enablers of transformation
6	Knowledge workers have choice	3	Enablers of transformation
6	Culture is behaviours	3	Enablers of transformation
7	Alignment - values, culture, strategy	2	Enablers of transformation
7	Authentic	2	Enablers of transformation
7	Retention	2	Enablers of transformation
7	Right thing to do/genuine desire	2	Enablers of transformation
7	Global examples	2	Global examples
8	Relevance	1	Enablers of transformation
8	Stakeholders	1	Stakeholders
8	Corporate citizen	1	Stakeholders
8	Strategy	1	Enablers of transformation
8	Open discussions	1	Enablers of transformation
8	Apartheid	1	Apartheid

75% of the participants agreed that there is misalignment between values and culture within their organisations. Despite the high percentage it is uncertain on organisational actions relating to accountability on alignment or misalignment as 42% of participants mentioned that there should be actions relating to accountability, either rewarding or punishing individual behaviour. 58% of the participants believed that the organisational values were merely written on the wall whilst 50% of the participants believed that values should be lived. 17% of the participants referred to global organisations that were

negatively impacted by misalignment between values and culture, for example Enron and KPMG.

Albert: *“A lot of companies, I think, have value statements. They’ve got a list of values. It may not necessarily mean that the culture is aligned to those values, and I would argue mainly because the values are never really enforced and they never really focus. I’m sure if you go back to companies like **Enron** or some of the recent things that have happened in many different companies or organisations, where you find either there’s been large scale fraud or corruption or mismanagement, I’m sure their values would be totally the opposite. So I think the more you neglect to focus and to communicate and to remind people that these are the values that we subscribe to and if you don’t conform you’re out, the more likely you will find that there will be a mismatch between the culture and the values, because the culture may be valid almost in isolation.”*

Morris: *“Let’s be very clear, culture is not merely influenced by your values, culture is a function of people’s behaviours so you can draw very nice values, respect, trust, honesty but you could have people stealing and wheeling and dealing and all sorts of funny things and we’ve seen many organisations which have gone down the wrong route, for example, **KPMG**. I don’t think it was in their culture to do business with clients and get yourself too close to some of those transactions to a point where it compromises your integrity as an organisation but, beyond that, your reputation as an organisation in the public.”*

Yusuf: *“So culture is the physical delivery of your values... If people are exhibiting the right behaviours, that means the culture is in line with the values. Now in my mind you **can’t leave it to chance that people will interpret your values** by exhibiting the appropriate behaviours. You have to take the time to **define what the behaviours are** ... then you have to **hold people to account for those behaviours** ... Because then, those people who are watching say that’s our value and we condone that behaviour. Well that’s not the culture I want to work in, that doesn’t make sense.”*

Sameera: *“I believe the **values are paper based**. They were crafted many years ago and there was a lot of engagement, and I think it started off with great intent. However, when we embarked on the transformation, the values became less important than the outcome from a commercial, entrepreneurial perspective. Honesty, integrity, etc., talk to the authenticity and **I don’t think the leadership has done a good job in demonstrating authenticity to the organisation and demonstrating that they subscribe to these values.**”*

Morris: ***"I think they created this organisation from the military – so rank is everything [laughter]. I'm the lieutenant, you're the commander and you are the general and therefore rank becomes the key and I think that's one of the things that I don't think is the right culture in an organisation, it's not part of our values but it's a culture that exists."***

**Table 5.10**  
**Results for inhibitors and enablers of transformation**

Rank	Construct	Interview frequency	Theme
1	Stereotypes	7	Inhibitors
2	Change management	6	Change
3	Alignment/Misalignment - values, culture, strategy	4	Consequence
4	Actively try to break stereotypes	3	Change
4	Quality feeder into industry	3	Education
5	Employee engagement	2	Enablers
5	Accommodating	2	Enablers
5	Tokenism	2	Inhibitors
5	Your frame of reference/background/exposure	2	Enablers
6	Generational	1	Generational gap
6	Millennials	1	Generational gap
6	Listen - understand	1	Enablers
6	Respect	1	Enablers
6	Energy	1	Enablers
6	Open discussions	1	Enablers
6	Share info	1	Enablers
6	Learning	1	Enablers
6	Clone	1	Inhibitors
6	Networking	1	Enablers
6	Financial impact	1	Consequence
6	Status quo	1	Inhibitors
6	Right thing to do	1	Enablers
6	Authentic	1	Enablers
6	Tick box	1	Legislative

58% of the participants agreed that stereotypes inhibited transformation in the male dominated telecommunications industry and 50% of the participants agreed that change management was core to transformation within the industry. As previously mentioned an enabler in promoting transformation is education, agreed by 25% of the participants, which then acts as a feeder into the industry. Alignment, or misalignment, of values, culture and strategy also impacts building an inclusive culture and promoting transformation.

Tumo: “**You are working against what comes naturally**, to those people these -jobs are technical jobs, **because they are technical they need to be done by male, because they are technical we don’t believe that black people can contribute** much in this space, you know, you are working very much against this current thinking, prevailing view or the mental model that you are working with, that is the thing, so that’s why you also have to be finding ways that are going to challenge that thing, to make the person that when they go home to think that, you know, I have been believing this thing all of my life and now I have suddenly realised that all that I have been thinking, I am actually wrong. You know that can be painful for people, so you need to also nurse it, so ehmm, so I just met this new person who is a new leader, and the way that things are going, he is clearly making me feel uncomfortable about my beliefs, so it is difficult, you have to work on it, but you also need to, **you need to care for the people** that you are changing, you cannot damage them, you need to, you still need them to be part of the equation. You need them, you know, I was surprised that from one meeting, there was one lady in my first meeting, she stood up and said certain thing. Now, after four months she is, actually **she is like an advocate**, she is going around and saying all sorts of things, and this is the person that everybody saw in an open meeting, she was clearly against it. So now to have that person being the ambassador of the new, that’s what you want because more people, **more people will now listen to her.**”

Yusuf: “It makes it very difficult for women to be seen with any credibility, I’ll be frank. So **women in Telecoms is still a novelty**. There’s lots of women who work in the industry but **not many who are leaders in the industry**. And I think a lot of that comes from the fact that the telecoms industry is still steeped in technology, so technology still drives the main nexus of what drives progress and **technology remains a very male dominated environment**, whether it’s engineering or on the IT side of the game, that is a very male dominated area of our economy. So I think in our industry, if you’re going to make this work, it has to start at grass roots level, you have to be getting more and more women involved in those key technology spheres.”

