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IIE Bachelor of Commerce Honours in Management

*Role Congruity Theory and Women in Leadership: A Cross-sectional Qualitative Study
Describing the Challenges Faced by Women Achieving Leadership Positions in Medium
Sized Organisations within KZN.*

Research Portfolio of Evidence

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There is no such thing as failure; either you win or you learn. – Unknown

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DECLARATION

I, Caitlyn Cassidy Read, hereby declare that the Research Report submitted for the IIE Bachelor of Commerce Honours Degree in Management to The Independent Institute of Education is my own work and has not previously been submitted to another University or Higher Education Institution for degree purposes.

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ABSTRACT

Understanding and overcoming the challenges behind the success of female leaders is important for the effective performance of female leaders. It has been found that a distressed journey to leadership can impact on how a female performs and is treated in her senior role. There are very few females in leadership positions as they are not afforded the opportunity to showcase their potential and succeed as a result of the entrenched patriarchal system in South Africa. This erodes their self-confidence to work towards achieving try and achieve senior roles, which poses a major problem. In response to this status quo, a study was undertaken to describe the common challenges female leaders faced during their journey to becoming a leader and to provide recommendations for aspiring female leaders on how to overcome the challenges. To facilitate this, the Role Congruity Theory was utilised.

The qualitative and descriptive nature of the study required a set of in-depth interviews as the approach to obtain an information rich analysis of the challenges from the female participants who were selected through purposive sampling based on their position within the organisation.

This research considers the glass-ceiling affect and analyses how this impacts on certain aspects of female leadership roles. Therefore, this research created a thematic foundation to interpret findings effectively in order for these to be trustworthy. The findings included female who are leaders in KwaZulu-Natal, who are not affected by the glass-ceiling, but rather through stereotypes that have made them doubt their capabilities.

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CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

Chapter One provides, a background to the study, identifying the relevance from an academic and organisational context as well as identifying the problem statement and the statement of purpose. This section provided the foundation for the study together with the research questions and objectives.

1.1. Background

Historically, leadership has always been the prerogative of the males in the corporate, political and in the general societal setting (Eagly & Karau, 2002). Although women have increased their access into more middle management positions, only a small number fill the positions as top executives. Females have begun to empower themselves and statistics have shown that the global growth of women in senior positions increased from 21% in 2011 to 24% in 2016 (Thornton, 2016). Additionally, in 2011 females made up less than 4% of CEO's in the Fortune 500 (Javidan, et al., 2016) whereas in 2017 women held 6.4% of CEO's on the list. Although there has been an increase in the number of females in leadership positions, it is still not adequate. However; women are becoming less associated with the lower positions in the workplace, indicating that they are being promoted to more senior positions (Elmuti, et al., 2009).

Many women in leadership positions have a central challenge in common; that being that they show a lack of confidence in their competency and capabilities because of the constant stereotyping and prejudice. Thus, women are perceived to be less competent (Eagly & Karau, 2002), which could be the result of stereotyping and bias. As a result, the Role Congruity Theory is of relevance to this study, to assist the analysis of the challenges women face in their leadership positions within KZN. The Role Congruity Theory of Eagly (2002) is based on the prejudice women are facing daily because of the stereotypical attitudes of those around them. This study attempts to deal with broad questions around the challenges women face in attaining their leadership positions within the KwaZulu-Natal Region.

1.2. Rationale and Relevance

1.2.1. Rationale

The fundamental reason for this research paper was to gain an understanding into the reason(s) behind the challenges females face when attaining leadership positions. While many studies have previously analysed and studied the aspects of female leadership and the challenges or stereotypes they have faced, this topic will look closely at a particular region of South Africa. The researcher, being a South African female, aimed to understand the different reasons as to why females still face stereotypes and prejudice even though social morals have changed considerably. The researcher is determined to establish the reason for this lack of progress, despite the changes and increased focus on this area, there has been so little growth and improvement of females in leadership positions.

In December 2014, a list of South Africa's top one hundred (100) CEO's was released; notably, there was only one female within the top fifty positions. Maria Ramos is the CEO of Barclays Africa Group Ltd and was ranked sixteenth (16th) having been in the position for 5.8 years at the time (BizNews, 2014).

This research was conducted to inform people on how women in senior positions have managed the role of leadership despite encountering obstacles. This study provides information on ways women can succeed in the workplace which is traditionally regarded as a male enclave. Furthermore, it has provided examples to motivate other women, illustrating how some female leaders have overcome the glass ceiling (McCrady, 2012).

1.2.2. Academic and Organisational Relevance

The purpose of this study was to provide a valid contribution to the body of knowledge on female leadership and to broaden this understanding, reflecting on the in-depth perceptions and experiences of influential women which motivated them to face the challenges head on. The study provided new knowledge on the application of the Role Congruity Theory to produce insight to solve the research problem. This theory provided the necessary information regarding various challenges and prejudice females are more likely to face in leadership positions. Additionally, the research topic was relevant to the

researcher's field of study. The researcher firmly believed that all organisations need strong, inspirational leaders in order to be successful, and that they should be appointed according to their capabilities and not their gender. This research will therefore contribute to the business sector as the challenges women face are analysed in-depth, and recommendations and strategies were formulated for women to overcome these challenges in the future. In addition, it is also contributing to the body of knowledge and the academic field of Commerce.

1.3. Problem Statement

Evidence shows that females globally are not being given the opportunity to enter into leadership positions. In South Africa, this lacuna is clearly evident in the workplace, where there is a paucity of women in decision-making or leadership positions. This creates a psychological "glass ceiling effect" (Hinze, 2015), where women believe that they are not suited for leadership positions.

Although this concept also occurs in male thinking, the "glass ceiling" notion is more evident in females because women are more often excluded from leadership roles, they hence lack confidence and are not willing to take risks in obtaining these leadership opportunities (Clevenger & Singh, 2013). Therefore, in response to the problem statement, research must be done to determine why females face challenges in their leadership roles (Maree, 2016). This in-depth understanding provided information in suggesting how females can overcome leadership challenges in South Africa through understanding the Role Congruity Theory.

1.4. Purpose Statement

The purpose of this qualitative research was to describe the challenges women face when attaining their roles as leaders in South Africa, using a qualitative approach. Through semi-structured interviews, an in-depth understanding of a central phenomenon, the female leader's perceptions, was developed. The study utilised a semi-structured interview approach to view verbal and non-verbal communication, providing an in-depth view beneficial to the study (Maree, 2016, pp. 95-96). The Role Congruity Theory

therefore provided the foundation for the in-depth understanding of challenges and moreover, to recommend ways in which these challenges could be overcome for women who are still aspiring to be leaders. Additionally, the findings presented in this descriptive research study were analysed through the use of qualitative content analysis.

1.5. Research Questions

1.5.1. Main question

How can challenges that females face when trying to achieve leadership positions be described?

1.5.2. Sub-Question

How does the leadership style females adapt to the challenges they face when attaining a leadership position?

1.6. Research Objectives

1.6.1. Main objective

To establish the challenges women faced in their journey towards securing a leadership position.

1.6.2. Sub-Objective

To understand how a female's preferred leadership style impacted on their journey to becoming a leader.

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

To successfully strengthen the findings of this study, the Role Congruity Theory is analysed according to its relevance. Additionally, it is applied in the literature review, as well as in the data analysis to evaluate the relevance of the previous sources and published information on the research topic. This section will also conceptualise the central concepts of the study.

2.1. Theoretical Foundation

The Role Congruity Theory of Eagly & Karau (2002) was a suitable choice for the theory of this research as it could assist in adding more detail to the concepts of this topic in the best possible way. The concepts that are pertinent to this theory formed the basis for the themes within the literature review and the data collection of this research. According to Eagly & Karau (2002), this theory considers the disparity between gender roles and leadership roles, particularly the key factors that could influence congruity perceptions and their consequences for prejudice and any prejudicial behaviours. In 2005, Eagly & Diekmann suggested that a particular group is positively evaluated when their characteristics are alleged to be aligned with the requirements of the groups' typical social roles. Furthermore, it reveals the relation between the prejudice towards female leaders, the female gender stereotypes and those associated with typical leadership.

Prejudice tends to develop when a perceiver judges a female because of what is believed to be 'inconsistent' between what is predominantly the communal qualities associated with females, and the predominantly agentic qualities that are needed to succeed as a leader (Eagly & Karau, 2002). This theory assists in the notion that females face challenges because of prejudice, especially those who are in influential positions.

The majority of societies, households and cultures, globally, and within South Africa are still motivated by its patriarchal nature in giving women double workloads; as they enter the workforce in order to survive, while at the same time also carrying out their domestic duties. Many women in management or leadership positions tend to find it difficult to maintain a balance between their social, career and personal lives (Morgan, 2015).

Galinsky & Salmond (2003) state that men tend to denigrate females as they feel that females lack the skills and criteria that are needed for leadership positions; women defend themselves by stating that they are excluded from male leadership structures and are purposely isolated.

Eagly & Kakau (2002) observe that there is an incongruity between the female gender roles and the leadership roles of individuals. It was concluded that this leads to two forms of prejudice:

1. In terms of potential leadership roles, females are less favoured than as males.
2. The prescribed behaviours that are 'necessary' for leadership roles are less favoured if enacted by females.

There is a belief that gender role behaviours are incongruous and devalued against the traditional gender roles. To elaborate on this, women more so than men, are placed in a more negative light when they display leadership traits due to the traditional female role being inconsistent with the demand of leadership roles (Eagly & Karau, 2002; Heilman 2001).

The Role Congruity Theory will assist in gathering enough information for the interpretivist approach to this study, as the theory imparts a narrative to the researcher and the reader (Maree, et al., 2016). It assists in providing an in-depth understanding or description of other people's realities, which are the challenges women are facing in leadership positions within KZN. The theory is applied to the study as it has been well researched (dating back to 1989) and it allows the researcher to categorise each female leader included in the in-depth interviews by understanding their personal experiences and opinions as well as the challenges they have faced. The questionnaire utilised during the interviews posed certain in-depth questions to the female participants in order to assist the researcher to determine appropriate recommendations for future aspiring future leaders.

2.2. Literature Review

2.2.1. Introduction to literature review

The purpose of the literature review is to develop a direction for the research. Currently, the topic of challenges in female leadership has been under-researched due to the focus being placed on the challenges facing the leadership position itself. This review will create a close link with the central theory (the Role Congruity Theory). Therefore, in order to contribute to knowledge on female leadership, this literature review will follow a thematic review and divide sources according to five themes, namely: the history and under-representation of female leaders; gender stereotypes; the gender pay gap, the leadership styles of women and gender differences in leadership.

