

Powerful Women in Leadership: An Exploration of the Characteristics of Successful
Women Leaders.

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Research Methodology (RESM 8419)

Bachelor of Commerce Honours in Management

I hereby declare that the Research Report submitted for the Bachelor of Commerce Honours in Management degree 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.

Word Count: 14 874

Abstract:

The objective of this study is to explore the characteristics exhibited by successful women leaders. A global concern has been identified regarding a severe underrepresentation of women occupying key leadership positions. This stems from a global perception that women lack the core competencies that are required to successfully execute the duties of a leader. Although there has been a slight improvement with regards to the number of women assuming the role of leaders, a stark disparity is still evident with limited focus being channelled towards empowering women by nurturing their skills and aiding them to realise their true potential from a leadership perspective. Research conducted on women in leadership with specific reference to their attributes is not extensive. Thus, a dire need to address this topic exists and by engaging with two prospering women leaders, an attempt was made to eradicate the concern by taking cognisance of key characteristics of women leaders among other crucial components pertaining to leadership. In-depth interviews were utilised to acquire data from participants as it facilitated extensive discussions permitting the researcher to obtain an intensive understanding of specific core aspects pertaining to the study. It was derived that women lead with a less hardened approach and that the ability to lead was a skill that was developed and enhanced over a period of time. The study addressed what embodies a successful women leader and may be utilised by women to identify these characteristics within themselves so as to enhance the number of women occupying leadership positions.

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Introduction:

Contextualisation:

It is not uncommon practice for women to apply for leadership positions and be subjected to a “you are not the right man for the job” attitude by the interviewer (Gavett, 2017). According to Budworth (2016), the concept of women in leadership has not been widely acknowledged and this issue is not unique or subject to a specific country. The failure to acknowledge women as effective leaders is an age-old issue that has plagued the world in entirety (Budworth, 2016). Women are often deemed to lack the characteristics required to be successful leaders (Harburg, 2010). It was thus of paramount importance that the characteristics of successful women in leadership were explored as it was anticipated by the researcher that conducting this study would assist women to identify these characteristics within themselves and make a significant contribution towards an increase in the number of women assuming leadership roles.

As a result of the above perception that women lack the characteristics required to be successful leaders in their fields of expertise, a vast number of efficient, competent and highly-skilled women are not granted the opportunity to occupy key leadership positions in the corporate world (Harburg, 2010). The concept of women in leadership and the attributes affiliated with the success of women in leadership is a topic that is often dismissed and is very rarely a priority from a national and international perspective (Ibarra, 2013). Although there has been a slight improvement with regards to this topic, it remains a global issue (Ibarra, 2013).

Firstly, the topic pertaining to the characteristics possessed by women in leadership was put into perspective by justifying why the study ought to be conducted, indicating the problem affiliated with the topic of study, stipulating what the objective of conducting the study in question was and emphasising what the researcher intended to extract from the individuals that were engaged with. Secondly, a discussion pertaining to the theory that best encapsulated the research topic ensued. Succeeding this discussion, relevant literature that currently exists on the research topic was elaborated on. The loopholes and constraints regarding existing literature as well as similar and contrasting perceptions on specific topics were also established and scrutinised. Insight pertaining to the key

concepts and ideas regarding the research topic were provided. The applicable research methodology was scrutinised thereafter. Lastly, the ethical factors that require acknowledgment and potential constraints were accounted for.

Rationale:

According to Ross (2013), irrespective of the fact that women are deemed to be highly educated and are academically inclined, they are deemed to be unequipped to lead and this contributes to the severe underrepresentation of women occupying key leadership positions. Women are painted as inferior beings when it comes to possessing the ability to lead and lead effectively (Zimmerman, 2016). Little to no attention is channelled towards understanding what is required in order for women to reach their full potential so as to make a significant contribution to the number of women in leadership (Zimmerman, 2016).

Having analysed a number of existing studies and research that has been conducted in the past from a local and global perspective, it was identified that the concept of addressing women in leadership is often dismissed, thus making the research study that was conducted imperative and significant. The majority of studies conducted focused intently on male leaders and the degree to which they are effective and efficient in the execution of their leadership duties or a comparison between female and male leaders was made, emphasising males as being the stronger contenders when it comes to exhibiting strong leadership characteristics.

The study was deemed to be relevant as it was intended to aid in identifying the key characteristics affiliated with women leaders. Furthermore, it was anticipated that it would contribute to the enablement of women, permitting them to identify these characteristics within themselves. The study was worth conducting because it was anticipated that it would contribute to the promotion of women in leadership. It has also been derived from what has been discussed above that existing studies failed to address the real concerns affiliated with the concept of women and leadership and by conducting this study, the researcher intended to emphasise the importance of this relevant topic.

Problem Statement:

As indicated by Porter (2009), a general perception exists that centres on the notion that women lack the ability to lead. It is common practice for people to consider women as inferior beings in the realm of leadership (Porter, 2009). It is believed that the maternal characteristics of women outshine their ability to lead and that as women are required to tend to their maternal duties, they are deemed incapable of being effective and efficient leaders (Porter, 2009). Women are too often undermined and are deemed to lack the skills and characteristics that are required to occupy leadership positions and to be successful leaders in their respective fields (Messemer, 2016).

This is deemed to be a serious issue and as a result of this perception, several efficient, highly-qualified and competent women are not being afforded opportunities to assume leadership roles in the corporate world (Kele, 2012). Taking cognisance of the above, it was established that a dire need existed for this issue to be addressed thus the researcher intended to analyse this concept in an attempt to aid in eradicating this concern.

Purpose Statement:

The research study is qualitative in nature (Mitic, 2012). The objective of this study and intention of the researcher was to investigate the essential characteristics required by women in order for them to become successful leaders and to make a significant contribution to the number of women occupying leadership positions (Mitic, 2012). The outcome was an intense discussion of numerous themes and patterns (du Plooy-Cilliers et al, 2014). For the context of the study, the characteristics of successful women leaders were referred to as attributes.

Research Questions:

Main Research Question:

What are the characteristics possessed by women leaders?

Sub-Questions:

Are the leadership characteristics inherent or learnt?

What determines a successful leader?

Objectives:

Main Objective:

To identify the characteristics possessed by women in leadership positions.

Sub-Objectives:

To explore whether the characteristics are inherent or learnt.

To describe what exactly determines a successful leader.

Literature Review:

Theoretical Framework:

The Transformational Leadership Theory was applied to the research study. The concept of transformational leadership came into being in 1978 and was founded by James McGregor Burns (McCleskey, 2014). As indicated by McCleskey (2014), this particular theory was further developed and adapted by Bernard Bass in 1985. According to Avolio (1999), transformational leadership involves selfless leadership and the practice of the leader prioritising the needs of the organisation as opposed to prioritising his own needs and conducting himself in a manner that results in self- gain and benefit. Victor (2008) indicated that a leader that embodies transformational leadership is one that promotes positive change within an organisation and possesses the power to implement such change through the values possessed, perceptions and objectives.

Banerji (2011) stipulated that the concept of transformational leadership within an organisation involves the leader conducting himself an ethical manner. This permits for a relationship to develop between the leader and the followers (Banerji, 2011). Trust and respect are deemed to be the foundation on which the relationship is built (Brevis & Vrba, 2016). Transformational leadership enables an organisation to progress and develop as it permits the participation of subordinates and affords them the opportunity to present ideas and suggestions in an attempt to resolve issues and contribute to the success of the organisation (Brevis & Vrba, 2016). As stipulated by Diaz-Saenz (2011) as cited by

Bryman et al (2011), the transformational leadership theory centres around the provision of motivation and guidance so as to enable the workforce to reach their full potential. As stated by Diaz-Saenz (2011) as cited by Bryman et al (2011), one of the most significant components of this theory is the display of empathy and concern for each member of the organisation.

Mohr (2015) stipulated that the transformational leadership theory is a crucial component of women in leadership as women generally believe firmly in the empowerment, motivation and upliftment of other individuals. Being supportive is deemed to be inherent in women and it is common practice in the corporate world for them to attempt to stimulate positive adaptations and amendments within the organisation (Mohr, 2015). As stated by Lopez-Zafra (2012), this particular leadership theory involves the discussion and analysis of several characteristics demonstrated by women occupying key leadership positions (Lopez-Zafra, 2012).

The transformational leadership theory was considered to be most applicable to the research study as it permitted the practical application to the topic of the study and had an intensive focus on the specific behaviours, attitudes and characteristics that are affiliated with women occupying leadership positions (Lopez-Zafra, 2012).