Manoj: “For example, **we have eight in our C-suite, two of which are women, so that’s a large percentage. I’m not sure what the benchmark is but we’re making a conscious effort to try include them.**”

Sameera: “**I had to fight for it.** My transition for me personally was not difficult for me to transition into the role, but **the transition for the leadership team**

*was very difficult. I worked ten times harder than my predecessor, I delivered far more than what he had delivered, and I think, throughout this journey, I needed to continuously prove my worth, which is not something that would happen for a male who steps into the role. I just felt I spent an enormous amount of time just trying to be everything to everyone just to prove my worth, which wasn't necessary, it wouldn't be required from someone else."*

Sameera: *"I can safely say that, for myself, I'm soft spoken and there's zero tolerance towards the fact that I am. It takes away from **the perception of your level effectiveness** and really it's seen in a negative light, it's like you lack assertiveness, you're not certain as to your content. And my view is that this is a male view because that is not something that females perceive as a weakness. So, from an inclusivity perspective, if what is inherent or specific to you in terms of your nature is not accepted, it makes it difficult for an environment to be inclusive ... For example, I don't shake hands, I don't really hug, I would not actively pursue any networking, especially not with males, **so that was seen as a huge, huge gap in terms of my ability to perform as an effective leader.** So, it will sound like a contraction at this point in time because **I've now got an opportunity to move into a senior role elsewhere**, so I don't want to put it as a general trend. There's inconsistencies in leadership in terms of how they actually deal with diversity"*

Morris: *"There's no doubt that when you have a male dominated career, let's make a very simple example, **the technicians that we have, those guys, if you do find a female you are very lucky, I've never seen a female technician.**"*

## 5.10 Conclusion

This chapter presented the results of the six research questions, which emerged from 10 interview questions, from the 12 interviews conducted. Constructs that transpired from the interviews and data analysis, largely supported existing literature on leadership, the operating environment as well as organisational behaviour, culture and values. In addition, insights were provided through the research process, not only from the responses of participants but also including observations from the researcher. The findings from this chapter will be further discussed in Chapter 6.

## **CHAPTER 6: DISCUSSION OF RESULTS**

### **6.1 Introduction**

Chapter 6 aims to address the six research questions presented in Chapter 3, by explaining the results presented in Chapter 5 in relation to the literature reviewed in Chapter 2. This chapter reviews the data and insights gathered in the 12 interviews and compares the findings against the literature. Each research question is presented, followed by the findings of the research question and how the findings relate to the literature. This culminates in the conclusion of the research question. The research findings will contribute to the overall understanding of the role of leadership in setting the pace of transformation in the telecommunications industry – by either boldly building the next leader or conforming to the status quo.

### **6.2 Discussion of results for Research Questions**

#### **6.2.1 Research Question 1: What influences today's leadership trends in the telecommunications industry?**

The research question sought to understand the leadership trends in the telecommunications industry and to ascertain the root cause of the type of leadership style currently utilised. The objective of the question was to compare leadership styles identified in the literature review to the views held by participants' holding leadership roles within the organisation.

##### **6.2.1.1 Findings**

Table 5.1 in Chapter 5 shows that a combination of leadership styles is currently perceived to be used by leadership in the telecommunications industry. Participants touched on transformational leadership, authentic leadership, servant leadership as well as a combination of these leadership styles. The participants substantiated their responses with reasons relating to the fast-changing telecommunications environment that also utilises a customer centric model.

Table 6.1 below recaps the academic leadership theory, as it moves from the traditional evolution approach to a transformational revolution approach that is required for organisations operating in the 21<sup>st</sup> century in the telecommunications industry.

**Table 6.1**  
**Recap of leadership theory**

Theory	Researcher/s
Authentic leadership: The process of self-awareness and being true to oneself is key; “individuals who are ‘in tune’ with their basic nature”	Avolio and Gardner (2005)
Transformational leadership: These leaders mentor and empower their followers, developing their potential aligned to the organisational purpose	Eagly (2007)
Servant leadership: Organisational goals are secondary after first fulfilling the follower’s needs with genuine concern	Van Dierendonck et al. (2014)
Inclusive leadership: Self-awareness, insight and empathy from personal experiences shapes their attitudes towards diversity and inclusion	Groysberg and Connolly (2013)
Effective leadership: Leadership behaviour and decision-making needs to be flexible to evolve with contextual change	Snowden and Boone (2007)

The findings align with the literature. Transformational leadership ranked second, authentic leadership ranked fourth and servant leadership together with a combination of leadership styles ranked fifth. This is corroborated by the quote below:

Mandisa: *“For example where we are, definitely the **transformational** would be more important - but ultimately **what we need to be aiming towards is service**, which is really what **servant leadership** speaks about.”*

Design changes and change management were referenced by the participants 100% and 75% respectively, for example, Tumo mentioned a survey that was done before a strategy session to understand how employees felt about the company and Caren mentioned that an induction programme can be used as an example of a change management tool. Interestingly, 58% of the participants mentioned that the future leadership would need energy to support the change.

The findings in Table 5.1 in Chapter 5 are either directly or indirectly supported by the literature. This is confirmed with theory showing authenticity (Avolio & Gardner, 2005), recognition by transformational leaders that change is a process and needs an open, participatory environment to develop and empower followers (Eagly, 2007), and through understanding that, as business environments evolve with a knowledge-based economy, it is critical that leaders recognise employees' needs to deliver success (Van Dierendonck, 2014). The inclusive leadership theory by Groysberg and Connolly (2013) featured in 50% of the participants' interviews with the construct of "apartheid", emphasising that self-awareness shapes their attitudes towards inclusiveness. Effective leadership theory by Snowden and Boone (2007) was also evidenced with change management.

### **6.2.1.2 Conclusion**

The results support the literature and confirm that a combination of leadership styles is currently being used in the telecommunications industry. As the industry is fast-paced and evolving, change management is also a critical element for leadership consideration. Apartheid also featured as a construct, confirming the impact of the South African history on current organisational leaders, who will also shape the future of the organisations moving into the 21<sup>st</sup> century with energy.

### **6.2.2 Research Question 2: What does a 21<sup>st</sup> century leader look like and what drives building this leader?**

This research question was separated by first discussing the participants' views on the characteristics of the future leader followed by insights on whether the future leader was being built internally within the organisation. The second interview question allowed the participants an opportunity to reflect on their passion for transformation, if any, and their actions in actively driving transformation within their organisations. The two interview questions were designed to engage the participants to reflect on what characteristics should a 21<sup>st</sup> century leader have, leading to the root cause analysis on behaviour that drives building the future organisational leader.

#### **6.2.2.1 Findings**

Table 5.2 in Chapter 5 shows the participants' perceptions regarding the characteristics needed for a 21<sup>st</sup> century leader to successfully operate in an telecommunications organisational environment. The majority of the constructs identified by the participants ranked either third or fourth, showing the diverse range of business and technical skills

required to lead a 21<sup>st</sup> century organisation in the telecommunications industry. This is shown by the quote below:

Manoj: *“The next person who comes would have to be at least **ambidextrous**, so understanding the business well, how you increase growth, and understanding the network because that’s what we sell.”*

Lack of succession planning and lack of building a leadership pipeline within the organisation was ranked second and third respectively by the participants. As in research question 1, energy also featured as a construct, ranked third, as a characteristic that should be embedded in the future leader as well as risk taking, as ecosystems blur for organisations operating in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, particularly in the telecommunications industry. Once again, a combination of leadership styles featured in the responses.