The division into the five themes above will help structure the analysis and enable the researcher to address the research questions and objectives accordingly. The research therefore follows an interpretivist approach which benefits from the literature review and is discussed further in the methodology. This review examines what previous research has discovered and thus enhances the purpose of the Role Congruity Theory (du Plooy-Cilliers, et al., 2015, p. 101).

The criteria of information that will be excluded is any literature that is not current, however, literature older than five years is included in this review as it is still relevant for reasons that will be argued in the review. The main contributing seminal authors for this literature review are Alice Eagly and Steven Karau. However, the researcher has searched for more recent sources as this topic is highly debated and is a currently trending topic.

2.2.2. The History and Under-representation of Female Leaders

Recently, there has been evidence of a radical change in the roles that females have occupied themselves into within organisations (Oláh, Richter, & Kotows, 2014). There has been a major social shift, where women were previously being marginalised and their labour was valued less than that of men (Bosak, Eagly, Diekman, & Sczesny, 2018). This is because of the intense patriarchal system that was evident throughout the world,

including in South Africa (Mies, 2014). Over more recent years, it is clear that the social roles of men and women have undergone different patterns of change. The most prominent trend is women's entry into male-dominated roles in vast numbers since the mid-20th century (Diekmann & Goodfriend, 2006). However, there are certain events that happened in the past that have allowed females to enter the working world, establishing themselves and develop. These events include both World Wars I and II.

According to Bryant (2009), "as men went off to war women took on more responsibilities", indicating that women entered the workplace as organisations needed to keep running. As time passed, women were beginning to adapt to roles that had previously been regarded as the man's domain, for example, during WW1, females dressed like the men and went to war in order to assist the Army with more staff (Bryant, 2009). Eventually, females were completing tasks and entering job positions that were predominantly meant for males, enabling the status of women to improve. Thus this resulted in women advancing in the workplace as more women were obtaining the positions of senior managers or even leaders (Carli & Eagly, 2011).

With reference to the statistics mentioned in the introduction, it is clear that in a few years females have made substantial gains in leadership, however, they have not yet reached a parity with men (Carli & Eagly, 2011), because women are not being represented at high levels of leadership. More often than not, they are perceived to be 'unfit' for the position. In addition, even when a woman attains a top position or leadership position, they still do not have the same authority as their male counterparts (Carli & Eagly, 2011). According to Carli and Eagly (2011), women generally fill the positions that require less authority as it is believed that men are best suited for the higher, authoritative positions.

There has been ongoing debates about the natural differences between males and females that contribute to their suitability for leadership positions and also to how they would adapt to an appropriate leadership style (Zhang & Qu, 2016). Women generally are believed to lack the characteristics required to be a successful and efficient leader, whereas males are more likely to appropriate the roles that provide wealth and power (Carli & Eagly, 2011).

2.2.3. Gender Stereotypes

The issue of gender stereotyping is not a new topic of interest; studies on this issue have been done as far back as 1990 (Eagly & Karau, 2002). Gender stereotypes are both descriptive (the perception held on what men and women typically do) and prescriptive (the belief held on what men and women *should* do) in nature. Gender stereotypes provide abundant explanations why women are under-represented and men are over-represented in senior leadership positions, typically by attributing gender disparities to the dispositions of women and men. Stereotypes are part of a broader cognitive framework that view social categories in essentialist terms (Likki, 2018). People form stereotypes based on their membership within a particular social group – particularly in terms of race or gender. These stereotypes are created because of the bias and/or judgmental attitudes people hold on these social groups (Eagly & Mladinic, 1989). Dr Tiina Likki explains that “gender stereotypes are notoriously sticky, in part because we’re often unaware that we hold them” (Likki, 2018).

Some of the more common stereotypes that prevent the advancement of women into positions of power were that women lack commitment, are seen to be too emotional and are not strict enough. They generally do not want or are unable to work longer hours as most are forced to find a balance between work and family responsibilities (Porter, 2009).

Prejudice and stereotypes are closely linked because both contain an unfair evaluation on particular individuals based on their group membership. Prejudice against female leaders have been found to stem from commonly held stereotypes about women (Carli & Eagly, 2011). The potential for prejudice occurs when a social perceiver holds a stereotype about a social group that is incongruent with the attributes that are thought to be required for success in certain classes of social roles (Eagly & Karau, 2002).

Whilst research on this topic was done in the United States of America, it is still of global relevance including KwaZulu-Natal. Research indicates that men are expected to be more agentic – authoritative and assertive, whereas women are expected to be more communal – supportive and kind (Newport, 2001). Although this research is considered to be outdated, these labels are still issues that women are facing today. Another research conducted acknowledges that women tend to be more communal, that is, oriented toward

the concerns and needs of others, and less agentic, that is, focused on individual achievement and advancement (Goethals & Hoyt, 2017). This adds to a common challenge that female leaders face, where females are expected to be more agentic in their leadership positions, but if they are too agentic, then they are accused of being 'bossy' and less communal (Carli & Eagly, 2011). In general, men are more critical of female leadership and react more negatively to highly competent women (Carli & Eagly, 2011), which is known as the double-bind theory.

The double-bind theory is also closely linked to another common challenge female leader's face and that is they often will their competence (Carli & Eagly, 2011). Behaviour that is often accepted and associated with males, is seen as inappropriate for females as they are seen as more aggressive. Due to the stereotypes and prejudice towards females, they unfortunately also struggle with the gender pay-gap when wanting to grow as individuals (Guadagno & Eno, 2010).

2.2.4 Gender Pay Gap

The 'glass ceiling' effect as mentioned earlier is known as a barrier of prejudice that prevents women from occupying higher levels of leadership positions (Eagly & Karau, 2002). The popularity of the 'glass ceiling' has increased in many parts of the world and even in South Africa, as it stems from the rarity of women in major leadership positions. This is supported by a report released by the World Economic Forum in 2017, which became known throughout the world as the global index report on gender inequality. The report revealed that although there has been an increase in the number of female legislators, senior officials and managers, there has also been an increase in the gender wage gap (France-Presse, 2017). To be more precise, the vehicle manufacturers of Hyundai found that on average, females in South Africa earn 27% less than their male counterparts (Makou, 2018).

Economists conducted their own research and discovered that there are a number of factors that contribute to explain the lower earnings of women compared to men (Blau & Kahn, 2007). This could still be a possibility currently, however, women are becoming more knowledgeable about careers which formerly were reserved for males, and where

women are still earning less (Catalyst, 2018). A study was conducted in the United States and it was found that a census research dating from 1950 to 2000 showed that as more females entered male-dominated fields, the overall pay rate had declined (Catalyst, 2018). Although the research was based on United States situations, this phenomenon is also noticeable in countries such as South Africa.

2.2.5 Leadership Styles of Females

Eagly (1987) stated that the stereotypes of women and men are purely observations of their actions in gender-typical social roles (e.g. breadwinner, homemaker and so forth), and it contains different beliefs about the attributes of women and men. A meta-analysis was published by Eagly, Johannesen-Schimit & van Engen (2003) (as cited in Bryman, et al., 2011) where the differences in the leadership styles of men and women were analysed. In their findings, it was evident that women were more likely to engage in a transformational leadership style – that is, transformational leaders develop a vision for their followers, furthermore, they find means to encourage individual development. It is believed that this style of leadership is favoured and is found to be more effective compared to other leadership styles as it contributes to the organisational effectiveness through organisational commitment and job satisfaction (Díaz-Sáenz, 2011). However, women leaders are still being evaluated less favourably than the males, particularly in situations that are male-dominated and have a predominant hierarchical structure (Díaz-Sáenz, 2011).

Women have the proven ability to be exceptional leaders (Sollmann, 2012), yet they are still expected to outperform men in order to be considered as an effective and competent leader, which create double standards (Díaz-Sáenz, 2011). Women face the challenge of lacking confidence because their competence is not adequate for the demands of modern society. For a woman to be acknowledged as competent to lead in her style of leadership on any level, she must be perceived as highly skilled and confident. Females are frequently at a disadvantage based on these double standards. Some authors suggest that double standards do exist, in that often women are required to provide precise evidence of their level of competence (Froddy & Smithson, 1999).

Women are not often given the opportunity to show their potential in leadership positions because of the stereotyping and prejudice against them. According to Eagly & Karau (2002) self-promoting behaviour makes a person's competence visible and is an important part of agentic behaviour. Due to this concept, females are at a disadvantage because it has been found that females are considered to be more communal leaders in their style of leadership, based on the conceptualisation of the Role Congruity Theory.

There are a number of important similarities in the leadership styles between men and women. Both are expected to behave in an assertive manner, however, the degree of assertiveness differs. When men are being assertive, they appear to be more aggressive, whereas women are believed to be more passive-aggressive (Díaz-Sáenz, 2011).

In previous years, the more successful females described their leadership styles to be more transformational. They found ways to engage their workers and allowed them to become more motivated and driven about their personal interests, leading towards organisational goals. This leadership style characterises power on a more personal level, such as an individual's charisma and interpersonal skills. On the other hand, there are those that believe that female leaders tend to be more situational based – implying that their strategies are based on dealing with issues when they arise, which they have not foreseen, and then strategised (Elmuti, et al., 2009).

The above attributes elaborate a concept that implies that women have a natural leadership style. Unfortunately, not many women reach top management positions or leadership positions, although women are also perceived to successfully lead and manage when they are placed in new environments, as they are able to adapt easier.

2.2.6 Gender Differences in Leadership

There have been previous analyses conducted on the different traits between men and women. A meta-analysis of fifty-seven empirical studies conducted by Hershcovis, concluded that on average men show traits of being more aggressive and physical in comparison to women, and this aggression was evident in their working environment (Hershcovis, et al., 2007). Men tend to be more assertive, especially in their working

environment, whereas females tend to be more caring and socially approachable than men (Carli & Eagly, 2011).

It has been observed that men and women show traits that are predominantly different, but similar in some respects. Many of the traits that are considered to be more 'female' or more 'male' tend to be historically or biologically determined, and are responsible for the differences that have occurred (Carli & Eagly, 2011). Women used to be relegated to more domestic roles, while men were competitors for survival. As mentioned previously, women are believed to be more caring, willing to help others and be forward thinking, whereas; males are perceived to be more assertive and aggressive than females. Carli and Eagly's (2007) critical leadership study states that women are more relationship-orientated, while men are more task-oriented. This is critiqued by Bowring (2004 as cited in Bryman, et al, 2011) who suggests that people have multiple interrelated and shifting identities. This view can further contribute to this study as it supports the notion that the experiences and challenges that women face do not define them or their capabilities and competencies.