Review of Past Literature:

Introduction:

As proposed by Howard (2014) as cited by du Plooy-Cilliers, Davis and Bezuidenhout (2014), the objective of the literature review is to create clarity regarding the research study pertaining to what the focal point of the study is. In this instance, attention is channelled towards acquiring insight pertaining to the characteristics possessed by successful women leaders. Howard (2014) as cited by du Plooy-Cilliers et al (2014) states that in addition to this, the aim is to establish existent literature compiled by predecessors regarding the topic of research. According to Howard (2014) as cited by du Plooy-Cilliers et al (2014), the intention of the researcher is to identify applicable material that would aid in the stimulation and enhancement of research. As the research study entails an investigation of the characteristics possessed by successful women leaders, an analysis of existent literature will assist the researcher in determining the most crucial concepts that

require attention as a result of constraints and loopholes in current literature pertaining to the topic of the research study (Western Sydney University, 2017). The researcher essentially intends to ensure that the research problem aligns with the literature identified (Western Sydney University, 2017). An analysis of the essential themes will be conducted. Firstly, the concept of leadership and the determining factors attributed to successful leaders will be dissected and explored. An intensive assessment of women in leadership and the characteristics they possess will occur thereafter. Thereafter, transformational leadership and its applicability to the research topic will be analysed.

The Concept of Leadership, Whether It Is Inherent or Developed and the Determinants of a Successful Leader:

There are several definitions of what the concept of leadership entails and virtually every definition centres on a common notion. Professor Kotter (1990) stipulated that leadership involves the conduct of influencing other individuals by setting examples, providing direction and guidance, developing a vision and instilling in followers the importance of functioning in unison so as to accomplish objectives and permit the vision to materialise. Essentially, the focal point of leadership is determining direction and implementing strategies (Kotter, 1990). Kotter (1990) further stated that successful leaders are good what they do.

Northouse (2010) validated Kotter's (1990) thinking and reasoning in a more current academic article and indicated that the concept of leadership involves an individual conducting himself in a manner that influences other individuals and encourages them to work in conjunction towards the achievement of a shared goal or objective. Leadership is deemed to be a process that involves leaders impacting on followers in either a positive or negative light. The leader is in turn impacted on in either a positive or negative light (Northouse, 2010).

According to Northouse (2010), leadership is deemed to be effectively conducted in instances where follower inclusivity and input is emphasised. The acknowledgement of followers and their input motivates and drives them to work with diligence towards the accomplishment of objectives (Northouse, 2010). As the focal point of the research study involves an exploration of the characteristics of successful leadership, it is of paramount

importance to take cognisance of the concept of leadership and what it entails as it directly applies to the topic of research.

Having conducted an analysis of both Kotter's (1990) and Northouse's (2010) perspective on the concept of leadership, it is evident that there are a few distinct elements of which leadership is comprised. A defect noted in the above literature identified is that both studies focused primarily on defining the concept of leadership and the influence of a leader as opposed to viewing leadership holistically and establishing the characteristics affiliated with and the determinants of successful leadership. In addition to this, the authors addressed leadership as a general concept and no distinction was drawn between leadership and how it applies in different contexts or specifically to leaders that are women.

In a research study, Mothilal (2010) stipulated that establishing the elements that determine the success of a leader is synonymous with the concept of whether leadership is inherent or is nurtured and developed. The stance that leadership is embedded in an individual and comes naturally to that specific individual was adopted (Mothilal, 2010). According to Mothilal (2010), the ability to lead and lead in an effective manner is innate, thus the determinants of successful leaders are deemed to be directly linked to their natural ability to lead and are in turn considered to be inherent as well. Essentially, Mothilal (2010) through the influence of the research conducted arrived at the conclusion that leadership is a natural talent possessed by few and only those gifted few possess the determinants or traits associated with leadership which in turn enables them to be successful at influencing and leading others.

According to Mothilal (2010), there are distinct factors and elements attributed to the success and effectiveness of a leader. The list which is by no means exhaustive is compiled of the following: the ability of the leader to adapt irrespective of the situation (Mothilal, 2010); a great degree of prudence is evident (Mothilal, 2010), the leader possesses the ability to engage and interact with others (Mothilal, 2010), the confidence of the individual in himself does not waver (Mothilal, 2010), the leader is willing to assume responsibility and accountability for his actions (Mothilal, 2010), the leader is decisive (Mothilal, 2010), dominance is displayed to a certain degree (Mothilal, 2010), persistency is evident (Mothilal, 2010), the leader is driven and determined (Mothilal, 2010) and leader

possesses the ability to persevere even when subjected to stressful conditions (Mothilal, 2010).

In contrast to Mothilal's perception, Rao (2012) proposed that leadership is deemed to be a skill and not a talent. It was indicated by Rao (2012) that while talents are inherent, skills may be learnt, developed and nurtured with exposure to experience. As a result of this mode of thinking, he was of the opposing view that leadership could be developed and thus leadership qualities to which successful leadership is attributed could be cultivated through experience in the line of profession, engaging with other specialists, observation and practice. This issue was further tackled and it was stated that depending on the circumstances and the situation, all individuals are equipped with leading competencies and the ability to have a profound impact on those they have influenced as a result of their leadership conduct (Rao, 2012).

A comprehensive list referred to as the "Indispensable E's" consisting of the determining factors pertaining to the effectiveness and success of a leader was compiled by Rao (2012), an expert in the realm of leadership. As per Rao (2012), a leader is regarded as efficacious if he has the ability to be enthusiastic, displays endurance, leads by example, is energetic, possesses emotional intelligence, is able to empower others, effectively executes strategies, is ethical and strives for excellence in all endeavours. Rao (2012) emphasised the growing importance of leaders exercising emotional intelligence. As proposed by Goleman (1990) as cited by Rao (2012), emotional intelligence is considered to be one of the most crucial components of successful leadership. Louw and Venter (2013) defined the concept of emotional intelligence as the process of being aware of your moods, emotions and conduct and the impact these factors will have on others. This concept involves taking the views and opinions of others into account and possessing the ability to remain objective and not be wrongfully influenced by the emotions of others (Louw & Venter, 2013).

Mothilal (2010) and Rao (2012) possessed conflicting views pertaining to leadership and the determinants of successful leaders, there were however specific elements and qualities that were subject to both perceptions. Whilst Mothilal's (2010) approach appeared to be flawed and restrictive as it was one-sided as he argued that leadership is innate and that only those born with this skill would be efficient leaders, Rao (2012) adopted a more

holistic view by indicating that leadership and the elements pertaining to it were not unique to a minute population and that the skill could be developed. It was imperative to explore the above content as it aligns with the researcher's topic of study as people and women in particular are often under the impression that they do not possess what is required to be successful leaders or that they were not born with the ability to lead.

Women in Leadership and the Characteristics of Women in Leadership:

Kadyrkulova (2008) tackled the topic of female leadership and indicated that women do not derive the same opportunities as men with regards to the occupancy of leadership positions and that women are often deemed to be inadequate leaders. Females suffer great prejudices and injustices pertaining to their opportunities to lead and assuming a leadership role is deemed to be a male dominated privilege (Kadyrkulova, 2008). An intensive analysis that focused specifically on female leadership did not ensue as Kadyrkulova (2008) channelled her attention to an investigation on the varying leadership styles exploited by leaders with very little emphasis on how this impacted on or applied to females occupying leadership positions.

Wittenberg-Cox (2010) stipulated that the concept of women in leadership should be analysed from a different perspective as it is a widely known fact that women are grossly underrepresented in terms of the occupancy of key leadership positions. Wittenberg-Cox (2010) indicated that there ought to be a shift in focus and that attention should be channelled towards alleviating the issue of the underrepresentation of women in leadership and generating solutions to the problem as opposed to merely emphasising the clearly evident issue at hand.

Statistics pertaining to the number of efficient, knowledgeable and competent women were provided and it was clearly indicated that several women possess the essential characteristics and skills to conduct effective leadership and should thus be afforded the opportunity to occupy top leadership positions within organisations (Wittenberg-Cox, 2010). Women are often undermined and deemed to be inadequate in the realm of leadership as they are regarded to lack the core competencies affiliated with being successful and effective leaders (Wittenberg-Cox, 2010).

Wittenberg-Cox (2010) stated that the gender disparity in leadership is a deep-rooted phenomenon that has been in existence for several years. In a modern and cosmopolitan world, successful leadership should not be determined based on the gender of an individual but rather on potential, competencies, the ability to adapt, the ability to influence others in a positive light and the willingness to consistently learn and broaden horizons (Wittenberg-Cox, 2010).