Table 5.3 in Chapter 5 indicated the views of the participants whether building the future leader was represented by the leaders’ personal passion in actively driving transformation within the organisation that goes beyond concerted organisational business efforts or legislation. The findings show that the construct of personal passion that ranked first at a 50% frequency level, tied in with authenticity that ranked second. The construct tick box/compliance/legislation was also ranked second, at a 42% frequency level. The quote below shows that a combination of the elements of personal passion, business mandate and legislation would be the best result for driving the behaviour of building the next leader within the organisation:

Albert: *“... the **business imperatives** and the **legislative requirements**, like I said, are **not necessarily mutually exclusive**, and the more you can find a way of **connecting it to each other**, in other words, comply with legislation but in a manner that is sustainable, and promote your own commercial objectives. I think it becomes, I’ll call it, a **competitive advantage**. Again, I think one must go beyond the letter of the law of just mere compliance. I think if there’s a culture of **empowerment**, of diversity and sharing of skills and knowledge, if that is the culture, which, again, stems from the top often, it’s better than just mandatory requirements, and like I said, I **embrace it**”*

The impact of macro-economic conditions within the country and government policies also influenced organisations, feeding into the construct tick box/compliance/legislation that ranked second at 42% frequency, as represented by the quote below:

Yusuf: *“... I think, **as a country** and as an economy, we have too many people **who don’t see it as a priority** or play lip service to it as a priority and I think*

*until ... I don't think we must expect it to become the number one priority, I think what we must be pushing for is that it must become a **share priority, it must become as important at EBIDTA margin**, as important as the share price because if it becomes on that level, I think it's a major step forward as compared to what it is now ..."*

The findings of the research question mainly align to the literature. This is firstly done with theory, as explained by Daft (2011), that leadership means more than having a set of skills and the theory of Wacksman and Stutzman (2014), that technology has redefined organisational ecosystems thereby eroding the traditional business model. Secondly, as also explained by Groysberg and Connolly (2013), a powerful message is conveyed to the organisation when diversity and inclusivity are included on the strategic agenda from a leader's personal mission approach.

### **6.2.2.2 Conclusion**

The results support the literature review in Chapter 2 related to the revolutionary approach leadership needed by organisations operating in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. This is confirmed by the diverse skills needed by the future leader as well as personal passion needed by current leadership to build the future leader. However, the factors of a lack of succession planning and building the leadership pipeline internally within the organisation, as well as the factor of tick box/compliance/legislation, featured strongly as elements that may inhibit building the future leader internally within the organisation.

### **6.2.3 Research Question 3: What motivates leadership to pursue transformation and inclusivity in the telecommunications industry?**

Through two open-ended interview questions, the research question sought to explore the factors and trends within the telecommunications industry regarding the motivational drivers of advancing the subject of transformation into the organisational strategic agenda. It was also the intention to engage with leadership who, in the participants' view, was responsible for organisational transformation and how the progress of transformation was being measured within their organisations.

#### **6.2.3.1 Findings**

The results of the first interview question relating to this research question are shown in Table 5.4 in Chapter 5. According to the participants, the factors that rank first in promoting transformation on the strategic agenda are legislation as well as a combination of legislative, business and personal factors. This was followed by the

factors BBEE, EE, compliance and tokenism that ranked second on one end of the scale, contradicting the opposite end of the scale by the factors that it should be driven strategically through a genuine desire. Stereotyping ranked third as a factor that impacted the motivation of promoting transformation on the agenda. Factors, such as the old boys' club, the clone concept as well as the fact that transformation was not on the strategic agenda, ranked fourth.

The findings partially support the literature explained by Berrey (2014) that policies have been designed to promote a more inclusive environment in organisations by introducing, for example, employment equity in the workplace (Burger & Jafta, 2010). Although research has been performed on the impact of progressive policies on marginalised groups (Kaiser & Spalding, 2015), limited research has been conducted on the impact of progressive policies in relation to transformation in the top management team.

Tokenism theory, confirmed by Hurn (2013), states that females prefer to earn their seats in the top management team by their own merit, instead of feeling undermined by being appointed to reach a target quota for the leadership team. There was a confirmation of polarisation theory by Elstad and Ladegard (2012) where barriers against the marginalised group or individual increase and act as inhibitors of transformation. Tokenism, the clone concept and stereotyping is evidenced in the statement below made by a CEO:

Bongani: *"We know that telecommunications is predominantly **dominated by males** and, in the process, it's historically been **white males** and in the process we started including **black males** and you find that the women aspect of other marginalised groups, whether they are people with disabilities or whatever, has been coming out slowly in trickles. So if you want to have the inclusive transformation, you need to prioritise those groupings that have been marginalised because, for argument's sake, if we're predominantly male and bring in one woman and we just do it as a box ticker and say we have one woman, the one thing that we're going to do because we don't prioritise it is that the environment that we've created for that one woman to operate, **is still predominantly a male environment** and we want this person to be a male. Maybe they tell you, you are a female but you need to be hard core, be hard, or whatever and what we have done to create that is that we've taken away some of those values and skills that could have liberated this person because **we want them to be a clone** of what they are not."*

The results of the second interview question relating to this research question are shown in Table 5.5 in Chapter 5. KPIs ranked first as 83% of the participants agreed that KPIs were the key measurement indicator of transformation within the organisation. Exco, CEO and HR ranked second and third respectively, as indicators of who is responsible for transformation within the organisation. The fourth ranking indicated that participants were uncertain who was responsible for transformation within the organisation. Twenty-five percent of the participants were conflicted on whether tangible KPIs were the best measure for transformation that consists of more intangible elements as referenced in the quote below:

*Sameera: "If it does get **measured, it's as a by-product**. I think we measure from the perspective of, let's say, BBBEE. We measure, I don't know, we measure social responsibility type of measures, but these are steps or initiatives put in place from a compliance perspective, not a transformational one. **That cannot be the true measure of progress.**"*

The findings confirm the literature explained by Berrey (2014) that organisational metrics force conformity. The theory by Gilbert, Stead and Ivancevich (1999) shows that transformation is a process that should be strategically driven by the top management team. Derby (2013) found that challenges and the drivers of change needed to be identified simultaneously for sustainable change.