A new study by Norwegian researchers found that in order to be an effective leader, there are five personality traits that should be evident in the individual (Eagly & Karau, 2002). These traits include dealing with stress and pressure that is job-related, being open to new experiences, being communicative, taking the initiative within an organisation and finally, supporting employees. Of these traits, women scored higher than the men and portrayed four out of five of them. This makes one question whether the management hierarchy is adequately chosen, as well as why more women are not in these roles to improve the organisation (Stamarski & Son Hing, 2015).

Because of women having favourable traits, one would think there would be more women in leadership or higher managerial positions, but because of the double-bind women face; they are in a position where they cannot actualise their capabilities. Bryman et al. (2011) emphasises this notion in the "double bind" concept, which denotes that women doubt their competence. Demonstrating male behaviour is suggested where women must balance the role's agentic demands that are more prevalent in men, yet still possess a flair

for communication, which is described as a predominantly feminine trait (Bryman, 2011:108).

2.3. Conceptualisation

Leadership: Leadership has been a concept that has been very difficult to define. According to Stogdill (1950), leadership is defined as “the act of influencing the activities and movement of an organised group in its efforts towards goal setting and goal achievement”. It is also the capacity whereby an individual creates a compelling vision, which can furthermore translate into an organisational reality (Bennis & Townsend, 1995). It is to be noted that leadership is not a personal quality an individual has, but is rather a process an individual adapts to (Sollmann, 2012). This research is based around the concept of female leadership, therefore it is important to understand the basics of leadership.

Female leadership: is where a woman is in power and has the achievement of being a leader within an organisation (Sollmann, 2012). It is an act of influencing and inspiring others, whilst being a female. There are elements of trust, vision and passion that a female leader projects towards her followers and which the followers radiate back to the female leader (Silva, 2016). Female leadership is a term that is based on the gender of the individual who is a leader.

Role Congruity Theory: this theory proposes that a group is positively evaluated when its characteristics are recognised as aligning with that group’s typical social roles (Eagly & Karau, 2002). The Role Congruity Theory sees that prejudice towards female leaders occurs due to the inconsistency that exists between the characteristics associated with the female gender stereotypes and those associated with the typical leadership. This theory is important to this research as it is the lens through which this study is viewed.

Prejudice: is typically conceptualised as an attitude that has a cognitive component (a certain belief about a target group), that contributes to an antagonised and inflexible generalisation about a phenomenon (Dovidio, et al., 2010). Prejudice was analysed in this research as it was a contributing challenge to a woman’s journey in becoming a leader.

Gender Stereotypes: are over-generalisations about the characteristics of an entire group based on gender (Rights, 2014). Gender stereotyping can be problematic as it limits the development of the natural talents and abilities of both females and males; it even affects an individual's educational and professional experiences and life opportunities in general.

Double-Bind: a concept that is an emotionally distressing problem in communication in which an individual (or group) receives two or more conflicting messages, and the one message contradicts the other. The double-bind concept was first described by G.Bateson and his colleagues in the 1950s (Bateson, et al., 1956). Women are caught up in this double-bind because if they strive to be leaders they are perceived to be too kind and gentle, but when they become more assertive and dominating they are perceived to be too bossy. This concept is of relevance to the study as it allows the reader to understand that it is a problem for females to find that balance in their leadership.

In conclusion, this section discoursed on the application of theoretical models together with identifying previous literature sources, creating a foundation for understanding female leadership and prejudice for the study.

CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY

3.1. Research Paradigm

The aim of this study was to understand in more detail the challenges females face when attaining a leadership position, as well as to understand how they have overcome these challenges. This was a social science as it tried to gain information about peoples' opinions and perceptions. The approach to this study was therefore qualitative and due to this, the proposed paradigm for this research was the interpretivist approach to research (du Plooy-Cilliers, et al., 2014). Qualitative studies seek to understand the context of participants through gathering information directly from the person/participant. Interpretivism and qualitative research are complementary because both are based on discovering a deeper meaning through the analysis of particular phenomena (Creswell, 2003), which in this study were the challenges female leaders face in medium sized organisations in KZN.

According to Maree et al. (2016), interpretivism is used to construct meaning in a deductive context as this research is based on an existing theory; and then a prediction of consequences is based on this. If the theory is correct, then the prediction of the observation is successful (du Plooy-Cilliers, et al., 2014). With close reference to the assumptions of interpretivism, this study assisted the researcher to gather enough information by analysing what challenges these women in leadership were faced with because of the prejudice and stereotypes meted out to them. This in turn enables future researchers to develop an understanding of the meanings of social contexts through the exploration of the richness, depth and complexity of a phenomenon (Maree, et al., 2016). A negative aspect of interpretivism can be subjectivity and the abundance of the information collected (Maree, et al., 2016). This is because there are no factual data, just opinions, and there are many viewpoints to consider when using the interpretivist approach.

The reason for using interpretivism as the paradigm approach for this study, was to gather information to understand what challenges women were faced with in achieving leadership roles and how they manage these challenges. However, it is important to note

that there were no single answer to the topic of this study; the best answer was obtained by considering different perspectives. The best way in which this was achieved was by gathering information from current female leaders regarding the challenges they were and are still currently faced with, how they deal with the stereotypical and prejudicial mind-set of the people (or colleagues) around them. The way in which this paradigm was justified was through explaining the five positions of interpretivism (du Plooy-Cilliers, et al., 2014).

3.1.1. Epistemology

From an interpretivist perspective, the epistemological position argues that common sense is what guides people and information is dependent on people's interpretation (du Plooy-Cilliers, et al., 2015, pp. 28-29). In this research, it depended on the researcher's view of the participants' feedback and whether or not the information was correct (du Plooy-Cilliers, et al., 2014).

3.1.2. Ontology

The ontological aspect is the study of reality or existence through the analysis of interaction with others (du Plooy-Cilliers, et al., 2014). This research however, had the researcher examined the female leaders to see the reality of their challenges, yet find their own way or ways to overcome and push through the challenges to be successful. It was through their personal, or subjective experience that creates their reality.

3.1.3. Axiology

The axiological aspect is the study of values by appreciating the complex understanding of unique realities (du Plooy-Cilliers, et al., 2014). In this case, the value is in the unique opinions of each female leader and what they perceive as their realities.

3.1.4. Methodology

The methodology of research enabled the researcher to gain an in-depth understanding of multiple realities through sensitive and qualitative methods such as in-depth interviews in order to understand different perceptions (du Plooy-Cilliers, et al., 2015, p. 31). Due to the

qualitative nature of this research, the study focused and relied on the opinions, personal experiences and beliefs of the phenomena, as it aimed to gain a deeper understanding of the challenges women were faced with when aspiring towards their leadership positions (Maree, et al., 2016).

3.1.5. Meta-theory

Lastly, the meta-theory of interpretivism is the enabling of the researcher's examination of these females in leadership positions to explain their narrative through the theoretical framework in order to guide the research to arrive at a conclusion by having a deeper understanding of their situations. The meta-theory of interpretivist research heightens the fact that subjectivity is important, that the theory used to research the participants must be focused on understanding these female leaders' subjectivity (du Plooy-Cilliers, et al., 2014). Therefore, based on their responses, the researcher carefully analysed and provided a context for the phenomena (females facing and overcoming their challenges when they were gaining leadership roles) being studied (Maree, et al., 2016). The form of the analysis was based on thematic coding as the researcher grouped results in themes and concepts during the analysis process.

3.2. Research Design

For the purpose of this study, the research design followed a qualitative approach during the collecting and analysing of the information. Qualitative methods are expedited by interpretivist paradigms as it deals with underlying meanings of information (du Plooy-Cilliers, et al., 2015, p. 173). The use of qualitative research allowed the researcher to study a smaller sample of females and provided the opportunity to pose open-ended questions to obtain useful and detailed information (du Plooy-Cilliers, et al., 2015, p. 173). The feelings, opinions and overall thoughts (qualitative aspects) of the participants were important to the framework of this research.

For this study, a cross-sectional (short-term) timeframe was used as it was completed in 2018 (at a specified point in time) (Maree, et al., 2016). The data required for this research was collected once from selected participants with no secondary interviews needed, which

created a foundation for the assistance for aspiring future female leaders to overcome challenges along their journey (du Plooy-Cilliers, et al., 2015, p. 149). A cross-sectional design was a feasible option for the researcher who was an Honours in Business Management student under a time constraint. The purpose of interpretivist studies allows for a perspective of a situation and provides insight into the way in which individuals, for example the female leaders, make sense of challenges they encounter (Maree, 2016, p. 62).

Deductive reasoning was used in this research as a general thought or assumption was made by the researcher, where research was done in order to conclude with a more definitive assumption (du Plooy-Cilliers, et al., 2014, pp. 48,128). This allowed the researcher to test the existing theory of Role Congruity and conduct a research study on the challenges women have faced when obtaining their leadership positions.

To gain an in-depth understanding of the female leader's challenges, a non-experimental research design was followed (Maree, 2016, p. 54). For this research, the most suitable design was interactive studies as it assists qualitative research in terms of being more descriptive (Maree, 2016, p. 54). Additionally, the literature review formed the basis for the study and was utilised without manipulation to ensure trustworthiness for this study. A fair amount of interaction was required between the researcher and the sample group.

3.3. Population

The population criteria of this study are the total group of people (or entities) that information to complete the study is required from (du Plooy-Cilliers, et al., 2014). Specifically, it was necessary for the researcher to identify the population parameters as it guided the study and the sample size of the population (Maree, et al., 2016).

3.3.1. Target and Accessible Population

The target population included individuals who met the population parameters of this study (du Plooy-Cilliers, et al., 2015, p. 134). For the purpose of this research, this included all females who are leaders of sort, within South Africa. Whereas, the accessible population to ask questions from was a fraction of the target population available to the

researcher (du Plooy-Cilliers, et al., 2015, p. 134). The accessible population, due to time and resource constraints, included four female leaders from medium-sized organisations within KZN, who were faced with challenges when they were attaining their position. The small sample size was sufficient for this study as it allowed the researcher to gain an in-depth understanding from expanded questions within the in-depth interviews.