The concept of women in leadership was further addressed by Al-Salem (2016) in a research study that was conducted. A study within a national context was conducted as the focal point was the exploration on women in leadership in Kuwait. Al-Salem (2016) stated that with the country in question being highly patriarchal, it is common practice for women to be disadvantaged with regards to the opportunities presented to them to lead. At present, women are acknowledged within the realm of leadership to a slightly greater degree than was the case in the past (Al-Salem, 2016). However, there still exists a stark disparity between the percentage of males occupying leadership positions and women in leadership positions and males are without a doubt dominating this area (Al-Salem, 2016).

The country boasts a number of women that would do justice to the concept of effective leadership and what it entails as they are well-endowed with competence, drive, passion and numerous other leadership qualities (Al-Salem, 2016). Al-Salem (2016) proposed that if women were afforded the opportunity to exploit such characteristics, they would flourish and through their efficiency and determination would re-define leadership. However, Al-Salem (2016) stipulated that the general mind-set of society was not easily swayed. Each generation and this is inclusive of the women of each generation had it engrained in their minds that women in general are inferior and would be ineffective leaders and as a result of this thinking, women have not been afforded the opportunity to lead or have been granted the opportunity to lead to a very small degree (Al-Salem, 2016).

In comparison to the studies conducted by Kadyrkulova (2008) which focused partially on women being treated as inadequate leaders and Al-Salem (2016) which focused extensively on women frequently being deemed ineffective leaders, Wittenberg-Cox (2010) focused more intently on creating awareness regarding the need to bridge the gender gap and resolve the issue as opposed to merely emphasising the problem at hand. However, it was noted that Kadyrkulova's (2008) study which was said to focus primarily on female

leadership provided very little insight on the said topic. She emphasised that women were deemed to be inadequate leaders as a common perception but her investigation involved mainly a discussion on the dominance of males occupying leadership positions and various leadership styles as opposed to an in-depth exploration of females and leadership.

Whilst Al-Salem (2016) addressed the topic of women in leadership extensively, the research led by him was exclusive to the country Kuwait and he failed to analyse this particular topic as a global concern. Having scrutinised the above studies, Bryman, et al (2011) established that qualitative studies are predominant in this area of research and besides the statistics provided by Wittenberg-Cox (2010); a quantitative approach is rarely adopted.

It is not a common occurrence for women to occupy executive leadership positions such as being the CEO or director (Fries, 2017). Therefore, the meagre percentage of women in such leadership positions serve as sources of inspiration and represent women globally (Fries, 2017). Fries (2017) stated that as being a woman in leadership can be very demanding and daunting it is of paramount importance to be familiar with how one should conduct oneself as a leader as well as be aware of the characteristics affiliated with being a women leader.

According to Fries (2017), the following characteristics are synonymous with being a woman in a leadership role: the ability to persuade, the ability to channel focus, the ability to build and develop teams, possessing self-confidence and the ability to challenge conventional thinking.

In an attempt to elaborate on the aforesaid, Fries (2017) indicated that women are deemed to be significantly more persuasive as a result of their ability to empathise and engage with others from an emotional perspective. Women leaders are said to be extremely focused as they set concrete goals and do not deviate from their plan of action (Fries, 2017). Women leaders are often deemed to possess the innate ability to motivate others and build unity within teams (Fries, 2017). Women in leadership possess a high self-esteem and never cease to believe in their ability to succeed even when obstacles obscure their path (Fries, 2017). Taking into consideration that women are often faced with challenges and obstacles with regards to leadership, they are courageous and challenge

conventional thinking by tackling tasks by observing things from a different perspective (Fries, 2017).

Gengan (2018) stipulated that there are specific characteristics and attributes that are applicable to women in leadership and her approach and mode of thinking aligns with that of Fries (2017). It is imperative to be assertive and bold when leading as a woman as gender often deciphers the respect that is earned (Gengan, 2018). Possessing these characteristics speaks volumes of a women's ability to lead not because she is coercive but because she is driven and not afraid to rise up to a challenge (Gengan, 2018). Displaying an assertive and bold attitude indicates to subordinates that the woman in the leadership position is not one to be taken for granted despite being female (Gengan, 2018). In addition to this, Gengan (2018) also stated that being rational and realistic is vital as well as engaging with the team, encouraging functioning as a unit and engaging in ethical practices.

As the researcher, it is of paramount importance to take cognisance of what the concept of women in leadership truly entails. In addition to this, it is imperative that the characteristics possessed by women in leadership are acknowledged as this theme is a direct link to the topic of study. Furthermore, it provides intensive insight on the experiences of women in leadership and the characteristics that are possessed by women leaders and that are required for the effective execution of leadership from a woman's perspective.

Transformational Leadership:

As proposed by Stewart (2009), transformational leadership may be defined as an approach to leadership that stimulates and encourages positive change in individuals. When correctly applied, it is said to result in a positive impact on the attitudes and behaviour of followers (Stewart, 2009). The ultimate intention of the exploitation of transformational leadership is to develop and nurture the skills of followers so as to transform them into leaders over a period of time (Stewart, 2009). Transformational Leadership and what it entails was validated by Wright (2011) who stipulated that the focal point of this concept is to unleash the full potential of followers so that they can function at their optimum level and assume key leadership positions on the foreseeable future.

Leaders who have adopted the transformational leadership style firmly believe in enhancing the performance of followers by instituting the following mechanisms: providing unwavering support, boosting morale, leading by example and providing consistent motivation (Wright, 2011). Transformational leadership is said to derive many a benefit for the organisation within which it is practised. By acknowledging followers and channelling energy towards bettering them at what they are assigned to do, they tend to feel appreciated and recognised for their efforts which in turn results in an increase in productivity and the overall performance of the organisation (Wright, 2011). Subsequently, transformational leadership aids the leader with regards to the advancement and building of character of leaders of a high calibre as the intention is to groom current followers to be effective and efficient successors in leadership (Wright, 2011).

According to Marjolein (2018), there are explicit attributes affiliated with being a transformational leader. A few of the most crucial components associated with this leadership style includes the following: the ability to build and develop camaraderie within the organisation, being an exceptional source of motivation, possessing the ability to positively impact on and influence others, the ability to display empathy and the ability to generate and instil a culture of trust within the organisation (Marjolein, 2018).

Having comprehended the information compiled by both Stewart (2009) and Wright (2011) pertaining to transformational leadership, it is evident that this leadership style revolves around the upliftment and motivation of others and adopts a democratic approach to leadership.

Furthermore, an analysis of the characteristics possessed by transformational leadership as indicated by Marjolein (2018) has proven to be exceptionally insightful as it directly supports the researcher's topic. As the research topic involves an exploration of the characteristics of successful women leaders, it has come to light through the observation of the characteristics of transformational leaders that several of the characteristics that are associated with women in leadership are also applicable to transformational leaders. It has in fact been stipulated by Kim (2016) that women leaders are often deemed to be the epitome of transformational leaders as they possess numerous characteristics that encapsulate this form of leadership. These characteristics are inclusive of the following:

the ability to empower others, motivate, stimulate positive change and empathise among others (Kim, 2016).

Conclusion:

Having analysed several pieces of literature pertaining to the study on the exploration of the characteristics of successful women, there are a number of conclusions that may be derived. Firstly, the first theme which centred around the concept of leadership, whether it is inherent or developed and the determinants of successful leadership brought a number of interesting things to light. It revealed that the concept of leadership essentially revolves around the leader influencing followers either positively or negatively. This view was supported by Kotter (1990) as well as Northouse (2010). It also indicated that there are contrasting opinions pertaining to whether leadership is an innate quality or one that may be developed over a period of time. Whilst Mothilal (2010) was adamant that people are born with the ability to lead and that the determinants of successful leadership are directly linked to this perception, Rao (2012) opposed this view by arguing that leadership is a skill that may be nurtured and developed.

Following on from this, the theme regarding the concept of women in leadership and the characteristics they possess was scrutinised and the following was identified: an intensive focus on the fact that women in respect of leadership are grossly underrepresented exists as opposed to focusing intently on what the concept of women in leadership entails or the measures that can be implemented to address this issue. This was evident in the study conducted by Kadyrkulova (2008) as well as the one conducted by Al-Salem (2016) although his study delved deeper into the exploration of women in leadership.

Lastly, the final theme which elaborated on transformational leadership emphasised that a link exists between women leaders and the characteristics they possess and the characteristics affiliated with being a transformational leader as a few characteristics overlap. This was validated by Kim (2016).

Conclusion:

The final segment of the literature review centred around the identification of several sources of applicable literature. The first theme tackled the concept of leadership and it was derived that opposing views exist with regards to whether leadership is inherent or a skill that may be acquired. The first study explored pertaining to this topic consisted of numerous shortcomings as it adopted an exceptionally one-sided view. In the future, should new literature be compiled on this topic a more holistic perception ought to be adopted.