### **6.2.3.2 Conclusion**

The results largely support the literature, confirming that, largely, legislation and compliance are the key motivational drivers of ensuring that transformation is on the strategic agenda, although there is acknowledgement by the participants that a combination of legislation, business and personal passion should ideally be the core drivers of transformation. Factors, such as tokenism, stereotyping, old boys' clubs and the clone concept, featured as inhibitors of transformation. KPIs featured as the core measurement of transformation and a combination of the top leadership team members featured as being responsible for driving transformation within the organisation. It was inferred from results that the KPI measure is not sufficient as a transformation measurement tool and that an element of intangibility should possibly be considered as a transformation measurement tool of true sustainable progress.

#### **6.2.4 Research Question 4: How does the fast pace of transformational change demanded in the telecommunications industry compare to the organisational design changes being implemented?**

This research question sought to gauge from leadership their sense of priority in implementing design changes needed within their organisations as well as to investigate the maturity level of progress. The question allowed leadership to reflect on their influence on the advancement of transformation within their organisations and whether this was being specifically tailored to meet their organisational needs or was simply a generic approach.

##### **6.2.4.1 Findings**

Table 5.6 in Chapter 5 showed that design changes ranked first, followed by factors of change management in second place. A variety of design changes implemented within the organisation, either tailor made to the organisation or a generic approach, were mentioned by the participants, for example, reverse mentoring, the induction programme, a female leadership development programme, women network forum, women-in-waiting program as well as recruitment and female appointments made by the CEO to the top management team. Another factor that ranked second featured the view of participants that design changes were not prioritised within the organisation or by the top management team. These are evident from some of the quotes below:

Mandisa: *“To be honest the design implementations are something that I have not prioritised in the last month. **They were actually not upheld as priorities.**”*

Tumo: *“The other thing that we have done is that we are implementing this other thing that we call **reverse mentoring**. By that we mean, we have again accepted that we have an aging leadership, people that are 55 and plus, and for those people to be able to embrace change, instead of them, they can also be mentored by people that are different from them, young people, engage on these kinds of topics and have discussions. It becomes an interesting topic, where this young person is talking about how does it feel like in an environment where you are the only one who is black, where nobody is ever asking you any questions or trying to draw you into the discussions, you know, and now it is no longer just theoretical.”*

Divya: *“I headed a **women network forum**, and we set this up because we wanted to see what we can do around making value propositions for women in the work environment. Work for them and get feedback from them, for women*

*who are in those positions where, they, you know, they want to be heard, they want to have a voice and an opportunity. Ehhhhm, similarly the company is doing a quick programme on looking at women who are not in the organisation, to see how they can bring them into the organisation. it is called **Women-in-waiting** programme.”*

The findings support Pfeffer's (2010) theory where it was described that leader power was essential to ensure successful execution of a new agenda. Neilson, Martin and Powers (2008) showed that leadership was linked to the execution of strategic effectiveness through operational decisions. The research by Romero (2015) presented a sustainable growing business model with organisational agility that is responsive to challenges and where learning was encouraged through inclusion of marginalised groups.

Human (1996) recognised that initiatives such as diversity programs raised individual awareness of stereotypes, allowing for authenticity and promoting an enabling environment for behavioural change. However, Ibarra, Ely and Kolb (2013) argued that a sustainable return on investment was not seen from diversity programme spend, as evidenced by the quote below:

Yusuf: *“I don't want to say things like **programmes**, because those are **not necessarily sustainable**”*

On the subject of change management, the findings support the literature. Stoker et al. (2012) stated that leadership plays an important role during organisational change and transformational leadership, with the element of authenticity being effective during this period. Stoker et al. (2012) also mentioned the significant impact that leadership could have on effective change management and organisational performance. This is confirmed in the quote below:

Raj: *“... I mean leadership have recognised in order to drive the organisational change, they need the type of people that can do that – meaning that **they are not people biased by their legacy ...**”.*

#### **6.2.4.2 Conclusion**

The findings, to some extent, do support the literature of implementation of design changes by leadership, as confirmed by the numerous intentional design changes mentioned above. Despite the design changes implemented, the inference by the participant responses that not all organisations are committed to prioritising design

changes to drive transformation cannot be ignored. This should be of great concern to leadership as the diversity opportunity, operating within a highly competitive environment, could be missed. Of equal concern to leadership should be driving sustainable transformation within the organisation and not to allow diversity programmes that come with a financial impact to the organisation to bring about superficial change.

#### **6.2.5 Research Question 5: For an organisation operating in the 21<sup>st</sup> century – what are the risks of not driving transformation and inclusivity and what are the opportunities to drive transformation and inclusivity?**

This research question was split into two parts. The first discussion encouraged leadership to reflect on the implications that the organisation and the industry would face by not promoting transformation. The second part of the question, emanating from the first discussion, sought to understand that if leadership acknowledged the consequences of not driving transformation then what routes should leadership actively pursue to attain the benefits of transformation?

##### **6.2.5.1 Findings**

Table 5.7 in Chapter 5 shows that eight out of the 12 participants chose financial impact and risk of becoming irrelevant as the main risks in not encouraging transformation within the organisation and the industry. As the lines blur in operating within a global context during VUCA times, it was mentioned that organisations can get left behind in their own industry, with older industries, for example the financial services industry, creeping into the telecommunications industry. This was evidenced with the quote below from a group CFO:

*Yusuf: “I think this industry runs the **risk of becoming less relevant** if it’s not careful because I do see other industries potentially starting to transform because they are having to transform because they’ve run out of growth quicker than this industry has. So this industry runs the **risk of being left behind** and having to play catch up in this important space if it doesn’t get its act together on this thing quite quickly.”*

The second and third ranked constructs touched on stakeholders and customer centricity, with elements of stakeholder and consumer activism that have been assimilated with the use of technology connecting the world.

The findings are consistent with Johnson et al. (2008) in that maintaining a successful organisation is dependent on the ability to recognise when fundamental change is

needed. Herrmann and Nadkarni (2014) found that strategic change, which was necessary to operate in today's world, could lead to competitive advantage and higher organisational performance. Gerzema and D'Antonio (2010) explained that stakeholders, collectively as a group with their purchasing power, can influence the behaviour of large organisations driving value based consumerism. Technology has changed the nature of business growth and success (Wacksman & Stutzman, 2014).

The results of the second part of the research question are shown in Table 5.8 in Chapter 5. Open discussions ranked first and design changes ranked second. Change management, authenticity and having a genuine desire ranked third. This is aptly evidenced with the quote below from a group CEO:

*Tumo: "... so I just met this new person who is a new leader, and the way that things are going, he is clearly making me feel uncomfortable about my beliefs, so it is difficult, you have to work on it, but you also need to, **you need to care for the people** that you are changing, **you cannot damage them, you need to, you still need them to be part of the equation.** You need them, you know, I was surprised that from one meeting, there was one lady in my first meeting, she stood up and said certain thing. Now, after four months she is, actually **she is like an advocate**, she is going around and saying all sorts of things, and this is the person that everybody saw in an open meeting, she was clearly against it. So now to have that person being the ambassador of the new, that's what you want because more people, **more people will now listen to her.**"*

The findings are consistent with the literature. Daft (2011) found that powerful subtle personal qualities encompassed leadership, for example, listening, truly understanding and having genuine concern for their people. Lee and Purnam (2016) explained that the success of the implementation of the organisational strategy relied, not on only the CEO and the top management team, but also included all the employees within the organisation. Kim and Mauborgne (2003) stated that when change agents, who are vital players during the change process, are engaged and committed, then fundamental change, which is a learnable action, can quickly be achieved in the organisation. The utilisation of change agents as well as the influence of the top management team during the change process was also confirmed by Lawrence (2015) and Stoker et al. (2012) respectively.