3.3.2. Population Parameters

- The female had to be a female leader of sort, to ensure that the research is relevant and trustworthy.
- It is to be noted that a leader is described as an individual who holds a superior position within their field and can exercise a high degree of influence over others (Bryman, et al., 2011).
- The female leader had to be domiciled within the Durban area, as this was an accessible location for the researcher.
- This study had an age limit whereby the participant could be between the ages of 18 to 65.
- The study was not limited to participants of a particular race as South Africa has a diverse population; however, the study was not restricted to include all races, as female leaders were not defined by their demographics, but rather the way in which they are faced with challenges by their position as a female leader.

3.4. Sampling

A sample in research is known as a subset of the population – which were the female leaders that the researcher would have had access to. The sample was the actual group of people that were purposely chosen to be studied (du Plooy-Cilliers, et al., 2014).

3.4.1. Unit of Analysis

The unit of analysis for this research were females (people), and the female leaders' verbal responses that were interpreted and studied together with the Role Congruity Theory, to encourage female leaders to overcome challenges in their leadership positions (Maree, et al., 2016).

3.4.2. Non-probability Sampling

Four current, medium-sized organisational female leaders were selected to be interviewed for this study through non-probability sampling. Non-probability sampling is a representation of a group or sampling techniques that help researchers to select units from a population that they are interested in studying (du Plooy-Cilliers, et al., 2014). Collectively, these were units from the sample that the researcher studied.

3.4.3. Sampling Method

The sampling method used in this study was purposive sampling as the participants are purposefully chosen based on their position within different medium-sized organisations, as well as where the female leader is located in KwaZulu-Natal (du Plooy-Cilliers, et al., 2014). This sampling method assisted the researcher in ensuring an easier access to the participants without the misuse of time and finances.

3.4.4. Sample Size

Four current female leaders were interviewed as it was a sufficient number of participants to give detailed descriptions of their views of key success factors. However, it was important for the researcher to ensure that the questions asked allowed for elaborated and detailed responses.

3.5 Data Collection Methods

The qualitative data collection method utilised in this research study was in-depth interviews together with a semi-structured questionnaire (Maree, et al., 2016). The researcher conducted four one-on-one interviews that were followed by a series of open-ended questions that took place in roughly forty minutes. The purpose of an interview setting allowed for a more elaborate conversation as it created a safe space for the participant to be free to answering the questions and feel comfortable when answering them (du Plooy-Cilliers, et al., 2014). This in turn, permitted the researcher to gain insightful information from these current female leaders. With their assistance of the participants and their answers to the questions, this information will be used as a guideline

to contribute to society and to the field of commerce through the understanding of the challenges female leaders faced and how these challenges can be prevented or overcome.

In-depth interviews are used in qualitative research when the researcher is aiming to find a detailed analysis on the different perspectives with a small number of participants (Maree, 2016). These interviews are generally intensive and allow for more comprehensive information than other forms of qualitative data collection methods, such as focus groups. Due to the nature of in-depth interviews being more private and in an interview setting, it allowed the participants to be more relaxed and comfortable as they were able to speak about personal topics without feeling embarrassed. However, the downfall to the use of in-depth interviews was that they were time consuming, as time was allocated to each individual, rather than for example, focus groups where they are in a “one-time” setting (du Plooy-Cilliers, et al., 2014) .

Qualitative research is subjective as it is difficult to generalise the data gathered from the participants because these are the opinions of the participants and these vary (Boyce, 2006). This therefore allowed the participants to meet with the researcher individually to describe their personal opinions in more detail, without any judgements or distractions from others; they also had the chance to properly think about the questions and their respective answers in greater detail (du Plooy-Cilliers, et al., 2014).

The researcher received consent from the four participants prior to the interviews, to be voice-recorded. The researcher made note, however, the recordings were taken to ensure that the researcher did not omit any vital details when the data was being analysed. The nature of the questions asked during the interviews were in a qualitative language. This means that the questions were asked in such a way that they were “open-ended” as it allowed the participants to respond with very detailed, lengthy descriptions about their feelings and opinions (Maree, et al., 2016). An example of a question that was asked is; “Describe your journey to becoming a leader.” This question allowed the researcher to analyse how they might have been mistreated through their years of gaining experience.

The researcher conducted a pre-test to ensure the chosen participants for the research would understand the questions and respond to them in an honest and logical manner.

Based on the results of the pre-test, the researcher changed the grammar and layout of a few questions to receive appropriate and anticipated responses.

3.6 Data Analysis Methods

The qualitative data analysis allowed for a structured data collection (du Plooy-Cilliers, et al., 2014, p. 232). When conducting this research, one of the most important steps is to analyse the data collected. This is because it assists in making sense of the data and convert it into relevant information that can be used in further research (du Plooy-Cilliers, et al., 2014).

For this research, a deductive (research based on an existing theory), qualitative thematic content analysis was used to analyse the data collected from all four interviews through the voice-recordings (du Plooy-Cilliers, et al., 2014). The researcher identified unique themes that emerged from subdividing and reassembling data collected (du Plooy-Cilliers, et al., 2015, p. 232).

The reason for the choice of the qualitative thematic content analysis, was to provide a detailed insight into the complex views of current female leaders by analysing their responses to the questions. This was crucial for the study as the discrimination against female leadership is a dynamic topic throughout the world, and also in South Africa. It was necessary for the researcher to fully understand these complex views of current female leaders to identify the challenges and provide a detailed recommendation on how to overcome these challenges.

The content analysis involved eight steps to group the data in such a way that it was interpreted and reported appropriately and attentively (Maree, 2016, p. 111). This careful preparation allowed the researcher to focus on the key concepts as it enabled simplifying the data so it could be coded effectively.

Step one involved the preparation of the data through transcribing the data from the voice-recording into a written Microsoft Word document (du Plooy-Cilliers, et al., 2014). The participants were listed as Participant A to D to ensure confidentiality.

Step two involved using prior coding to place responses into similar phrases, sentences or paragraphs for an easier and manageable analysis. These were then used to form a conceptual unit based around these concepts to identify themes, rather than single words or sentences when interviewing the participants (du Plooy-Cilliers, et al., 2014).

Step three included developing categories and a coding scheme to group the related coding units together to form specific categories (du Plooy-Cilliers, et al., 2014, p. 238-239). The categories were exhaustive, mutually exclusive and specific. The codes needed for the research were established before the analysis phase.

Step four entailed testing the coding on a sample test, such as the pre-test, in order to ensure consistency and clarity.

Step five included coding all the text through highlighting all relevant ideas. Thematic coding was used as the researcher needed to read through the data carefully to identify relevant phrases. The researcher linked this coding to the list of themes from the literature review and theoretical foundation used when analysing the data for themes and concepts (du Plooy-Cilliers, et al., 2014, p. 241). This allowed a reduction in the text by identifying the themes of challenges, competencies and success factors (du Plooy-Cilliers, et al., 2014).

Step six included ensuring that the coding was consistent and nothing was omitted. It was crucial that the researcher revisited all the coding for any possible discrepancies as the process was conducted without additional assistance.

Step seven entailed drawing conclusions through the interpretation of findings from the categories and themes that were identified (du Plooy-Cilliers, et al., 2014, p. 242). These findings were based on the information received from the participants.

Lastly, step eight included reporting the findings based on the similar, yet personal challenges these female leaders had faced and related it to the Role Congruity Theory.

CHAPTER FOUR: PRESENTATION AND INTERPRETATION OF FINDINGS

This chapter contains an in-depth presentation and discussion of the data collected through all fifteen open-ended interviews. The data was discussed and represented in both visual and textual format for ease of interpretation. The interview questions were designed to address the research objectives and research problem. The analysis of all data was conducted as per the research methodology discussed within Chapter Three. The trustworthiness of the data is also explained below.

4.1. Trustworthiness of the Study

In this qualitative study, the researcher aimed to create an in-depth understanding of the phenomenon at hand and relied on the trustworthiness of the participants and the research content (Maree, et al., 2016). Trustworthiness in this qualitative study was crucial as there were many different opinions about the challenges that female leaders were faced with and the contributing factors thereof. Whilst those opinions could be generalised, the researcher found the means to prove that the data was credible and that it contributed to the body of knowledge (du Plooy-Cilliers, et al., 2014). This was achieved by choosing and making use of trustworthy participants to share information about the challenges they face as females in leadership positions. Lincoln and Guba (1985) (as cited in du Plooy-Cilliers, et al., 2014), suggested that the aim of trustworthiness in a qualitative inquiry was to support the argument in such a way that the findings are worth paying attention to (Elo, et al., 2014). The trustworthiness of this study was ensured using the four criteria mentioned below that should always be considered by researchers (Maree, 2016, p. 123);

4.1.1. Credibility

Credibility in a qualitative study refers to how accurately the researcher interprets the data provided by the participants (du Plooy-Cilliers, et al., 2015, p. 258). The credibility of this study was enhanced when the researcher spent long periods of time (approximately one hour) with the participants to ensure they understood and interpreted the data correctly (du Plooy-Cilliers, et al., 2014). Additionally, the credibility of the research was enhanced

further as the researcher created questions that would encourage more detailed answers from the participants in order to understand their challenges and responses to the questions (Maree, et al., 2016).

4.1.2. Transferability

The second criterion was transferability. This refers to the ability to apply the results to a similar study and generate similar results (du Plooy-Cilliers, et al., 2015, p. 258). In this study, transferability did not expect generalised claims about the challenges that female leaders had to face, it merely allowed the reader to relate their experiences or their own research to the elements of this study – such as theories, the methodology used and so on (Maree, et al., 2016).

4.1.3. Dependability

The third criterion was dependability, which specifically referred to the quality of the process of integration that occurred between the data collection process (in-depth interviews) and analysis gathered from the data (du Plooy-Cilliers, et al., 2014). In this study, the researcher ensured dependability through demonstrating an understanding of the participants using a detailed discussion of the research design, collection, analysis and reflective evaluation. Furthermore, the researcher continued to motivate why the different methods were necessary (Maree, et al., 2016). According to Lincoln and Guba (1985) (as cited in du Plooy-Cilliers, et al., 2014), it was discovered that there was a strong connection between credibility and dependability because it is believed that the credibility of research ensured dependability.

4.1.4. Confirmability

Lastly, the final criterion was confirmability. In this qualitative study, this was important as it confirmed the data collected to be supportive of the researcher's interpretation. It ensured that the findings are purely based on those of the participants and that no bias is shown as this would be seen as unethical (Maree, et al., 2016). Therefore it was important for the researcher to carefully audit the findings of this study and receive assistance from the supervisor to remove any bias from the conclusions (du Plooy-Cilliers, et al., 2014). To

increase the confirmability of this study, the researcher made an attempt to avoid any misleading or biased questions in the questionnaire.