The concept of women in leadership and the characteristics they possess was investigated and this aspect of the review succeeded the discussion pertaining to leadership. The following was deciphered: women leaders are often deemed to be incapable of leading effectively.

It was further discovered that there are stark characteristics affiliated with being a woman in leadership. A major gap in literature that was established regarding this component of the literature review is that limited writings have been compiled on how to bridge the gender gap evident in leadership. The research study aimed to contribute to the current knowledge on the topic as it dealt directly with the characteristics of successful women in leadership as angles that have not been explored prior to this have possibly been addressed by the study conducted by the researcher. A discussion pertaining to transformational leadership and its applicability ensued thereafter. It was established that this style of leadership is often affiliated with women leaders. The research study intended to elaborate and expand on applicable concepts so as to make a meaningful contribution to research on this specific topic.

Research Design and Methodology:

Research Paradigm/Tradition or Worldview:

According to du Plooy-Cilliers et al (2014), the interpretivistic paradigm came into being to address the constraints and restrictions affiliated with the positivistic paradigm. Specific reference is made to the manner in which it was applied to social sciences. The focal point of interpretivism is on the fact that human beings are distinctly different to objects and

must be treated as such (Baskarada, 2017). One of the most essential consequences pertaining to this mode of thinking is that human beings must be studied and interpreted in a completely different manner to that utilised when studying objects as humans are subject to change and are influenced by their surroundings and the environment in which they function (Baskarada, 2017).

A prime example of an interpretivistic view is that it is irrational to examine and study human beings in a laboratory as this is not the environment in which they function and operate (Maree, 2016). The intention of the researcher utilising the interpretivistic paradigm is to scrutinise, define and derive meaning from social action (Maree, 2016). The objective of the researcher is primarily to interpret and comprehend the behaviour and conduct of human beings and to motivate why such behaviour and conduct is displayed. Interpretivism centres around the notion that things deemed to be factual are influenced by the context in which they are interpreted as well as the manner in which they are comprehended by individuals.

The research topic that was explored was the characteristics of successful women leaders. As the intention was to fully comprehend the characteristics affiliated with successful women in leadership as well as the behaviour and attitudes displayed by the said individuals, interpretivism was deemed most applicable (du Plooy-Cilliers et al, 2014). The researcher intended to conduct an analysis and gain an in-depth understanding of the characteristics possessed by the selected participants (Klenke, 2016). The intention was also to decipher whether such characteristics are inherent or have been learnt and developed over a period of time through experience. The focus was on engaging with the participants and analysing their conduct in order to derive a deeper meaning and truly understand things from the perspective of the women on whom the study is being conducted (Klenke, 2016).

As stipulated by Thanh (2015), the interpretivistic paradigm is most applicable where the study being conducted is of a qualitative nature. As such, as the study that was conducted adopted a qualitative approach, interpretivism was regarded as the most suitable paradigm. The intention of the researcher was to truly connect and engage with the participants so as to broaden knowledge on the topic of women in leadership and the characteristics that have been instrumental in contributing to their success as leaders

(Thanh, 2015). The intention was not to generalise but rather to obtain detailed and extensive knowledge pertaining to the relevant topic from each participant and to comprehend unique and subjective experiences from each participant's perspective (Thanh, 2015). The researcher was of the belief that each participant is unique and thus intended to respect and appreciate the experiences affiliated with each individual (Thanh, 2015).

Interpretivism was identified as being the most applicable paradigm as the intention of the researcher was to comprehend the characteristics affiliated with successful women in leadership as well as the behaviour and attitudes adopted by the individuals in question.

Interpretivism from an epistemological perspective: This refers to knowledge being studied. The researcher deems subjective knowledge to be of paramount importance and the objective is to conduct an in-depth analysis of experiences and occurrences with specific reference to those applicable to the women to whom this research study applied (du Plooy-Cilliers et al, 2014).

Interpretivism from an ontological perspective: This refers to reality being explored and studied. The researcher considers knowledge to be an internal factor and of a subjective nature. It comes into being through individuals engaging and interacting with one another (du Plooy-Cilliers et al, 2014). In this instance, reality was explored as the researcher engaged with women leaders in order to gain a realistic understanding of women in leadership and the characteristics associated with this concept.

Interpretivism from an axiological perspective: This refers to values being studied and acknowledged (du Plooy-Cilliers et al, 2014). This particular research study valued the promotion and understanding of women leaders and the characteristics affiliated with the leaders in question.

Research Design:

Line of Reasoning:

Inductive reasoning was employed as the researcher intended to explore and analyse the experiences of the participants so as to contribute to existing theories on women in leadership (du Plooy-Cilliers et al, 2014).

Type of Study:

A qualitative research approach was utilised to conduct this study as the intention was to engage with women in key leadership positions so as to gain an in-depth understanding of their unique and subjective experiences that have contributed to their success as women in leadership (du Plooy-Cilliers et al, 2014). The focus of the researcher was on acquiring extensive knowledge regarding the core characteristics possessed by the women leaders on which this study was conducted (du Plooy-Cilliers et al, 2014). The study that was conducted was exploratory in nature and this was deemed most suitable as the researcher intended to probe further regarding key elements related to the study (University of Western Cape, 2015) thus permitting the researcher to explore the distinct leadership characteristics that are embodied specifically by women in leadership. An exploration of these characteristics enabled the researcher to become fully acquainted with the precise characteristics possessed by women leaders. The intention was not to provide conclusions or solutions to the problem that was identified (University of Western Cape, 2015).

Type of Approach:

A case study approach was exploited. This was considered to be the most applicable approach to adopt as the researcher intended to explore and acquire deeper knowledge and a greater, more realistic understanding pertaining to the characteristics that successful women leaders in their respective fields possess (White, 2009). According to White (2009), the case study approach involves engaging with participants to truly understand things from their perspective and it centres on the interaction with participants so as to provide a detailed explanation of a real- life scenario that has occurred. As stipulated by White (2009), a case study approach permits an authentic representation of what has been gathered by the researcher through engaging with participants. Deploying a case study approach enabled the researcher to generate an intensive understanding of what epitomises a successful women leader (White, 2009).

By utilising a case study approach, the researcher was equipped with the ability to make a significant contribution to creating awareness on a pressing issue that is generally neglected (White, 2009). The case study approach was thus deemed applicable because this concept of women in leadership is one that is too often dismissed and very rarely taken cognisance of (White, 2009).

Time-Dimension:

A cross-sectional time dimension was applied as the research study intended to observe and obtain information pertaining to a number of individuals at one specific point in time and not over a prolonged period (Maree, 2016).

Population:

Population Parameters: The population consisted of women (du Plooy-Cilliers et al, 2014). The shared characteristics that they were deemed to possess were as follows: the population was to be comprised of women that occupy leadership positions (du Plooy-Cilliers et al, 2014).

Unit of Analysis: The unit of analysis was comprised of people (du Plooy-Cilliers et al, 2014).

Target Population: The target population was comprised of all women occupying leadership positions (du Plooy-Cilliers et al, 2014).

Accessible Population: The accessible population consisted of only the two women occupying leadership positions as the research study did not permit the entire target population to be included (du Plooy-Cilliers et al, 2014).

Sampling:

Sampling: Non- probability sampling was deployed and was deemed applicable as a result of the study being qualitative in nature. Furthermore, the intention was to draw a sample in accordance with common characteristics pertaining to the research study (du Plooy-Cilliers et al, 2014). Convenience sampling was utilised as the researcher is well-acquainted with the participants and was easily able to access these individuals and communicate with them (du Plooy-Cilliers et al, 2014).

Sample Size: The sample size consisted of two individuals that are women in leadership positions (du Plooy-Cilliers et al, 2014).

Data Collection Methods:

The researcher was regarded as the research instrument as this was a qualitative study (Maree, 2016). An in-depth interview was conducted to obtain data. The interview process involved engaging with two participants that complied with the criteria, namely successful and well-established women in the realm of leadership. Six questions were posed to the participants. The intention was to permit participants to provide detailed responses and simultaneously to permit the researcher to delve deeper into what is required of women to be deemed successful leaders. When making use of an in-depth interview, clarity is essential and an interview of this nature permitted in-depth discussions and explanations pertaining to the questions posed (du Plooy-Cilliers et al, 2014). An in-depth interview presented the researcher with the opportunity to ask further questions in instances where the responses of the respective women leaders were ambiguous or incomplete (du Plooy-Cilliers et al, 2014).