#### **6.2.5.2 Conclusion**

The research findings indicate the significant negative financial impact on the organisation or the risk of becoming irrelevant if transformation is not deemed a priority

within the fast-paced telecommunications industry. It was also shown from the results that the need for open discussions, design changes and change management are critical to drive transformation proactively. The findings therefore support the literature. As one cannot ignore what shapes one's views of authenticity, apartheid once again featured in the responses of some of the participants, considering the South African context. This, in turn, can be related to the suggestions put forward about the need to increase the quality of education and relevant skills upgrade within the country through public-private partnerships, which, in turn, can feed into the industry thereby coming full circle enabling all to be benefactors. From the responses, it was also noted that best practice of driving transformation is currently not being shared within the industry.

### **6.2.6 Research Question 6: Is there alignment between organisational values and culture in the telecommunications industry and what is needed to build an inclusive culture for the 21st century?**

This research question was split into two parts with open-ended questions. Firstly, the discussion encouraged leadership to reflect on the alignment within their organisation of values to culture. The second part sought to investigate the potential inhibitors and enablers needed to build an inclusive culture.

#### **6.2.6.1 Findings**

In the first part of the research question, nine out of 12 participants acknowledged that there was misalignment between organisational values and culture in their organisation, as shown in Table 5.9 in Chapter 5, and this ranked first. This was congruent to the construct that values are written on the wall that ranked second, as stated by seven participants. The need to live the values and accountability ranked third and fourth respectively. When one considers the top four ranked constructs in relation to each other, it seemed that there was no consequence, positive or negative, when one decided to align to the organisation values and culture or not.

Although the research findings, to some extent, are consistent with the literature, it is of concern that the positive application of the literature is not found within the organisations. Theory showed that organisational behaviour and organisational development leads to organisational effectiveness and allowed flexibility to adapt to market conditions (Champoux, 2017; Cummings & Worley, 2015; Sull, 1999). Robbins and Judge (2015) defined organisational culture as a system of shared meaning or core values where most of the members within the organisation internalised their behaviour to match the accepted organisational norms. The organisations that formed part of this research study

will need to consider the person-organisation fit model carefully. This argues that individuals will stay in an organisation that is aligned to their values.

The research findings stand in contradiction to the literature. Daft (2015) explained that a leader influences the culture and reinforces the culture by living it in a model way, thereby visibly showing acceptance of the organisational culture for all members of the organisation. Standards and expectations that are integrated amongst all in the organisation are shown through employee commitment to learn how to enact the behaviours required by the organisation (Cummings & Worley, 2015). Leader motivational theories were proposed by Robbins and Judges (2015) to encourage members within the organisation to achieve a collective goal and tactics to reduce resistance to change.

The research findings also do not support the literature as explained by Daft (2015) that leadership should agree on an approach in addressing non-compliant behavioural issues as well as the perception of inclusion (Sabharwal, 2014) that could predict commitment by organisational members. Inconsistency of shared identity theory within the organisations that participated in the research study contradicted the theory espoused by Hogg (2009), where the role of leadership provided followers with a shared identity.

The contradictions are shown by a quote from the Group Chief Strategy Officer as well as a quote from the head of finance:

*Albert: "A lot of companies, I think, have value statements. They've got a list of values. It may not necessarily mean that the culture is aligned to those values, and I would argue mainly because the values are never really enforced and they never really focus. I'm sure if you go back to companies like **Enron** or some of the recent things that have happened in many different companies or organisations, where you find either there's been large scale fraud or corruption or mismanagement, I'm sure their values would be totally the opposite. So I think the more you neglect to focus and to communicate and to remind people that these are the values that we subscribe to and if you don't conform you're out, the more likely you will find that there will be a mismatch between the culture and the values, because the culture may be valid almost in isolation."*

*Morris: "Let's be very clear, culture is not merely influenced by your values, culture is a function of people's behaviours so you can draw very nice values, respect, trust, honesty but you could have people stealing and wheeling and dealing and all sorts of funny things and we've seen many organisations which*

*have gone down the wrong route, for example, **KPMG**. I don't think it was in their culture to do business with clients and get yourself too close to some of those transactions to a point where it compromises your integrity as an organisation but, beyond that, your reputation as an organisation in the public."*

The results to the second part of the research question are shown in Table 5.10 in Chapter 5. Stereotypes, tokenism, the clone concept, networking and maintaining the status quo were mentioned as inhibitors of building an inclusive culture. The enablers most mentioned in building an inclusive culture were change management, alignment of values, culture and strategy, actively trying to break stereotypes and having a quality feeder into the industry.

The findings are consistent and support the literature. On stereotypes, Glick and Fiske (2009) and Behm-Morawitz and Mastro (2009) found that intelligence was a trait used in gender-related judgements with women regarded as being inferior to men. Bussey and Bandura (1999), and Golombok and Fivush (1994) explained that sociological theory led to the labelling of certain characteristics which leaned on certain beliefs and practices of female-typed traits and gender-based occupations, allowing for preconceptions.

Mendleberg and Karpowitz (2016) noted that the societal gender gap affects females' levels of assertiveness impacting their perceived influence. Sherbin and Rashid (2017) argued that diversity and inclusion are different concepts, where inclusion allowed individuals with differences to perform to their highest potential and fostered innovation to achieve organisational goals and lead to business growth. Barak (2017) stated that the challenge of lack of inclusion in the workplace, being accepted as a valued member and encouraged to fully participate within the organisation was a trend experienced by the increasingly diverse workforce globally.