4.2. Presentation and Interpretation of Findings

Each session began with a run-through of the information sheet and consent forms, as depicted in appendix E and F. Each question has been addressed according to the results of the analysed data and has been aligned to the literature review.

4.1.1. General information of participants

The purpose for the following questions served as a means to collect sufficient background information of the participants to analyse the data in a fair and ethical manner. These questions allowed for the researcher to get a basic understanding of the participants' history within their career when conducting the interviews.

Table 1: Age of the participants

Question 1: What is your age?	
Participant A	29
Participant B	37
Participant C	44
Participant D	50

The above table is a representation of the participants' ages. The purpose for this question was to analyse whether or not females experience the same challenges even though their age differs. This question proved that even though the participants are of different ages, they gave the same or similar answers and opinions.

Table 2: Leadership position of the participants

Question 2: What is your leadership position and how long have you been in this position?		
Participant A	National Marketing Director	4 Years
Participant B	Chief Operating Officer	10+ Years
Participant C	Risk and Sustainability Executive	2 Years
Participant D	Operational Director	15 Years

The above question was asked in order understand what their exact leadership roles were within their company and the length of time they had been in that position. This allows for a better understanding of their experience as a leader to make certain assumptions and conclusions with regards to the challenges they faced when achieving their leadership position.

Table 3: Journey to becoming a leader

Question 3: Describe your journey to becoming a leader.	
Participant A	She described her journey as challenging because she is young and had minimal experience. She studied a BCom in Marketing Communications. After her studies she went from working as a receptionist, to being part of a customer relationship management team with a different company, to her current company as an assistant marketing manager for two years, and finally to her current position in 2014 as a National Marketing Director.
Participant B	This participant did not study; at the age of twenty-one she was offered a job as a receptionist when she first started out. However, through proving her capabilities she was able to gain a lot more trust and worked hard to where she is today, as the COO of the company.
Participant C	This participant has her Honours in Chartered Accountancy. She completed her three-year articles with a company, where she was a financial manager for one year after

	completing her articles. She then moved to the company she is currently with as the financial manager for the past fifteen years. Due to 'competition' with a male in her department, the position of the Risk and Sustainability Director of the company came available; she wanted change and took it because she knew she would do well in the position.
Participant D	She holds an Industrial Relations undergraduate qualification. She explained that she has had an unconventional career as she began in the employment market. Her next job she described as "a real white-man's boys club" and did accounting work. She then did marketing work and proceeded to be the marketing manager. She then moved to another company where she became second in charge for the credit department. She then moved across to her current organisation and started as a project manager and through proving herself became the operations director.

The above question served as an opening question to determine if the participants would voluntarily provide any information on the challenges they had faced on their journey, which they did. Each participant related their history in detail and exposed minor challenges that they faced during their journey. For example, particular participants struggled to be appointed in high-positioned jobs as they were not trusted to do the work properly, or competing against their male counter-parts to succeed but not being chosen for the development.

4.1.2. Information grouped into appropriate themes

The remaining questions that were asked during the interview have been segmented into particular themes relating to the answers given and was then aligned to the literature review. Additionally, the analysis also questioned whether the research objectives had been achieved. Each theme has specific question(s) that assisted the researcher to get sufficient information to conclude the findings accordingly (see below).

Theme 1: Natural Differences between Men and Women

Table 4: Question 4

<i>In your view, please describe how the natural differences between men and women played a role in the attainment of your position.</i>	
Participant A (National Marketing Manager; 29 years old; 4 years in position) & B (COO; thirty-seven years old; approximately ten years in position)	Explained that it was “a big factor” for females. The example that was given was that females are given a “time-frame” to map their lives out, i.e. when they should be married, have children and run a home. They both feel as though they were living “in a man’s world”. Both also added that they were exposed to stereotypical environments.
Participant C (Risk & Sustainability Executive, forty-four years old, two years in position)	This participant explained that the natural differences did not affect her as she is part of a very understanding organisation. She explained that to strive and get through any issues, one should “just continue being progressive.”
Participant D (Operating Director, fifty years old, fifteen years in position)	This participant described many of the main points of the corresponding theme. She referred to the way in which men are more assertive and aggressive, and females are more emotional and caring, and with this, it is a constant fight for females to achieve their goals. As a result, she believes that the “personality of a female changes” and that they need to become more aggressive to achieve. A strong cultural background was described by this participant, explaining that “women were raised to bear and look after children, not get a tertiary education and work”.

All the participants believed that the history of females being suppressed as well as the natural differences have impacted on the way in which females are treated and viewed.

However, it was noted that the older the female is, the more challenges she faced and had a more defined opinion about it. For example, participant D comes from a cultural background where there was strict adherence to their beliefs, whereby women were mainly raised to look after children. When she wanted to further her education after school, she was questioned and admonished.

It also became apparent that even the younger participants (A and B) are still experiencing the mind-set of females being seen as inferior. This clearly shows that irrespective of a female's age, they have all faced challenges and still experience these prejudice-induced difficulties in their careers. The reason for this is related to the findings of the Role Congruity Theory whereby according to Ely (1994; as cited in Eagly, 2002), women adhere to self-regulatory processes as they have social identities that reflect prevailing gender stereotypes in their workplace, as these stereotypes are based on the natural differences between genders. These stereotypes are based on the natural differences between men and women and are particularly evident in organisations with fewer numbers of women in senior positions, which all the participants have in common because they are seen to be in male-dominated careers.

Theme 2: Gender and Industry-related Stereotypes

Table 5: Question 5

<i>Can you describe any stereotypes or prejudices you have faced in your journey towards becoming a leader?</i>	
Participant A	Due to this participant fulfilling her career in the motor vehicle industry, she faced the more common stereotypes in her career. She described that members of the organisation she works in believe she is “not cut out for the position she is in” because “women do not know cars”. Another significant stereotype this participant is faced with is that “women who are leaders are taken lightly and not seriously.”
Participant B	This participant explains that she does not face any stereotypes being in her position, as she said she “treats people the way she wants to be treated in return.”
Participant C	Due to her position, this participant described other employees having the opinion that “decisions are based on her emotions or hormones rather than fact.”
Participant D	This participant said that she had “been lucky” in the sense that she has always been treated well and taken seriously, therefore resulting with no stereotypes being evident.

This question seeks to discover whether females are still experiencing noticeable stereotypes in their careers. Based on the above responses from the respective participants, it is evident that there is still major prejudice and stereotypes being held against females based on their knowledge, gender, hormones or emotions in the industry in which they operate. However, according to Eagly & Karau (2002), males and females who are leaders or potential leaders differ in their management style, beliefs and behaviours. Various studies have suggested that female leaders have a behavioural

repertoire that possess more communal features than that of a male (Eagly & Karau, 2002). This is particularly evident with participant C where her decisions are ostensibly hormonal rather than factual. The prejudice these participants have been subjected to be unnecessary in the opinion of the researcher because it relates to the double-bind concept. This concept was explained in theme two of the literature review, whereby women are viewed as too aggressive when they adopt more masculine leadership traits in order to succeed as a leader.

Theme 3: Stereotypes

Figure 1: Word cloud indicating the common responses amongst participants' opinions on the gender pay gap.



Table 6: Question 6

<i>What is your perception of the pay-gap between men and women in leadership positions?</i>	
Participant A	Felt as though it is discussed more openly; also explains that “females definitely deliver more than males do and still get paid less”. She mentioned there is a “cultural understanding that men are the breadwinners and this is still embedded in people’s thinking”.
Participant B	Described the pay-gap between men and women in equal

	positions as 'horrible'.
Participant C	Stated that it is "still highly significant and it is still believed that men should fill the higher roles".
Participant D	Explained that it exists but should not and that remuneration should be based on knowledge and experience, not gender.

After developing an understanding of the participants' perceptions of the pay-gap, it is clear that the gendered pay-gap has a major impact on female workers and women have a negative view of this. However, when conducting the interviews, participants A and B had a somewhat more aggressive tone to their response, indicating that they have been directly affected by the pay-gap. Participant B in particular stated she would be earning almost triple than what she currently is earning had she been a male. In terms of the Role Congruity Theory, researchers have examined gender discrimination in wages and promotion closely and although it has improved, it is by no means where it should be (Eagly & Karau, 2002). This question served its purpose in theme three of the literature review to understand how females feel about the topic and to analyse how they are being affected by it. The concluded reason for this is largely based on the fact that women are still being viewed as the submissive gender because cultural backgrounds are still uppermost, which impacts on people's decision-making and opinions.

Table 7: Question 10

<i>Are you able to describe any challenges you have faced in your journey to becoming a leader?</i>

This question was asked during the interviews to obtain the participants' direct answers regarding their personal challenges. By asking this question, it allowed researcher to conclude the challenges with definite and plausible answers. A common thread was found amongst participants which is represented in Figure 2 below. With regards to participants A, C and D, who possess qualifications and participant B who does not, the only challenge participant B had that was different to the others was that she had to teach herself the majority of the work she was required to complete. Many of the common responses lead

back to the Role Congruity Theory as it set the baseline of stereotypes that they were trying to overcome. For example, with regards to the response of “proving herself”, all the participants mentioned it for the reason that the males in the organisations were seen as the better candidates to produce better results and work, in comparison to females. The given responses relate back to the theme of Gender Stereotypes in this research and also assisted in answering the main research question as the direct challenges were given in detail.

Figure 2: Word Cloud displaying the most common answers amongst the participants of the challenges they had faced.



Table 8: Other responses that were less common amongst the participants.

“Women are regarded as not good enough”
“Lots of self-doubt because I didn’t have any qualifications”
“When I first started in my position and I needed to produce work, it was always assumed that it was someone – particularly a male – that was doing my work for me that I just presented as my own. So, because of that, I was never taken seriously.”
“Because I am second in charge and the CEO was a male, I constantly lived in a man’s shadow until I learnt to stand my ground.”
“At first, I was not able to stand my ground. I was a push-over, which made me very unhappy and made it very difficult to adapt to my environment.”

Table 9: Question 11

In addition to the previous question, could you describe any challenges you are still faced with in your current position?

The purpose of this question was to understand if and how these females had overcome their challenges. Through asking this question, the researcher hoped to obtain answers which would indicate what they had done to overcome their challenges as a means to provide appropriate recommendations for this research. As depicted in the figure below, the common challenge that females are faced with are a result of the males from older generations who are still set in their old ways. This means that these men grew up in an era where women were not given the opportunity to be leaders or be outspoken, which made it difficult for leaders such as Participant A and Participant C in particular.