Conducting an in-depth interview was the most applicable method as the aim was to gain insight regarding the beliefs, experiences and opinions of participants with specific reference to the characteristics displayed by women leaders and the manner in which women leaders conduct themselves (Maree, 2016). Hence, by deploying this method, the researcher was afforded the opportunity of obtaining an in-depth understanding of what women leadership entails and more importantly of the relevant characteristics possessed by women in leadership (du Plooy-Cilliers et al, 2014). Furthermore, it enabled the researcher to critically analyse and identify other core components pertaining to leadership and how it applies to women in the execution of their leadership functions and duties

The interview process was facilitated by the researcher who had compiled specific questions to further aid in comprehending the topic of study. Two suitable candidates were singled out and the respective interviews were scheduled for a time that was convenient to the respective participants. An audio-recording was utilised to record the responses of participants by means of a cellular device. As postulated by Paulus (2014), the intention behind utilising an audio-recording is to aid the researcher in the data analysis phase when transcribing the data obtained. Having conducted the research study by way of in-depth interviews, it was discovered that the process enabled the researcher to acquire a good understanding of participants (Hofisi, 2014). Furthermore, it allowed for extensive

and rich data regarding the topic of study to be obtained enhancing the knowledge of the researcher (Hofisi, 2014).

Participants were afforded the opportunity to engage with the researcher and share their experiences and beliefs without being restricted (Hofisi, 2014). Such occurrences bear testament to the strength and efficiency of deploying this method.

However, the process was also a rather tedious and time-consuming one representing the downfall of exploiting this particular method (Hofisi, 2014). As participants were busy, it was difficult for them to accommodate the researcher within the time-frame the researcher had allocated for the data collection process, thus resulting in a delay in the obtaining the data. Having conducted an interview for the first time, the researcher lacked the necessary experience which may have impacted negatively on the quality of data acquired (Hofisi, 2014). Hence, it was ascertained that there were specific strengths and inadequacies affiliated with the data collection method elected.

Refer to Annexure A for interview questions.

Data Analysis Methods:

Qualitative content analysis was utilised to process and scrutinise data (du Plooy-Cilliers et al, 2014). As stipulated by Bryman, Collinson, Grint and Jackson (2011), this analysis method is deemed to be most suitable where the intention is to investigate and identify conspicuous and inconspicuous themes and patterns contained in a specific text and the study is of a qualitative nature. As perceived by Watkins (2017), deploying the qualitative content analysis method involves transcribing the data that has been acquired via the interview process. This imperative step involves a representation of the data that was obtained in the form of an audio-recording in the data collection phase in text format (Watkins, 2017). Thereafter, the researcher is required to scrutinise the data gathered in an attempt to extract and identify predominant themes pertaining to the topic of study (Watkins, 2017).

An essential element of this particular mode of analysis is that data is required to be grouped via the coding process which is imperative to simplify the analysis process (Bryman et al, 2011). The core codes are referred to as the foundation on which all

successive data is built (du Plooy-Cilliers, 2014). The researcher may proceed with the extraction of themes and patterns only once the coding procedure has been sufficiently executed (Watkins, 2017).

In this particular instance, the researcher interviewed participants and captured data by means of an audio-recording. Thereafter, it was essential for the data to be transcribed in text format (Bailey, 2008). The intention of the researcher was to extract specific themes from the data that was obtained succeeding the respective interviews with the two participants by carefully scrutinising the text to draw comparisons and identify similarities (Bailey, 2008). As was indicated above, prior to the extraction of themes, the coding process had to be followed (Lorelli, 2017).

For the purpose of this study, selective coding was utilised. Blair (2015) stipulated that selective coding is the process of selecting and establishing precise themes and affiliating them with other distinct categories. The researcher exploited selective coding by electing the crucial codes that were synonymous with the behaviour and attitudes of women in leadership after taking the information acquired into account (Blair, 2015). By utilising selective coding, the researcher was permitted to link common perceptions that were acquired as well as identify stark contrasts regarding certain perspectives (Blair, 2015). The transcribing and coding process enabled the researcher to establish key aspects that provided further insight regarding explicit characteristics exhibited by women leaders among other crucial themes that align with the purpose for which the study was conducted (du Plooy-Cilliers et al, 2014). Hence, it can be derived that utilising qualitative content analysis and selective coding were suitable and effective when applied to the study.

Findings and Interpretation of Findings:

Introduction:

Two participants that aligned with the criteria were sought out for the objective of this study. The criteria were as follows: two successful and well-established women leaders were required to do justice to the study that was conducted. In-depth interviews were conducted at the convenience of each participant. The interviews were highly insightful and aided the researcher significantly in broadening knowledge on the specific topic. By engaging with the participants, the researcher was exposed to extensive information from the perspective of each participant. The unique experiences and perceptions that were subject to each individual were taken into account and by scrutinising the data retrieved, several interesting elements were extracted.

There were certain distinct similarities and stark contrasts between what was stated by respondents and what was proposed in numerous pieces of literature that were analysed. The following themes were extracted by taking cognisance of what was stipulated by participants: women leaders exhibit specific characteristics, the ability to lead is developed, the success of a leader is attributed to specific determinants and women are deemed to be team-oriented.

Theme 1: Women leaders exhibit certain distinct characteristics:

An intensive analysis of the content provided by respondents permitted for the emergence of a distinct theme that is deemed crucial and instrumental as far as addressing the research problem is concerned. At its inception, the intention behind the research study was to explore the characteristics affiliated with successful women leaders so as to contribute to the number of women occupying leadership as it was anticipated that the identification of such characteristics would enable women to identify such characteristics within themselves, nurture and enhance these characteristics and become better equipped to execute leadership functions. An observation made by the researcher following the interaction with the two women leaders that were elected was that prosperous women leaders exhibit stark characteristics to which their success may be attributed.

An exploration of literature compiled by Fries (2017) indicated that women leaders are highly persuasive as they are able to engage with others on an emotional level whilst remaining objective. They are also said to be exceptional at empathising with others (Fries, 2017). Fries (2017) further added that women leaders set concrete goals and that they are committed to accomplishing goals set. They are also said to be firm in facilitating and monitoring the execution of their subordinates' functions and working in conjunction with them to ensure success (Gengan, 2018).

Gengan (2018) further supported the perception of Fries (2017) by stating that women are decisive and driven by the desire to accomplish goals, they are assertive but also possess the ability to be nurturing adopting a less hardened and more humanistic approach. Gengan (2018) proposed that women leaders generally impact the lives of their team in a positive light. Women leaders are honest in their conduct and commit to being transparent (Gengan, 2018)

Participant One: Women bring a different dynamic to the working place. The female approach, the softer approach can also be successful. Um, I think you need to be driven but not in a way that harms others. You need to know what you want and work towards a goal but you need to also realise that you can't do it on your own. So you have to be nice to the people around you. You need to motivate them to be the best that they can be. You need to be assertive but um also gain respect. This can be difficult but it's not impossible.

The above description indicates that the participant is convinced that women leaders are gentler regarding their approach to other and how they conduct themselves. The participant stated that a woman's approach to leadership is less hardened aligning Gengan's (2018) view who indicated that women leaders are nurturing and adopt a humanistic and soft approach in the execution of their functions. Women leaders are deemed to set specific goals and are said to be so driven that they commit to such goals and never stray from the path they have chosen to follow (Fries, 2017).

Participant One stimulated this mode of thinking by stating, "Um, I think you need to be driven but not in a way that harms others. You need to know what you want and work towards a goal but you need to also realise that you can't do it on your own." The participant mentioned that others should not be harmed in the process of accomplishing

goals and further added that goals cannot be accomplished in isolation. This is an indication of a correlation with Gengan's (2018) view regarding women working in unison with others to accomplish goals and achieve success.

Participant Two: It is imperative for women leaders to be decisive. They need to know what it is that they want to achieve and they must know how they are going to accomplish this. Women leaders have a strong sense of integrity. Um, you need to commit to being righteous and never deviate from that. Honesty is key and in order to gain respect, being consistently honest regarding decisions taken or any information is absolutely essential. Being firm is also necessary. You don't want a lack of compliance just because you are a woman.

Consensus has been reached on much of the characteristics that are deemed essential for the success of women leaders when analysing the views provided by both participants. In the above mentioned statement, Participant Two spoke of being decisive. She further elaborated on the importance of integrity and being honest, thus supporting Gengan's (2018) argument who had emphasised the need to be transparent and honest in all dealings as well as the importance of being decisive. As stipulated by Participant One, "Being firm is also necessary. You don't want a lack of compliance just because you are a woman." Women leaders are required to be assertive under certain circumstances (Gengan, 2018). Participant One's statement regarding being firm validates this.