Eagly and Carli (2003) found that females faced further discriminatory barriers in male-dominated industries although Diehl and Dzubinski (2016) agreed that the sociotechnical systems change theory could create equal opportunity when recognised and endorsed by the top leadership. This is evident by the quote below:

*Sameera: "I can safely say that, for myself, I'm soft spoken and there's zero tolerance towards the fact that I am. It takes away from **the perception of your level effectiveness** and really it's seen in a negative light, it's like you lack assertiveness, you're not certain as to your content. And my view is that this is a male view because that is not something that females perceive as a weakness. So, from an inclusivity perspective, if what is inherent or specific to you in terms of your nature is not accepted, it makes it difficult for an environment to be*

*inclusive ... For example, I don't shake hands, I don't really hug, I would not actively pursue any networking, especially not with males, **so that was seen as a huge, huge gap in terms of my ability to perform as an effective leader.** So, it will sound contraction at this point in time because **I've now got an opportunity to move into a senior role elsewhere**, so I don't want to put it as a general trend. There's inconsistencies in leadership in terms of how they actually deal with diversity”*

Mendelberg and Karpowitz (2016) and Hekman et al. (2014) stated that gender gaps in societal status give men higher status than females, by mere virtue of their gender. This, in turn, leads to issues experienced in the workplace, such as glass ceilings, unequal pay, exclusion from networks and the restriction of women to positions of leadership within organisations (Eagly & Carli, 2003). This was supported by Diehl and Dzubinski (2016) who showed, despite organisational interventions and policies, there has not been a corresponding increase of women to positions of authority despite an increase in female human capital investments (Eagly & Carli, 2003). It was found that women should be superior leaders (Vecchio, 2002) and that more females were likely to be appointed as CEO in times of crisis due to their collaborative leadership style (Glass & Cook, 2016; Gerzema & D'Antonio, 2013).

Regarding the literature on the old boys' club or network, the findings support the literature. Networking is a fundamental enabler towards an individual's path to success in entering the senior leadership level and it was explained that the unwritten rules of organisational behaviour were dictated by white men who dominated the top leadership team in most organisations (Leimon et al, 2011). Groysberg and Connolly (2013), and Ellemers (2014) found that the old boys' club or network was the single barrier impacting all women and was usually embedded in the organisational culture and everyday practices, thereby ensuring that the status quo was maintained (Broadbridge & Simpson, 2011). This is evident from the quote below:

*Layla: “I think it impacts it negatively, because the people who are there, who was in the positions of power still, you know, there's **no real change in the mind-set, change in structure, change in system itself**, because you can't change it if you're not committed to it, and if you haven't, if you don't believe that something needs to change. So you end up in a situation where the **status quo is just, yeah, it just persists.**”*

### **6.2.6.2 Conclusion**

The results showed the misalignment of values within the organisation to organisational culture and lack of accountability. Global examples of Enron and KPMG were shared by some of the participants, highlighting the challenges faced on the global scale as well as in the South African domain, where issues on leadership and ethical considerations plague the country, supporting operating during times of crisis.

The findings show the lack of progressive organisational change despite an increase in demand for female leadership that organisations require to operate in today's VUCA times. Although females still face many barriers that limit their progression to leadership positions, it was recognised that steps are being made by a few males in top leadership positions to change the current stereotyping and societal gender preconceptions that exist in the telecommunications industry, albeit at a very slow pace.

The role of education, accompanied by a skills revolution relevant for the industry, featured yet again in the responses of some of the participants who hold the view that this element could play a part in enabling transformation with improved feeder quality into the industry.

Apartheid also featured once again in the responses of some participants, showing that the legacy of apartheid continues to live in the present world and may even shape the future.

### **6.3 Summary of results and conclusion**

This chapter discussed the results that were either supported or contested by the literature reviewed. Table 6.2 below represents a summary of the results of the six research questions. Insights on the role of leadership, the pace of transformation and the enablers and inhibitors of transformation that arose from the research study will be further discussed in Chapter 7.

**Table 6.2**  
**Summary of results**

Research Question	Literature reviewed	Summary of results	Results contested	Results supported
1. What influences today's leadership trends in the telecommunications industry?	Theory: Leadership  Cited: Avolio and Gardner (2005), Eagly (2007), Van Dierendonck (2014), Groysberg and Connolly (2013), Snowden and Boone (2007)	The results align to the literature of authenticity, transformational leadership, servant leadership as well as inclusive and effective leadership.		√
2. What does a 21 <sup>st</sup> century leader look like and what drives building this leader?	Theory: Leadership  Cited: Daft (2011), Wacksman and Stutzman (2014), Groysberg and Connolly (2013)	The results align to the literature that leadership means more than having a set of skills and that diverse skills are needed. However, there is lack of support of building the future leader within the organisation with lack of succession planning and lack of building a leadership pipeline.	X	√
3. What motivates leadership to pursue transformation and	Theory: Target quotas and diversity programmes	The results align to the literature that legislative compliance drives or forces transformation and inclusivity. Although KPI's		√

<p>inclusivity in the telecommunications industry?</p>	<p>Cited: Berrey (2014), Burger and Jafta (2010), Kaiser and Spalding (2015), Hurn (2013), Elstad and Ladegard (2012), Gilbert, Stead and Ivancevich (1999), Derby (2013)</p>	<p>is used a measurement tool there should be careful consideration if this in correct in promoting the correct behaviour.</p>		
<p>4. How does the fast pace of transformational change demanded in the telecommunications industry compare to the organisational design changes being implemented?</p>	<p>Theory: Leadership, diversity programmes and change management Cited: Pfeffer (2010), Neilson, Martin and Powers (2008), Romero (2015), Human (1996), Ibarra, Ely and Kolb (2013), Stoker et al. (2012)</p>	<p>Although the findings largely support the literature of implementation of design changes by leadership, there is lack of organisational commitment in prioritising the design changes to facilitate transformation that could bring about competitive advantage. Generic approaches applied could result in superficial change, with a financial impact of implementing diversity programmes.</p>	<p>X</p>	<p>√</p>
<p>5. For an organisation in the 21<sup>st</sup> century – what are the risks and what are the opportunities of</p>	<p>Theory: Leadership, change and strategic management Cited: Johnson et al. (2008), Herrmann and Nadkarni (2014), Gerzema and D'Antonio (2010), Wacksman and Stutzman (2014),</p>	<p>The findings support the literature on the negative financial impact or risk of becoming irrelevant. The need for open discussions, design changes and change management are critical to proactively drive transformation.</p>		<p>√</p>

transformation and inclusivity?	Daft (2011), Lee and Purnam (2016), Kim and Mauborgne (2003), Lawrence (2015)			
6. Is there alignment between organisational values and culture in the telecommunications industry and what is needed to build an inclusive culture for the 21 <sup>st</sup> century?	<p>Theory: Organisational behaviour and culture, Barriers (stereotypes, old boys' club, institutional mindset)</p> <p>Cited: Champoux (2017), Cummings and Worley (2015), Sull (1999), Robbins and Judge (2015), Daft (2015), Sabharwal (2014), Hogg (2009), Glick and Fiske (2009), Behm-Morawitz and Mastro (2009), Bussey and Bandura (1999), Golombok and Fivush (1994), Mendleberg and Karpowitz (2016), Sherbin and Rashid (2017), Barak (2017), Eagly and Carli (2003), Diehl and Dzubinski (2016), Hekman et al. (2014), Vecchio (2002), Glass and Cook (2016), Gerzema and</p>	<p>The results show misalignment of organisational values and culture with lack of accountability following thereon. KPMG and Enron were provided as global examples. Despite the results confirming the literature on barriers, it was found that there is lack of progressive change on the part of the organisation with lacklustre support from leadership. Therefore ultimately status quo was being maintained.</p>	X	√

	D'Antonio (2013), Leimon et al. (2011), Groysberg and Connolly (2013), Ellemers (2014), Broadbridge and Simpson (2011)			
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## **CHAPTER 7: CONCLUSION**

### **7.1 Introduction**

This chapter summarises the findings and discussions presented in Chapter 5 and Chapter 6 respectively based on the research problem identified in Chapter 1. This is then followed by the contribution made to the research problem. Based on the findings, recommendations to organisational leaders and the telecommunications industry are discussed. After presentation of the recommendations for future research as well as the research limitations, the research study then culminates with a conclusion.