Figure 3: Word cloud representing most common responses from the participants answering whether they still face challenges being a leader.



Theme 4: Leadership Style of Females

Figure 4: Word cloud showing the common responses from participants of their perception of their adapted leadership style.

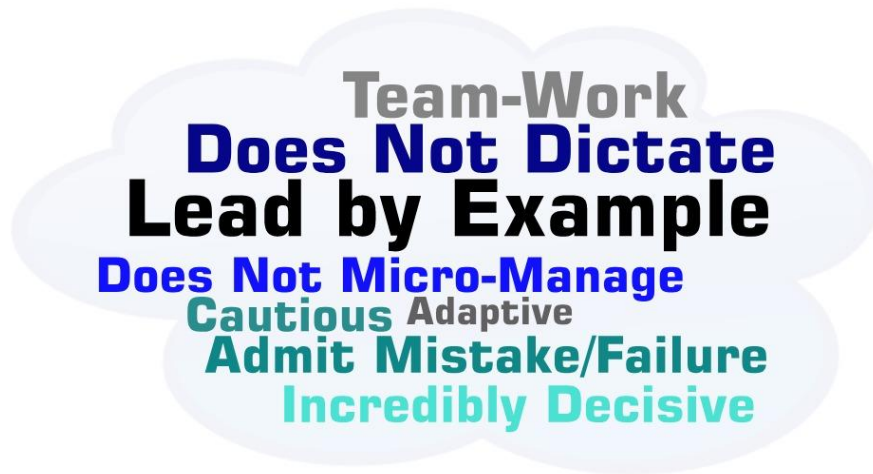


Table 10: Question 7

How would you describe your leadership style?	
Participant A	Stated that she prefers to “lead by example”, and any work she asks others to do, she must be able to get involved and do it as well. She enjoys mentoring and teaching others the necessary skills to perform their work with excellence.
Participant B	Stated that she does not dictate because she does not want to be viewed as bossy. She prefers to find her “own initiative” as she believes she achieves and grows more as a person by doing this.
Participant C	Stated that people take to change and her style is personal and adaptive depending on the type of person she is dealing with. However, overall, she enjoys teamwork for everyone to discuss their work and ideas,

	she does not like to micro-manage and allows her staff to “have control and show initiative”.
Participant D	Stated her style is “adaptive to the individual” she is dealing with. Prefers to “lead by example” and “constantly wants to improve herself and her employees”.

In this research, this question served as a probing research tool to analyse which leadership style the majority of women adapt to. Through the responses of the participants, it is clear that they portray a transformational leadership style. A transformational leader is described as an individual who solves challenges by inspiring others to achieve notable results through entrusting them with authority to make decisions once they are trained accordingly (Thornton, 2016). The participants preferred to embrace teamwork and create a good relationship with their employees and colleagues. Although some females do adopt certain male characteristics, it is merely a way in which the females can show authority in order to obtain results from an individual. These responses from the participants were incorporated into the concept of “double-bind” in the Role Congruity Theory as suggestions for females regarding the most adaptable and effective leadership style. This is because as female leaders, they explained that maximum results have been achieved through what they personally implemented. Additionally, this assisted the researcher to answer the research sub-question, whether women’s preferred leadership style hinders or assists them to achieve success.

Table 11: Question 8

<i>In your opinion, how has your leadership style impacted your position of leadership?</i>	
Participant A	She state that she had received a lot of advantages because she has gained her respect in the organisation. She further elaborated and explained that she had experienced some tension as her position “leaves little room for personal growth”.
Participant B	The only impact this participant has noticed is that she has gained a large amount of respect from those below and

	above her.
Participant C	This participant explains that her employees see her as emotional but she has to stick to her morals and to who she truly is as an individual, which has helped her gain respect.
Participant D	Stated that it has helped her a lot as she is balanced and gets the results she aims for. She added that she always ensures that she can get the job done and people are intimidated by her because of her “directness”.

This question formed the basis for understanding how these female leaders have adopted and adapted to particular leadership traits and how it has affected them. Through the analysis of their responses, it is obvious that each individual has benefited in terms of respect and results from being more transformational. Through a deeper analysis, Participant A has difficulties finding room for personal growth because she is largely concerned about the well-being of her staff. This can be exhausting for an individual and could affect their well-being and performance within an organisation. Participant D on the other hand explained that she was a lot more balanced in her chosen leadership style and continuously grows as an individual. By taking these two participants and comparing their different situations of the same leadership preferences, the difficulties Participant A faces can be narrowed down to her age and minimal experience in the corporate world. Furthermore, as she becomes more exposed to her tasks she will become a much more balanced individual. Alternatively, Participants B and C have gained much respect through their decision-making styles and initiatives as they have respected others and received respect in return. However, it is to be noted that Participants A and D explained that they both command respect, but that was not their primary focus, whereas Participants B and C did.

Theme 5: Gender Differences and the Double-Bind

Table 12: Question 9

<i>Can you explain how your leadership style differs to that of a male?</i>	
Participant A	Explained that men do not feel guilty and are authoritative in nature. She further elaborated that because of those two attributes, they tend to “not lead by example”.
Participant B	She believed that men have a much more vocal nature and showed “no compassion”, especially because they do not listen to what others have to suggest. She also explained that men show a lot more authority.
Participant C	She went into detail explaining that females are “softer and get to know their employees on a more personal level”. Whereas males are sterner and “domineering;” tend to be more autocratic and “don’t know their staff”.
Participant D	This participant strongly believed it depended on the person and the situation they are in and that “gender difference is persistent in the workplace”.

Understanding the perceptions these participants have on how they differ from men, served as important information for the theme of ‘Gender Differences in Leadership’ in the literature review. This is because it identified areas of differences of gender leadership from female leaders to their male counterparts. Through the analysis of the responses, males are perceived to be more dictating, less compassionate and are not concerned about leading by example, as all they expect are results. As stated above, this question forms the basis for theme five and further confirms, where the Role Congruity Theory is concerned, that females are more communal, and males are more agentic (Eagly & Karau, 2002; Bryman 2011). This is closely related to the double-bind concept as depending on one’s gender one is assumed to have certain personality traits which cause issues for females, as most have a kind nature and if they become more domineering, they are seen as aggressive.

Table 13: Question 12

As a female, what doubts have you faced in reaching your position?

After analysing the responses that the participants gave to this question, it was clear that females still have doubts about their performance within their roles and their positions of leaderships. This stems from the prejudice and stereotypes they have had to face in their journey towards becoming a leader, proving that stereotyping has a major effect on the self-image of these participants. It is known that females tend to over-analyse situations which lead to doubting oneself (Hinze, 2015), however, it should not stem from stereotypical behaviour in the working environment. Participant B was the only individual who explained that she does not have any doubts, as she was brought up. She learned to “never take things personally” and allow this to bring her down.

Theme 6: Self-Doubt

Table 14: Question 13

<i>Question 13: Could you explain why you think so few females are in leadership/senior positions in South Africa?</i>	
Participant A	She explained that “women are not willing to wait it out” and that “opportunities are not handed out,” therefore it needs to be earned by proving yourself. She feels as though too many females “give up too soon because of self-doubt as they don’t see the results they would like”.
Participant B	Many females are in organisations where there are older individuals who still have their mind-set in “the old way of thinking”.
Participant C	This participant has the same opinion as participant B. She also added that “men see women as emotional and submissive, which makes them feel as though they are not good enough”.

Participant D	This participant explained that female South Africans live in a “completely patriarchal and sexist society” and are subjected to an “incredibly traditional background”.
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When comparing the responses from each participant, it is clear that these responses link up to theme 1 (The History and Underrepresentation of Females) and theme 2 (Gender Stereotypes) of the literature review. Participant D’s response is related mainly to theme 1, whereas participants A, B and C relate theirs to stereotypes and self-doubt. Participant C however, pointed out that women have not received enough exposure to these positions because they are filled with doubt and are made to believe that they cannot do the work when in fact they actually can. This view has been the cause for fewer women in powerful and decision-making positions.

In conclusion, the section *supra* interpreted and presented the findings from the conducted semi-structured, in-depth interviews according to the need for avoiding and overcoming gender-related leadership challenges through the analysis of the Role Congruity Theory.

4.3. Recommendations for Aspiring Female Leaders

An additional question that the researcher asked was a recommendation for aspiring female leaders. It was said that females should not be fearful of starting at the bottom and work their way up in time, and addition to take all the jobs and experience you can get in order to grow and achieve success. Confidence is key, therefore, women need to believe in themselves and take situations lightly rather than overthink and analyse situations. A woman must ensure she puts her mind to her work and no one must prevent her from reaching her goal, nor should she back down. The last recommendation was to ensure that emotions must not rule their decisions and they not be afraid to elicit support when required.

CHAPTER FIVE: CONCLUSION

5.1. Research Objectives and Questions Analysed

The following section will address each research objective and research question.

Main Question:	How can challenges that females face when trying to achieve leadership positions be described?
Main Objective:	To establish the challenges women faced in their journey towards securing a leadership position.

As discussed in the literature review, Eagly & Karau (2002) explain how females are faced with stereotypes and prejudice. However, not much has been done to resolve this issue. To respond to this limitation, the main question and objective were created to distinguish the exact challenges that women face in order to develop appropriate recommendations and strategies for aspiring female leaders. This limitation was further addressed during the four conducted in-depth interviews whereby the participants were requested to describe the challenges they had faced in their journey to becoming a leader. Based on the responses identified by the participants, the researcher was able to develop a comprehensive recommendation of strategies that women could adhere to in order to remain motivated and achieve their leadership goal.

Sub-Question:	How does the leadership style females adapt to the challenges they face when attaining a leadership position?
Sub-Objective:	To understand how a female's preferred leadership style impacted on their journey to becoming a leader.

As mentioned by Eagly, Johannesen-Schmidt & van Engen (2003), the most common leadership style that females adapt to is the transformational style. This is because women are seen to have a more caring nature and listen to what others have to say. During the analysis of the responses from the participants, it was made clear that females do prefer to be more transformational in their leadership style as it assists each individual to succeed as a person, as well as work in a team. The participants were also asked to

compare their leadership style to that of a male's which also provided evidence of how men are more aggressive and only expect results.