Theme 2: The ability to lead is developed:

The topic of whether the ability to lead is inherent or whether it is developed is an interesting one. Contrasting opinions exist with some individuals firmly believing that the ability to lead is one that is innate and that only a select few individuals possess this ability (Duvernay, 2008). On the contrary, others are of the belief that one may develop the ability to lead over a period of time and as a result of exposure to certain elements (Duvernay, 2008). Most often, people are in support of the view that people are born with leadership abilities (Barling, 2014). The researcher delved deeper to enhance knowledge on this controversial topic and when a discussion was facilitated with participants, it was derived that both participants were of the opinion that whilst there are in certain instances, individuals born with a natural flair to lead, the ability to lead is one that is developed and may be enhanced and improved.

Mothilal (2010) was adamant that the ability to lead is one that is innate. It was proclaimed by Mothilal (2010) that leadership is a talent that a few gifted people are born with. Thus, it was stated by Mothilal (2010) that those that are not born with the natural flair to lead would not be efficient and capable as leaders. When placed in a situation requiring one to exert control and lead, only those born with this inherent characteristic would do justice to assuming the role of a leader because their instinct and natural ability is said to be a guiding force, permitting them to tend to their duties with ease and to do so efficiently (Mothilal, 2010).

Rao (2012) asserted that the ability to lead is a skill and as a result of the nature of leadership, the skill is one that may be acquired or further developed. Rao's (2012) argument was that the leadership ability could either be attained or enhanced by means of exposure to challenging situations, acquiring experience over a duration of time, by being afforded the opportunity to learn, develop and realise full potential, consistent commitment, rigorous practice and by engaging with specialists in the given profession or field. Rao (2012) adopted a complete different stance presenting an opposing view to that of Mothilal (2010). With a degree of nurturing and honing of skills, the ability to lead may be cultivated (Rao, 2012).

To acquire an abundance of knowledge on whether leadership abilities are innate or developed from the participants' perceptions, the following question was posed: "Were you born with the ability to lead or do you believe that the ability to lead is developed?"

Participant One: I think you get natural leaders in some cases. Then I think you get people that end up in the situation and have to develop the ability to lead. I am one of those that ended up in situations where I had to take control and take it from there. I had to step up to the challenge and learn as I went along. Um... you can do all the leadership courses and you know sometimes book knowledge doesn't cover everything. Um, they teach you number five or one to ten for that matter and then you have to deal with number eleven and twelve which is a bit different. I think the ability to lead usually comes with life experience.

The statement "I think you get natural leaders in some cases" lends itself to a certain extent to what was prescribed by Mothilal (2010). This view supports that in instances, people are born with the innate ability to lead.

However, the latter part of Participant One's perception correlates with that of Rao (2012) as she has given explicit insight on the topic, indicating that the leadership ability may be developed should one be placed in a position that demands one to lead. This is supported by the following statement, "Then I think you get people that end up in the situation and have to develop the ability to lead. I am one of those that ended up in situations where I had to take control and take it from there."

"Um... you can do all the leadership courses and you know sometimes book knowledge doesn't cover everything." "Um, they teach you number five or one to ten for that matter and then you have to deal with number eleven and twelve which is a bit different." "I think the ability to lead usually comes with life experience." Scrutinising the preceding statement, it is evident that Participant One firmly believes that the ability to lead may be developed and that it is influenced by the experience acquired over the years and exposure to challenges that one was not necessarily equipped for irrespective of courses or training undertaken. This further validates the compilation of Rao (2012).

Participant Two: Um, there is a certain primary trait. You know not everybody is born with those leadership characteristics. Those abilities are developed and I believe that in my case, my ability to lead is developed. I think that if the person is exposed to the right situations, given the right opportunities and if the person is trained, the ability to lead is enhanced and... um if the person is just in the right environment and is required to deal with different situations, they'd be able to develop a particular leadership skill.

The view provided above stimulates that of Rao (2012), clearly indicating that leadership abilities may be developed. Participant Two added, "You know not everybody is born with those leadership characteristics. Those abilities are developed and I believe that in my case, my ability to lead is developed." A stark contrast can be seen when analysing this statement and the approach adopted by Mothilal (2010) on this topic. Participant Two's statement, "I think that if the person is exposed to the right situations, given the right opportunities and if the person is trained, the ability to lead is enhanced and... um if the person is just in the right environment and is required to deal with different situations, they'd be able to develop a particular leadership skill" corresponds with Rao's (2012)

which centred on the fact that being exposed to certain situations and being in an environment conducive to growth would permit the enhancement of leadership skills.

Taking cognisance of the views presented by participant one and two, it can be ascertained that the ability to lead is one that may be developed should an individual be afforded with the opportunity to realise his potential, tackle complex problems, utilise experience and be exposed to various situations. This was a common mode of thinking fostered by both participants and their views mirrored that of Rao (2012) and opposed that of Mothilal (2010).

Theme 3: The factors that may be attributed to being a successful leader:

When addressing what embodies a successful leader, there are several factors that must be acknowledged. The manner in which one conducts oneself when occupying a leadership position speaks volumes of the extent to which the individual will acquire success (Deinert, 2013). Assuming the role of a leader is taxing and demanding and the individual undertaking such a role is required to take a number of important aspects into account prior to taking any action (Deinert, 2013). The failure to adopt an all-encompassing view as a leader could jeopardise chances of prosperity and success (Deinert, 2013). Interacting with participants presented the researcher with a detailed understanding of what being a successful leader entails.

As proposed by Kotter (1990), successful leadership entails an explicit provision of guidance and direction to the rest of the organisation so as to ensure they subordinates are aware of what is expected of them. Furthermore, being efficient in the execution of one's duties involves one leading by way of example, influencing others in a positive light, establishing a vision that would ensure the best outcome for the organisation in entirety and possessing the ability to communicate this vision with the rest of the organisation to facilitate the accomplishment of a shared goal (Kotter, 1990). A successful leader is one that excels at what he does within his area of expertise (Kotter, 1990).

Northouse (2010) stipulated that to do justice to being a leader, one has to conduct oneself in a respectable manner by displaying morality and scrupulous conduct. Northouse (2010) further stated that successful leaders influence others in a positive light. In accordance with the view of Kotter (1990), Northouse (2010) insinuated the importance of generating a

vision and sharing its importance with the entire team. In doing so, Northouse (2010) indicated that it encourages team inclusivity and reiterates the importance of collaboration to ensure the achievement of common goals.

The researcher was curious to establish what exactly being a prosperous and successful leader involves and posed the following question to the respective participants: “What do you think determines a successful leader?”

Participant One: Um, successful leaders are those that people can look up to and in no way will you find a person that is perfect but you need to at least be a person that can be respected. Um, strong character is important. You can't be someone that's going to defraud the company or someone that's on his way to jail and that does unacceptable things. Um, people need to realise that when they are in that leadership position, all eyes are on them. You know...successful leaders are good at what they do.

The aforementioned perception indicates that Participant One strongly believes that successful leadership is attributed to the manner in which one conducts oneself. It is evident that she is of the opinion that doing justice to a leadership position involves being a respectable individual that is committed to behaving in a scrupulous and morally upright manner. Furthermore, it can be derived that she views leaders as the representatives of the entity and that in order to be successful, leaders need to take cognisance of this and act accordingly.

By stating the following, “You can't be someone that's going to defraud the company or someone that's on his way to jail and that does unacceptable things ”, it may be ascertained that participant one's view regarding specific determinants of leadership align with that of Northouse (2010) as the link between being an exceptional leader and displaying righteous behaviour is evident. Furthermore, by indicating that “successful leaders are good at what they do”, she complemented the view of Kotter (1990) who indicated that successful leaders excel within their specific domains.

Participant Two: I think leadership requires the individual to walk the talk. So as much as you have the opportunity to say much or to present the team with opportunities and possess authority, you also need to be able to do as much as you

say. Um, if the leader does not show and lead by example then I don't think that he and his team would be successful. If you want to...if you want to achieve goals, you must speak up and also accept input from others. Um, you also have to earn respect by behaving appropriately.

Taking cognisance of Participant Two's view, it is evident that she affiliates successful leadership with the ability to act in a certain way as opposed to just giving instructions. This reveals that successful leaders ought to lead by example and is supported by the following stipulation, "I think leadership requires the individual to walk to the talk." Furthermore, the statement "If you want to...if you want to achieve goals, you must speak up and also accept input from others" bears testament to Northouse's (2010) perception regarding the importance of identifying goals that need to be achieved and communicating this with others to ensure the materialisation of such goals.

Rao (2012) proposed that to establish whether one does justice to the role as a leader, it needs to be determined whether the said individual has the ability to be mindful of other and their emotions when conducting himself As investigated by Goleman (1990) as cited by Rao (2012), this ability refers to the concept of emotional intelligence which is said to be imperative for the successful execution of leadership duties. Rao (2012) further explored the essence of being a successful leader and stated that being consistent when conducting oneself is imperative. Being energetic and enthusiastic as well as effective and efficient play an integral role in establishing the degree to which a leader is successful (Rao, 2012).