### **7.2 Synthesis of research findings**

The purpose of the research study was to determine the role of leadership in driving transformation in the top management team on the strategic agenda, as organisations seek competitive advantage in operating in today's VUCA times. Technology has mutated the world we live and work in as it has been known, with blurred boundaries becoming the norm, as the fabric of digital innovation seamlessly connects the world in a revolutionary manner (Wacksman & Stutzman, 2014).

The research study sought to understand if organisations were boldly leading by building the next leader needed for the Fourth Industrial digital age revolution or if organisations were merely conforming to the status quo, by allowing stereotypes and societal preconceptions that have slowly evolved over the decades, especially with regards to marginalised groups, to prevail (Bickel, 2012; Tlaiss & Kauser, 2010). The results were then assessed against the environment where the war for talent and a diversified workforce intensifies to provide a competitive advantage in the competitive economic landscape, where organisational stakeholders are no longer passive by-standers (Barsh & Yee, 2012; Barak, 2017; Walumbwa et al., 2008).

The five research questions were centred around the themes of leadership, the operating environment and organisational behaviour, culture and values in assessing the current and future states of organisations on promoting transformation in the top management team. The main findings and contributions of the research study are briefly discussed.

The first contribution to the research study relates to the aspect of leadership, where it was found that leadership critically influenced the strategy, operations, organisational values and culture as well as the members within the organisation. Leaders have the potential to break the status quo barriers thereby enabling true transformation, with

diversity and inclusion at the forefront to boldly lead the change. Despite majority of the participants acknowledging that they possessed a personal passion for transformation, succession planning and building the next leader from within the organisation were not found to be supported. The current top leadership team within the telecommunications industry should invest time, money and energy in building the next generation ambidextrous talent pool needed for the 21<sup>st</sup> century, using a combination of leadership styles, with a bias towards diversity. This may help improve the competitiveness of the organisation as well as enhance relationships with the diverse stakeholders, as organisations operate not only in a local environment but a global landscape as well.

The second contribution to the research study relates to the theme of operating environment. Compliance to legislation as a tick box exercise featured strongly as an element that inhibits rather than promotes transformation. The research findings also found that an intangible measurement tool was more suited for transformation and it should be a responsibility of the collaborative efforts of entire top management team. Stereotypes, the old boys' club or network and institutional mind-set were identified as key inhibitors to transformation within the male dominated telecommunications environment. Despite the acknowledgement by leaders of the organisation seemingly conforming to the status quo, leadership did not prioritise design changes or create unique propositions tailored to the needs of their organisations, however generic initiatives, such as diversity programmes, were introduced in the organisation linking that imperative design changes, with change management principles, were not prioritised.

The third contribution to the research study relates to organisational behaviour, values and culture. The research findings were consistent in the misalignment of values within the organisation to the culture. It was also further evident that accountability could play a role in narrowing the gap, moving towards alignment. Global examples, such as the current plight of KPMG, was highlighted as an example of challenges faced in the local and global landscape, where the elements value and ethical conduct were reaching paramount status amongst organisational stakeholders.

As this research study was conducted in South Africa the aspect of apartheid was highlighted in the responses of many participants, showing that the legacy of apartheid is woven into the fabric of the country, continuing to live in the present world and impacting shaping the future. This necessitates the need for open discussions to nurture the environment needed for successful sustainable transformation. Investment in education was a novel aspect that was found that also seemed to feature strongly as a possible enabler of transformation, with the suggestion of forming a public-private

partnership, as a feeder into the industry with relevant skills demanded by the industry. Lastly, it was also found that best practices of driving transformation within the industry was currently not shared, thereby inhibiting the learning towards the enablers of transformation.

### **7.3 Value of the research**

This research study contributes to the topic by adding a South African component and includes lessons for the telecommunications industry on enablers and inhibitors of the role of leadership in setting the pace of transformation within the organisation and industry. Transformation currently features as a strategic agenda topic in the South African landscape, as the country uniquely moves on from a history of apartheid into the second decade of being a democratic society. The research study benefitted from semi-structured interviews with diverse high quality stakeholders in key leadership positions within the telecommunications industry, offering the unique and valuable experiences of the participants, who are highly respected in their field, leading large organisations that contribute to the economic landscape of the country.

### **7.4 Recommendations to organisational leaders and the telecommunications industry**

The findings from the research study reveal that a greater focus towards transformation activism is needed, as organisational leaders and the industry grapples to manage the pace necessary to be competitive in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. The recommendations to advance the pace of transformation by leadership within the telecommunications industry were developed with the insights developed and analysed in Chapter 5 and Chapter 6 respectively. The recommendations are split between industry, organisation and leadership:

#### **7.4.1 Industry recommendations**

- Creation of a transformation task team with diverse members and a representation of all organisational stakeholders. Sharing of best practices as well as challenges and experiences should be shared within the telecommunications industry;
- Development of a public-private partnership focusing on equal opportunity education and skills needed for the telecommunications industry. This will act as a relevant skills and quality feeder into the industry;
- Reconsider the “tick box” mentality that is largely driven by legislative compliance and propose other sustainable measures.

#### **7.4.2 Organisation recommendations**

- Concentrated efforts on succession planning and building the leadership pipeline;
- Leadership development;
- Relevant organisational design changes influencing processes, systems and the work environment;
- Hosting awareness programs on the benefits of inclusion as well as having open discussions on significant events faced by employees, the organisation, the industry and the country. For example, apartheid, macro-economic indicators and socio-economic indicators.

#### **7.4.3 Leadership recommendations**

- Concentrated efforts on sponsorship, equal opportunity networking, support system and role models;
- Focus on the alignment of values, culture and strategy with consequences for lack of accountability openly displayed;
- Intangible asset monitor as a KPI measure;
- Effective change management;
- Create transparency on responsibility and accountability of top management team on transformation.