5.2. Research Problem Addressed

The problem that was identified for this study was due to the low numbers of females in leadership positions as well as females not receiving the opportunity to be awarded leadership positions (Eagly & Karau, 2002). With this problem not being addressed or rectified, women are not able to grow in corporate organisations and are only given lower level jobs which impedes their career advancements. To address this research problem, the study utilised four participants to take part in an interview to develop an in-depth understanding of the challenges that females are faced with and what factors had caused it.

5.3. Implications of Findings

According to the findings conducted, the researcher has discovered that the challenges that female's experience through their attainment of leadership positions are due to the older generation's being set in their old ways, as well as a combination of self-doubt and a lacking self-confidence. These women want to make a difference in the corporate world and expand career fields for females to operate in so that there are more women in leadership roles. A key success within this study was the ability of the researcher to identify the underlying challenges through the participants' responses. Additionally, this was addressed by the researcher to assist future women to understand their way forward.

A key finding that was discovered was that irrespective of the doubt and lack of confidence women deal with, they still remain true to themselves and show their competence where they need to in order to succeed. This identified an avenue for further research discussed in the recommendations for future research section. However, another key finding of this study was the

5.4. Ethical Considerations

McMillian and Schumacher (2001 cited by Maree 2016) places emphasis on the importance of a researcher to follow ethical guidelines to ensure both the researcher and participants were considered ethically. Throughout the duration of gathering the information from the participants, there were certain considerations that the researcher was mindful of and the researcher ensured the comfort of the participants (du Plooy-Cilliers, et al., 2014). This research was a low-risk study, as no research was done on children, victims of crime or any individual who may be mentally disabled; however, the researcher ensured the following:

5.4.1. Participants

The chosen participants were informed that they must be willing to participate in the study, in doing so, they must (and did) provide their consent via the provided consent forms (refer to appendices A, B, C) (du Plooy-Cilliers, et al., 2014, p. 264). Additionally, because of the use of a qualitative and semi-structured interview, the researcher also ensured the confidentiality of the participants' answers and opinions. The researcher informed them through a confidentiality consent form, that the data will only be analysed by the researcher and the researcher's supervisor, as well as that their identities are and will remain anonymous. This was achieved by referring to the participants as A, B, C, D throughout the study. It is to be noted that the researcher avoided using incentives to remunerate or coerce the participants.

When conducting the research, the researcher kept the IIE Research and Postgraduate Studies Policy in mind, to ensure that all possibilities of risk upon the participants were avoided during the study. This was ensured by the researcher when the process of interviewing the participants took place (IIE, 2017). The researcher also made it clear from inception that the participants were allowed to ask questions freely. Finally, the researcher ensured the participants that a disclosure of the methodologies, as well as the avoiding of any form of dishonesty towards them to ensure integrity by explicitly explaining the purpose of the study to the participants (du Plooy-Cilliers, et al., 2014, p. 266-268).

5.4.2. Researcher

The researcher remained professional, open-minded and respectful when conducting the in-depth interviews with the participants. This was achieved by the researcher explaining the procedure of how the interviews will occur, being open to questions, clarifying any questions, thanking participants and also recognising any work of co-workers who participated in the study (IIE, 2017). The researcher also ensured that they do not analyse the data in a biased manner in order to avoid jeopardising the outcomes of the research. The researcher remained ethically accountable and honest when disclosing any information in a clear manner and upholding truthfulness which was indicated by the in-depth analysis and quoted statements of the participants (IIE, 2017).

The researcher had a goal the conducting of the research with high standards and to avoid falsifying information or jeopardising the results (IIE, 2017) (du Plooy-Cilliers, et al., 2014, p. 269-271). The voice-recording of the participants was used as evidence in case of any concerns about distorted results with regards to underlying subtexts. This was used to prove otherwise during the data analysis.

The data that was collected from the study was utilised for the sole purpose of the study, together with the understanding of the challenges females face in leadership positions and finding ways for these females (and future female leaders) to overcome these challenges. The researcher did not misuse the information received from the participants, or used inappropriate research methods that were harmful or unsuitable to the purpose, by following the procedure stipulated in the data collection method and analysis (du Plooy-Cilliers, et al., 2015, p. 271).

Additionally, the researcher ensured that the participants familiarised themselves with the ethical guidelines when conducting the research, as well as the researcher upholding the integrity of the research at all times by following the necessary guidelines and methodologies of the IIE Research and Postgraduate Studies Policy (IIE, 2017).

5.5. Limitations of Study

There were constraints that the researcher has acknowledged to increase trustworthiness. Therefore, it was necessary to identify these limitations well in advance in order to find

ways to reduce or avoid them. The first limitation that was encountered was the time constraint of this study, as the researcher conducted a cross-sectional study that was conducted in less than one year (2018). The researcher overcame this by receiving close guidance from the supervisor, as well as paying close attention to responses to extract sufficient information.

The second limitation was the matter of limited resources; the researcher could not afford to pay a coder to assist during the data analysis process. Therefore, to address this issue, the researcher paid close attention to detail when transcribing and analysing the founded results to ensure the trustworthiness of this research.

The third limitation was the number of participants the researcher had to interview. Although four participants was a fair minimum and provided sufficient information, it is a highly novice level. Therefore, the researcher ensured that the most useful and appropriate questions were asked during the conducted interviews to ensure detailed responses.

Lastly, the topic of this study has been researched on an ongoing basis for decades and the majority of the literature available on the topic of challenges females face because of their gender is considered to be outdated. Most of the literature available on this topic was older than five years, which is now considered to be essentially outdated. Therefore, the literature that was used in this study was utilised to analyse what had caused the stereotypes against females and how it challenged them in their careers by showing relevance to the underlying theories and concepts within a South African context.

5.6. Anticipated Contribution

The purpose of this study was to provide information on the challenges that women have faced during their journey to becoming a leader within the South African context. Similar topics of female leadership have been studied, however, not within South Africa.

Firstly, the researcher used the Role Congruity Theory and applied the theory to create an in-depth understanding of the challenges female leaders faced in their leadership positions and how they have learnt to overcome them. This helped to determine whether

the proposed study can describe which key factors contribute to the challenges women face as leaders. Through pursuing this, the researcher was able to provide a well-grounded recommendation to current and potential female leaders, as the research did reveal the key factors which contributed to the challenges faced by aspiring women. Women should strive for what they want and learn how to avoid or deal with challenges they face because of their gender.

This research also contributed to the field of management and commerce as gender leadership and how women face prejudice is studied within the field, thus allowing this research to assist the understanding of the challenges female face in the pursuit of leadership as it is a more complex topic because of the dynamic commercial environment. This has allowed for future researchers to expand on what can be avoided in terms of what affects the challenges that females face, and increase the numbers of female leaders, not only in KwaZulu-Natal but throughout South Africa. This will empower women to gain more confidence and showcase their levels of competency, and so prove that they are capable of being excellent leaders (Thornton, 2016).

5.7. Recommendations for Future Research

The following are potential recommendations for future research.

Future studies can further assess what challenges female are now facing in their current leadership positions after the experience they had in attaining their leadership positions. This will assist in finding the challenge females experience and thus strategy seminars can be formulated accordingly.

A further study could also use the same topic, but have a larger sample group and possibly focus an industry in order to make the study stronger and provide a greater understanding of the challenges females faced in attaining their leadership positions.

A study can be conducted using a similar title, however, they could consider making it qualitative to create statistics of the issues discovered.

Another alternative could be to compare the challenges males and females face in achieving their leadership positions as a direct comparison can be concluded, resulting in less probable stereotypes within the commercial milieu.

The above sections conclude the findings conducted as it identified how research questions, objectives and problem were addressed. It also provided the implications of the findings as well as the limitations encountered whilst conducting this study. The ethical considerations were assessed as well as provided a relevant anticipated contribution of the study and recommendations for future research.

CHAPTER SIX: CLOSING STATEMENT

6.1. Closing Statement

In conclusion, this research study aimed to describe the challenges that female leaders had faced in their journey to leadership within medium-sized organisations within KZN, South Africa. The qualitative nature of this study allowed the provision of an in-depth analysis of the findings collected from current female leaders through conducting semi-structured, in-depth interviews. The purpose of this study was to provide the necessary content to discuss the Role Congruity Theory and provide a series of recommendations for aspiring female leaders.

In response to the challenges that women faced, all the participants stated that they to encountered self-doubt due to the hurdles that they had to overcome. This response effectively summarises the stumbling blocks that females face because of their stereotypical working environments they are situated in. It was noted that the stereotypical environments were not always intentional, but rather through the constraints of their own their cultures and through the presence members of the older generation who were set in their ways and still occupying senior roles within the organisations, which precluded change. It was evident that women feel as though they are not fit enough for senior roles because of their environments which tended to defeat their hopes and aspirations. Key problems could be addressed by the female employees of an organisation by them overcoming the patriarchal mind-set, as well as the stereotypical and prejudicial environment that they work in; solutions in this regard were discussed in Chapter Four.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A: ETHICAL CLEARANCE

APPENDIX B: REPORT TABLE

Research Purpose/ Objective	Primary Research Question	Research Rationale	Seminal Authors/ Sources	Literature Review – Conceptual Framework	Paradigm	Approach	Data Collection Method(s)	Ethics	Anticipated Findings	References
								Low risk research.		
The aim of study is to describe the challenges women faced in their attainment of leadership positions within KwaZulu-Natal. The researcher is conducting this study in hopes to improve or reduce the leadership challenges that women face when trying to improve themselves .	How can challenges that females face when trying to achieve leadership positions be described?	This study is significant to the field of business and commerce, as it attempts to assist in solving the challenges females face achieving leadership posts within KZN. This is because it is common issue in modern times as females were previously very disadvantaged . Due to this, females are still struggling to achieve equality in the workplace to their male counterparts.	Seminal Authors: Alice H. Eagly & Steven J. Karau Source Example: Eagly, A. H. & Karau, S. J., 2002. Role Congruity Theory of Prejudice Toward Female Leaders. <i>Psychologica I Review</i> , 109(3), p.573-598	Theme 1: <u>The history and under-representation of female leaders</u> Theme 2: <u>Gender stereotypes</u> Theme 3: <u>Gender Pay-Gap</u> Theme 4: <u>Leadership style of women</u> Theme 5: <u>Gender Differences in Leadership</u>	Interpretivist Paradigm <u>Epistemology</u> : A subjective, reality. A reality a social construction and created by individuals in groups. <u>Ontology</u> : The Epistemology of the study will focus on the underlying issues, themes, and the meanings of leadership challenges. <u>Axiology</u> : The role of the research is to identify leadership challenges applicable to the South African business industry with	Qualitative approach. Population The population would consist females who are currently in leadership positions and is currently facing challenges in their positions.	The researcher will make use of in-depth interviews to collect data from various female leaders who face challenges within their position.	Obtain written consent participants and ensure confidentiality.	Females that were interviewed had very similar challenges and the same leadership style. First hand suggestions of what will help future female leaders to overcome or prevent challenges in attaining leadership.	The primary source of references was in-depth interviews. Secondary sources: Combination of credible, academic journal articles, chapters from relevant research books, case studies, and MA/PhD dissertations.
								Unethical reporting of information: Before presenting information, the researcher will attempt to fairly scrutinise		
								Limitations		
Research Problem	Secondary Questions / Hypotheses / Objectives		Key Theories						Contribute to commerce and society to be aware of what to avoid to	
This study has the aim to			Alice H.							

solve the prejudice against female leaders by focusing on women in leadership and the challenges they are faced with when trying to achieve leadership positions	Question: How does the leadership style females adapt to the challenges they face when attaining a leadership position?		Eagly and Steven J. Karau 1991 and redefined 2002 role congruity theory of prejudice.		females in leadership positions.	sampling as the researcher choses who they want to interview.	Content analysis	<u>budget, and limited accessibility to the target population.</u> Shifts in conditions cause participant unwillingness to contribute to the study and reserved responses	prevent female prejudice in the working environment.	
	Objective: To understand how a female's preferred leadership style impacted on their journey to becoming a leader.									