Participant One: You know um, you cannot have somebody that is a saint in the office and a devil at home. You need to leave your problems and emotions outside the door when you walk in. You cannot expect to throw a tantrum today and expect your staff to respect you tomorrow.

"You know um, you cannot have somebody that is a saint in the office and a devil at home." This speaks volumes of the importance of being consistent as a leader and indicates that consistency ought to be applied to one's conduct irrespective of where one is. This view validates the writings compiled by Rao (2012) who stressed the importance of not being easily swayed or influenced and remaining true to a certain way of conducting oneself and carrying out functions. Emotional intelligence is also deemed an essential

element of being a worthy leader as indicated by Rao (2012) and by stating “You need to leave your problems and emotions outside the door when you walk in. You cannot expect to throw a tantrum today and expect your staff to respect you tomorrow”, Participant One evidenced Rao’s (2012) perspective.

Participant Two: Errh, I think. I think you also need to be consistent in what you say and in what you do. Dealing with people is also tough... but you have to be cautious when handling situations because you cannot offend anyone and you must remain professional at all times irrespective of how you feel.

“Errh, I think. I think you also need to be consistent in what you say and do.” By insinuating this, Participant Two’s perspective not only aligns with that of Rao (2012) who emphasised the importance of consistency but also indicates a view that resonates Participant Two’s mode of thinking and echoes the importance of this core characteristic. The display of emotional intelligence has also been identified as crucial as Participant Two exclaimed “Dealing with people is also tough... but you have to be cautious when handling situations because you cannot offend anyone and you must remain professional at all times irrespective of how you feel.”

Looking at the views presented by Kotter (1990), Northouse (2010) and Rao (2012) whilst scrutinising the extensive insight provided by the two participants, it is evident that there are specific determinants to which successful leadership may be attributed. It was further discovered that consensus was achieved regarding the perceptions of the two participants and that their views correlated with that of the respective authors.

Theme 4: Women leaders are deemed to be team-oriented:

The perceptions and discussions provided by the participants regarding whether women leaders prefer taking decisions in isolation or whether they are team-oriented revealed that women believe in team engagement. This complies with the stipulations of the transformational leadership theory which was the theoretical framework deployed for the objective of this study. This concept will be further explored below

Mohr (2015) indicated that the transformational leadership theory is synonymous with women in leadership as it embodies many of the characteristics and the conduct displayed

by women leaders one of which is that women are team and people-oriented. Furthermore, Marjolein (2018) stated that women leaders stress the importance of motivating others and boosting their morale by engaging with them and taking their perceptions into account. Women leaders prosper when they engage with others (Marjolein, 2018).

The participants were asked whether women leaders preferred making decisions in isolation or whether they are team-oriented. The responses were as follows:

Participant One: You need to motivate people and you need to help them to be the best that they can be. I like to as far as possible get the team involved. Every different personality contributes to successful team dynamics. If you put all the suggestions together, you get a better group decision than you would have achieved on your own.

The above view corresponds with that of Marjolein (2018) who emphasised the importance of facilitating team interaction to ensure the best possible results. The statement, “I like to as far as possible get the team involved. Every different personality contributes to successful team dynamics.” “If you put all the suggestions together, you get a better group decision than you would have achieved on your own.” This indicates that women leaders and in this instance, Participant One values team input.

Stewart (2009) further discussed transformational leadership at length and stipulated that this form of leadership is synonymous with orchestrating positive change, motivating others and enabling them to realise their full potential. This perception aligns with what has been indicated by Fries (2017) and Gengan (2018) indicating a positive correlation between the characteristics displayed by women leaders and those displayed by transformational leader thus indicating that women leaders are often deemed to be transformational leaders and that they centre their conduct around others.

Participant Two: Okay, so I personally encourage my team to participate in the decision-making process. Um, if you as a leader want to be successful with your team, you need to know that without the team it could impact negatively on a certain decision. A decision needs to be made by engaging with the team for the betterment of the process. Sometimes they share things with you that you would not

have thought of on your own. Team engagement allows for access to an abundance of useful information. By taking their input into account, they know their contribution and input is valued. They also need motivation and this helps people realise their capability.

Participant Two reiterated the importance of being-team oriented and said, “Okay, so I personally encourage my team to participate in the decision-making process. “Um, if you as a leader want to be successful with your team, you need to know that without the team it could impact negatively on a certain decision.” Her perception further enhances the view proposed by Marjolein (2018). Participant One further proposed, “They also need motivation and this helps people realise their capability”. This view correlates with that of Stewart (2009) and it indicates that being a woman leader involves uplifting others, motivating them and inspiring to reach great heights be aiding them to become the best versions of themselves. The views of the participants align and correspond with relevant literature, justifying that women leaders are team-oriented.

Trustworthiness:

As stated by Lincoln and Guba (1985) as cited by du Plooy-Cilliers et al (2014), as a qualitative research approach was adopted, trustworthiness was considered most applicable. According to Lincoln and Guba (1985) as cited by du Plooy-Cilliers et al (2014), the intention was to gain an intensive understanding of the information acquired from the perspective of the participants within a specific context .The researcher in no way attempted to generalise the results that were obtained (du Plooy-Cilliers et al, 2014).

Credibility: According to Collis and Hussey (2003) as cited by du Plooy-Cilliers (2014), credibility refers to the degree to which the researcher is accurate in interpreting and comprehending the data that is to be acquired. In this instance, credibility and in turn the trustworthiness of the study was enhanced by the researcher engaging with participants in an agreed upon environment so as to develop a thorough understanding of how they operate as women leaders and how the characteristics they possess have contributed to their success as leaders (du Plooy-Cilliers et al, 2014).

Transferability: As indicated by Collis and Hussey (2003) as cited by du Plooy-Cilliers et al (2014), transferability refers to whether the observations and findings may be applied to

similar situations and would render results that are similar. Essentially, transferability centres around whether the results may be applied to other research studies and is not subject to the research study that is to be conducted (du Plooy-Cilliers et al, 2014).

As transferability was applied to a research study that focused predominantly on the characteristics possessed by women leaders with specific reference to the corporate world, the intention was to determine whether the results rendered pertaining to specific characteristics would be similar to those possessed by women leaders or other leaders in other professions if studies of that nature were to be conducted (du Plooy-Cilliers et al, 2014).

Transferability in this instance may be questioned as only the perceptions of two individuals were accounted for. Thus, should the study be conducted by another individual by utilising a larger population from varying sectors, there may be a stark difference pertaining to results rendered in respect of that particular study.

Dependability: As stated by du Plooy-Cilliers et al (2014), dependability refers to calibre of the integration process that occurs between data that will be obtained and analysed and the theory that will be generated from the data. To ensure trustworthiness of the study, the researcher was required to ensure proper integration and combination of the data obtained (du Plooy-Cilliers et al, 2014).

Confirmability: du Plooy-Cilliers (2014) states that confirmability refers to the degree to which the data obtained will act as a support system of the findings and the manner in which things are to be interpreted by the researcher. In order to ensure confirmability, the researcher was required to fully explain the research process so as to enable others to scrutinise the research design and decipher why it was applicable and significant for the purpose of this specific study.

Conclusion:

Assessing Whether the Research Problem, Research Questions and Research Goal Were Addressed:

A major concern pertaining to the stark disparity between males and females in the avenue of leadership was identified (World Economic Forum, 2017). This indicated the relevance of conducting this study. It was further established that men are generally dominant regarding the occupancy of leadership positions whilst globally, there's a meagre representation of women in such positions as a result of the misconception that women lack the necessary qualities and skills affiliated with being successful leaders (Al-Salem, 2016).

Thus, the intention of the researcher was to focus on the core characteristics displayed by successful women leaders to indicate that women embody the essence of being successful leaders. Secondly, the intention was to aid in the promotion of women leaders and diminish the disparity that exists. This was to be achieved by emphasising the characteristics to further enable women to identify these characteristics within themselves. It is well comprehended by the researcher that a problem of this nature cannot be eradicated by means of a single study.

However, as awareness was created and attention was channelled towards highlighting this concern, the research problem was addressed to a certain degree.

The most significant research question that was posed was as follows: What are the characteristics possessed by women leaders? An extensive description was provided by each participant pertaining to what they believed the most relevant characteristics that ought to be exhibited by women leaders are. It was established by scrutinising the literature that to do justice to being a woman leader meant setting concrete goals and remaining committed to it to ensure its materialisation, displaying emotional intelligence, fostering harmony by encouraging synergy and team engagement as well as motivating and inspiring others in a positive light (Fries, 2017). This observation is supported by the view presented by Gengan (2018) and the responses provided by the participants validate such perceptions. Taking cognisance of this, it may be derived that the research question

that served as the foundation on which this study was constructed was adequately responded to.