### **7.5 Future research**

Although leadership has been extensively researched, there is little empirical evidence of the role of leadership in setting the pace of transformation within organisations. The purpose of this research study was to uncover insights from leadership on the current landscape, to share lessons where success has been noted and to reveal the challenges faced by leadership within organisations in promoting transformation to the strategic agenda.

Limitations on the extensive literature performed by academic researchers over the decades still exist. For example, how does current leadership influence the future organisational leadership? Does accountability feature in leading an organisation? How do events that are unique to a country get integrated within the pre-existing organisations? How do macro-economic indicators and the political environment shape leadership operating within the sphere? How does competing in the 21<sup>st</sup> century change the core focus of organisational leadership?

The recommendations for future research are presented below:

- The misalignment between organisational values to culture featured strongly in the research study. Whilst there is a great deal of literature on alignment of organisational values to culture, more research should be done on the consequences of misalignment of organisational values to culture on organisational performance as well as the retention of talented knowledge workers operating in such an environment.
- This research study focused on organisations within the telecommunications industry. A similar research should be conducted on other industries to assess the role of leadership in setting the pace of transformation and the lessons that can be shared across industries.
- A longitudinal quantitative research study can be done linking effective leadership transformation with organisational financial performance.
- This research study concentrated on the leadership of the top management team. Further research should be conducted on the leadership of the board team, as they directly influence the top management team.
- Future research should be conducted on the full impact of the diversity programmes introduced within the organisations that were mentioned in this research study, tracking the progress of the participants on the programme.

## **7.6 Research limitations**

The research methodology limitations were discussed in Chapter 4. The following factors were further identified as limitations to the research study:

- The researcher is employed in the industry that the research study was based on. The researcher could have been biased towards the industry and the participants who hold leadership positions within the industry.
- The sample was limited to the top leadership team. Including leadership from all verticals throughout the industry could have widened the understanding of the topic. The views of senior management, middle management and junior management could have increased the understanding of the research study.

- The participants from the organisations that were included in the research study were based in Gauteng, South Africa. Geographic bias may have influenced the results.
- The research study was impeded by an imposed time limitation therefore a cross sectional study was conducted. A longitudinal research study may benefit from the understanding of the link between the role of leadership and setting the pace of transformation within the industry, which is a drawn-out process.

## **7.7 Conclusion**

The research study was motivated by an observed increase in the calls to action on the topic of transformation by leadership within the country. The business sense benefits of diversity and inclusion management, and the concepts of transformation were highlighted in Chapter 1. Leadership lies at the helm of organisations that are aggressively competing in a global economic landscape with failure a harsh reality. Organisations today face the wrath of unhappy stakeholders with social media providing immediate access to information. Transparency, accountability and ethical standards are being demanded from organisations and the implications of non-compliance could lead to negative financial situations putting the organisations' reputation at risk.

Contrasting views were presented in the literature reviewed in Chapter 2 where the limitations from the evolution of the industrial era to the revolution needed in the digital era needed for organisations to compete in the 21<sup>st</sup> century were argued. This research study within the telecommunications industry undertook to understand the current priority that transformation is given on the strategic agenda and to establish the steps taken to build future leaders internally. The findings of this research study, to some extent, supported the argument that, although transformation was critical to the survival of organisations, the societal barriers that have evolved over centuries continue to inhibit the progression of marginalised groups to positions of leadership. This confirmed that, although some advancement has been made, it was easier to remain with the traditional status quo rather than boldly build the next leader.

A total of 12 interviews were conducted with key leadership members within the telecommunications industry to obtain their views on the current and future state of leadership in setting the pace of transformation within their organisations as well as the industry. The data gathered from the conversations was analysed resulting in the identification of key enablers and inhibitors revealed during the research process. The implementation of the recommendations identified by this study will give current and

future organisational leaders the tools to drive transformative activism that will result in organisations seizing the opportunity to enhance competitiveness in the global landscape and mitigating the risk of becoming irrelevant while becoming more responsible corporate citizens.

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## APPENDICES

### Appendix 1: Interview introduction



#### Interview introduction

Thank you for joining me today. The objective of this discussion is to get a better understanding of the attitudes of organisational leaders in driving an inclusive and transformative environment in the telecommunications industry.

These conversations will be recorded for transcribing purposes only and will be kept safely for my research dissertation on the GIBS MBA programme. All information will be kept confidential. Please may you sign the consent letter that states you are voluntarily participating. The raw information gathered in the interview will not be shared with the company, however the final report will be available in the public domain.

This should be a fluid discussion and I appreciate that you're willing to share your views with me and take time out of your busy schedule. Thank you once again.

## Appendix 2: Consent form

# Gordon Institute of Business Science

University of Pretoria

Informed consent letter

Dear \_\_\_\_\_

I am conducting research on the attitudes of leaders in driving an inclusive environment, and am trying to find out more on this in the telecommunications industry. Our interview will take the form of an one-on-one interview is expected to last for about 1 hour to 1.5 hours, and will help me understand how C-suite and board members navigate inclusivity and transformation. The interview will be recorded and analysed during the research project. Your participation is voluntary and you can withdraw at any time without penalty. Of course, all data will be reported confidentially. If you have any concerns, please contact my supervisor or me. Our details are provided below.

Researcher name: Shreshini Singh

Research Supervisor: Shireen Chengadu

Email: [shreshini@hotmail.com](mailto:shreshini@hotmail.com)

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

Phone: 083-200-2191

Phone: 083-324-3188

Signature of researcher:

Signature of supervisor:

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Signature of participant

Date

### Appendix 3: Interview schedule

#### Interview schedule (approved questions)

1. What model of leadership do you believe fits your organisation well, for example, transformational, transactional or servant leader? Is this leadership style important & why?
2. How do you perceive the alignment of the organisational values to the current organisational culture?
3. What will it take to be the CEO or Board Chair of this organisation in five years and how are you building this leader?
4. What priority does promoting an inclusive environment take on the strategic agenda? For example, promoting women and people of different races to positions of leadership.
5. Who gets measured on the progress of this and how is this done?
6. Do you think that there could be any other factor, besides legislation and business mandate, that influences your behaviour? For example, do you have a personal passion for gender diversity or transformation that goes beyond policy pressures, logic and economics?
7. As a C-suite/board leader you are the primary role model and must stay involved in driving an inclusive environment. Statistically the telecommunications industry is a male dominated sector. How does this impact building an inclusive culture?
8. If you are committed to change, what design change have you implemented and how is it being measured?
9. What do you think are the implications of not driving transformation and inclusivity in your organisation and for the industry?
10. What do you believe should your organisation and the industry be doing to drive transformation and inclusivity?

## Appendix 4: Ethical clearance letter

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

13 July 2017

Shreshini Singh

Dear Shreshini,

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

*You are therefore allowed to continue collecting your data.*

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

*Kind Regards*

GIBS MBA Research Ethical Clearance Committee