APPENDIX C: SAFE ASSIGN SIMILARITY REPORT



Caitlyn Read

1 IIE Bachelor of Commerce Honours in Management

Role Congruity Theory and Women in Leadership: A Cross-sectional Qualitative Study Describing the Challenges Faced by Women Achieving Leadership Positions in Medium Sized Organisations within KZN.

1 Research Portfolio of Evidence

Campus: 1 Varsity College Westville

Supervisor: Sharon Ballack

Word Count: 14 832

There is no such thing as failure; either you win or you learn. – Unknown

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS I extend my sincere thanks to the people whose invaluable support and assistance has made the completion of this research paper possible:

RESM8419_2018_HBC1_VCDW1 - RESM8419_VCDW1

Activity 5.3.2: Submitting your final report

Caitlyn Cassidy Read on Sun, Oct 28 2018, 9:45 PM

26% highest match
Submission ID: 596ffe76-f2a5-4137-8c3b-08ef9ada4d98

Caitlyn Read Final PO...

Word Count: 18,633 | 26%
Attachment ID: 237042134

Citations (14/14)

1 Another student's paper

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- Theme 3: Tying Loose Ends and Paying Attention to Details
 - Writing an abstract
 - Activity 5.3.1: Writing an abstract
 - Proofreading and revision
 - Activity 5.3.2: Submitting your final report

Review Submission History: Activity 5.3.2: Submitting your final report

Assignment Instructions

Caitlyn Read

IIE Bachelor of Commerce Honours in Management

Role Congruity Theory and Women in Leadership: A Cross-sectional Qualitative Study Describing the Challenges Faced by Women Achieving Leadership Positions in Medium Sized Organisations within KZN

Research Portfolio of Evidence

Campus: Varsity College Westville

Supervisor: Sharon Ballack

Assignment Details

GRADE
LAST GRADED ATTEMPT /200

ATTEMPT 2
28/10/18 21:45 /200

SafeAssign ^ 26% overall match

SafeAssign Submission

Caitlyn Read Final POE 2.docx 26%
CX

View Originality Report

Submission

Caitlyn Read Final POE 2.docx

OK Start New

APPENDIX D: EXPLANATORY INFORMATION SHEET AND CONSENT FORM FOR PARTICIPANTS

To whom it may concern,

My name is Caitlyn Cassidy Read and I am a student at Varsity College (Durban Westville). I am currently conducting research under the supervision of Sharon Ballack about the current challenges females are faced with in their leadership positions, within small to medium organisations in Kwa-Zulu Natal. There are not many females that are in leadership positions, let alone in Kwa-Zulu Natal and it is very common for these females to face challenges in their positions. I therefore hope that this research will enhance our understanding of why these females face these challenges and how they overcome their challenges to be successful. With this, I hope to find recommendations for future female leaders to assist them in any challenges they may face because of their gender.

I would like to invite you to participate in my study. In order to explain to you what your participation in my study will involve, I have formulated questions that I will try to fully answer so that you can make an informed decision about whether or not you would like to participate. If you have any additional questions that you feel are not addressed or explained in this information sheet, please do not hesitate to ask me for more information. Once you have read and understood all the information contained in this sheet and are willing to participate, please complete and sign the consent form below.

What will I be doing if I participate in your study?

I would like to invite you to participate in this research because you portray the specific characteristics required for this study. If you decide to participate in this research, I would like to ask you a few questions about your workplace, and how you are affected as a female leader.

You can decide whether or not to participate in this research. If you decide to participate, you can choose to withdraw at any time or to decide not to answer particular interview questions.

Are there any risks/ or discomforts involved in participating in this study?

Whether or not you decide to participate in this research, there will be no negative impact on you. There are no direct risks or benefits to you if you participate in this study. You might, however, indirectly find that it is helpful to talk about your challenges of being female in a high and influential position. If you find at any stage that you are not comfortable with the line of questioning, you may withdraw or refrain from participating.

Do I have to participate in the study?

Your inclusion in this study is completely voluntary;

If you do not wish to participate in this study, you have every right not to do so;

Even if you agree to participate in this study, you may withdraw at any time without having to provide an explanation for your decision.

Will my identity be protected?

I promise to protect your identity. I will not use your name in any research summaries to come out of this research and I will also make sure that any other details are disguised so that nobody will be able to identify you. I would like to ask your permission to record the interviews, but only my supervisor, I and possibly a professional transcriber (who will sign a confidentiality agreement) will have access to these recordings. Nobody else, including anybody at Varsity College (Durban Westville) will have access to your interview information. I would like to use quotes when I discuss the findings of the research but I will not use any recognisable information in these quotes that can be linked to you.

What will happen to the information that participants provide?

Once I have finished all interviews, I will write summaries to be included in my research report, which is a requirement to complete my Honours in Business Management. You may ask me to send you a summary of the research if you are interested in the final outcome of the study.

What happens if I have more questions about the study?

Please feel free to contact me or my supervisor should you have any questions or concerns about this research, or if there is anything you need to know before you decide whether or not to participate.

You should not agree to participate unless you are completely comfortable with the procedures followed.

My contact details are as follows:

Caitlyn Cassidy Read

The contact details of my supervisor are as follows:

Sharon Ballack

APPENDIX E: CONSENT FORM FOR PARTICIPANTS

I, _____, agree to participate in the research conducted by Caitlyn Cassidy Read about female leadership and the challenges we are faced with in such a position, as well as how I am affected in my working environment.

This research has been explained to me and I understand what participation in this research will involve. I understand that:

1. I agree to be interviewed for this research.
2. My confidentiality will be ensured. My name and personal details will be kept private.
3. My participation in this research is voluntary and I have the right to withdraw from the research at any time. There will be no repercussions should I choose to withdraw from the research.
4. I may choose not to answer any of the questions that are asked during the research interview.
5. I may be quoted directly when the research is published, but my identity will be protected.

Signature

Date

APPENDIX F: CONSENT FORM FOR AUDIO-RECORDING/ VIDEO RECORDING

I,_____, agree to allow Caitlyn Cassidy Read to audio record my interviews as part of the research about female leadership and the challenges we are faced with in such a position, as well as how I am affected in my working environment.

This research has been explained to me and I understand what participation in this research will involve. I understand that:

1. My confidentiality will be ensured. My name and personal details will be kept private.
2. The recordings will be stored in a password protected file on the researcher's computer.
3. Only the researcher, the researcher's supervisor and possibly a transcriber (who will sign a confidentiality agreement) will have access to these recordings.

Signature

Date

APPENDIX G: INTERVIEW INVITATION

Subject: Interview with Honours Student – Caitlyn Read

Good day

My name is Caitlyn Read and I am a BCOM Honours student at Varsity College. I received your contact details from my Research Supervisor, Sharon Ballack, who is facilitating my Research Dissertation. In order to complete this study, I need to conduct four interviews with females occupying senior and influential positions within their organisation. Thank you so much for agreeing to be interviewed as part of my study. The title of the topic is:

Role Congruity Theory and Women in Leadership: a cross-sectional qualitative description of challenges faced by women achieving leadership positions in small-medium organisations within KZN.

I fully understand that you have a busy schedule, so I really do appreciate you giving up your time to meet with me. I am hoping that one of the days below will suit you to conduct the interview, which will take approximately one hour. I will call you within the next few days discuss a convenient time and venue. I am happy to meet you at your office or if it is more convenient we can conduct the interview via Skype:

Monday - 17 September 2018 Any time
Tuesday - 18 September 2018 Any time
Wednesday - 19 September 2018 Any time
Thursday - 20 September 2018 Any time up until 14h00

I have attached a consent form, for your signature, which needs to be included in my thesis. All information recorded is confidential and no individual or company names will be included in my research report.

I look forward to meeting with you and once again, thank you so much for giving up your time to assist me.

Caitlyn Read

APPENDIX H: QUESTIONNAIRE FOR INTERVIEWS

Your participation is voluntary and your identity will only be known to the researcher and research supervisor to ensure confidentiality. I will be recording this interview process to ensure I have an audio-recording of your responses. Please note you are welcome to leave the interview at any point should you feel uncomfortable or would like to end the interview.

QUESTIONS:

1. How old are you?
2. How long have you been in your position?
3. Describe your journey to becoming a leader.
4. Are you able to describe any challenges you faced in your journey to becoming a leader?
5. In addition to the previous question, may you describe any challenges you possibly are still faced with being in your current position?
6. Are you able to describe how the natural differences between men and women played a role when you were attaining your position as a leader?
7. As a female, what doubts have you faced in reaching your position?
8. Are you able to describe any stereotypes or prejudice you have faced in your journey to becoming a leader?
9. Can you describe your leadership style?
10. In your opinion, how would you say your leadership style has impacted you in your position of leader?
11. Can you explain your perception of how your leadership differs to that of a male?
12. What is your perception of the pay-gap between men and women in leadership positions?
13. What, in your opinion, is the biggest challenge majority of women are more than likely to face in attaining leadership positions?
14. Could you describe why you think so few females are in leadership/senior positions in South Africa?
15. What would you recommend for aspiring and current female leaders to become successful?