The first sub-question centred on establishing whether the ability to lead is innate or developed. The responses provided by the participants clearly indicated that as per their respective perceptions, the ability to lead is one developed by means of experience and exposure supporting the view of Rao (2012). Lastly, the final sub-question intended to address the determinants of a successful leader. Northouse (2010) stipulated that being a successful leader involves being moral and ethical, being consistent and leading by way of example among other crucial aspects. Observing each aspect in entirety revealed that the research questions to which the researcher required answers were sufficiently tackled and responded to as the participants responded to their full capacity and shed light on the topic by presenting views that aligned with that of Northouse (2010) justifying what successful leadership entails.

The goal that the researcher intended to accomplish was multifaceted. Firstly, the aim was to identify the core characteristics affiliated with successful women leaders. Secondly, the intention was to utilise the data obtained facilitate and promote the advancement of women in the leadership domain. The researcher satisfied the first component of the research goal as the characteristics in question were adequately established.

Accomplishing the latter part of the goal represents a challenge in itself as gender disparity in leadership extends further than the borders of South Africa (University of Cape Town, 2017). Thus, a significant amount of time and effort would have to be committed to accomplishing this goal in entirety.

Implications of Findings for Future Practices:

The findings extracted by engaging with participants revealed that there are specific characteristics exhibited by successful women leaders. They are said to be fierce in the pursuit of their goals and never deviate from a plan of action (Fries, 2017). Furthermore, their nurturing side enables them to motivate and inspire others permitting for harmony to be enjoyed (Fries, 2017). A strong commitment to being ethical also emerged as an important characteristic (Gengan, 2018). Whilst the list of predominant characteristics is extensive, the aforementioned elements are just a few of the regularly exhibited

characteristics by successful women leaders. In contrast to the observation stumbled upon by the researcher, the global perception still exists that a woman is incapable of successfully assuming the role of a leader owing to a lack of core competencies (Harburg, 2013).

South Africa is not excluded from adopting the perception that women are unequipped to lead (University of Cape Town, 2017). According to Gipson (2017), a greater degree of emphasis ought to be placed on empowering women and promoting the number of women occupying leadership positions by way of extensive training and development. This is said to permit women to satisfy a leadership role sufficiently and with efficacy (Gipson, 2017). Thus, when applying this study to a realistic situation and when putting it into practice, the initiative should be taken to enhance and develop the skills of women so as to better equip them to carry out leadership functions effectively.

Frameworks and structures that facilitate the growth and development of women in the corporate world and women in leadership exist and play an integral role in orchestrating positive change (O'Neil, 2015). According to O' Neil (2015), an incorporation of this concept would enable women to identify their strengths and core competencies that are applicable from a leadership perspective and would aid them in leveraging such competencies to their advantage. Hence, when practically applied a significant contribution to women in leadership can be facilitated, increasing the number of women occupying key leadership positions.

Heuristic Value of the Study:

The study conducted focused predominantly on the characteristics exhibited by successful women leaders to address a severe global concern, namely that the number of women in the realm of leadership is significantly low (Global Education Monitoring Report, 2017). The study was conducted from a corporate perspective. Taking cognisance of this, the opportunity is presented to engage further with this topic by possibly undertaking a different stance and adopting a more holistic view. This may be achieved by conducting a broader study that incorporates women leaders from different professional spheres. In doing so, it would permit for data to be acquired that is multifaceted and that is not subject to a specific field.

Furthermore, a scrutiny of the key findings emphasised the positive aspects affiliated with being a leader. As the attention was channelled towards establishing the characteristics to which the success of the leaders in question was attributed, it was derived that the study leaned towards only the strengths of the leaders painting a somewhat unrealistic picture of what being a women in leadership entails. To enhance the quality of the research pertaining to the topic of women leaders, prospective studies could tackle a few of the challenges synonymous with being a women leader. This could provide a more holistic view, addressing various points of being a women leader. By engaging with this topic, it would allow for a further exploration of how women can be efficient in the execution of their leadership functions as they would be well acquainted with the characteristics they ought to be displaying as well as the obstacles that they could encounter and how to execute plans to avoid being impacted on negatively as a result of such challenges.

Engaging with a larger number of participants would also enhance trustworthiness and the results rendered as it would permit greater exposure to people satisfying the criteria of the study (du Plooy-Cilliers, 2014). It would permit for the attainment of more diverse approaches to the study and would facilitate inclusivity resulting in richer data being obtained pertaining to the experiences and perceptions of the participants (Anney, 2014). A qualitative approach was exploited to conduct this study and a scrutiny of various pieces of literature including that of Al-Salem (2016), Mothilal (2010) and Kadyrkulova (2008) revealed that most studies of this nature utilised the qualitative approach. Thus, it would be interesting to analyse the results rendered should other methodologies be deployed. Despite certain defects and gaps identified, by analysing things holistically it has been determined that the study was successful to a certain degree as it was instrumental in addressing the core research questions.

Ethical Implications and How They Were Addressed:

As proposed Sanjari (2014), when conducting a research study anonymity must be considered and ensured to protect the participants. For the purpose of this study, anonymity was ensured as the researcher refrained from disclosing the names of the participants that were interacted with. Although, the participants consented to the use of their names, the researcher wanted to ensure the greatest degree of protection for the

parties concerned. As a result of this, the researcher elected to refer to the participants as participant one and participant two respectively.

Sanjari (2014) stipulated that it is imperative for the participants to consent to the research study that is to be conducted on their beliefs, opinions and views pertaining to the research study as this is standard practice in terms of legal compliance and is a requirement that must be satisfied as a prerequisite for the study to be conducted. To satisfy this crucial requirement, the researcher presented each participant with a consent form which each participant was required to analyse and sign prior to the study being conducted.

Furthermore, the nature of the study demanded an audio-recording for transcription purposes. The participants were made aware of this requirement prior to the study being conducted and a form was provided to them to seek approval and consent to proceed with the audio-recording of the respective interviews.

Confidentiality must be ensured at all times by the researcher during the research process in order to refrain from the infringement of the participants' privacy and to build a relationship of trust between the relevant parties (Oliver, 2010). The researcher acted in accordance with this ethical requirement by assuring the participants that the information acquired would not be distributed or exposed to any other party. The researcher committed to respecting the privacy of the participants by signing a non-disclosure agreement and furnishing each participant with a copy of the document.

As proposed by du-Plooy Cilliers et al (2014), the use of an interview as a data collection method requires the data obtained to be recorded by means of an audio-recording. In this instance, as an interview was conducted in accordance with the qualitative research procedure, an application for audio-recording clearance had to be made by the researcher. Once the application had been made, the researcher had to acquire approval before commencing with the study. As the nature of the study demanded an audio-recording for transcription purposes, the participants were made aware of this requirement prior to the study being conducted and a form was provided to them to seek their approval and consent to proceed with the audio-recording of the respective interviews.

Oliver (2010) stipulated the importance of applying for ethical clearance. This is deemed to be a prerequisite for conducting the study to ensure that the study complies with ethical

standards and practices. The researcher fulfilled this requirement and was permitted to commence with conducting the study upon receiving an ethical clearance letter.

It is of paramount importance to avoid being deceitful. Participants must be clearly informed of what is required of them prior to the study being conducted and the researcher must refrain from providing a general view on what the objective of conducting the study is (Maree, 2016). Participants are entitled to be informed of precisely what the researcher seeks to find (Maree, 2016). The researcher ensured that the participants were well acquainted with what the study entails by providing each participant with an information sheet that stipulated the context of study and informed the participants exactly what was expected and required of them. Furthermore, it was stressed that participants were not being forced to participate.

Limitations of the Study:

As proposed by Labaree (2009), the limitations of a study refer to factors that cannot be manipulated by the researcher. For the purpose of this study, accessibility proved to be a major challenge. Accessibility refers to the ease with which the researcher is able to locate participants and acquire their approval (Labaree, 2009). At its inception, the study was to centre on two specific individuals whom the researcher had sought out. Initially, the original participants agreed to being interviewed. However, when the time arose to conduct the interviews, one of the participants was unable to commit to the interview owing to personal commitments and the other was unable to accommodate the researcher as a result of a busy schedule. Thus, the researcher had to resort to locating two other well-known and suitable candidates.

As stipulated by Labaree (2009), restrictions may be imposed pertaining to the number of individuals engaged with. This was deemed to be a limitation as the study only permitted an interaction with two individuals. As a result of only taking cognisance of the two participants and their input pertaining to the topic of women in leadership and the characteristics they possess, the trustworthiness of the results obtained could be diminished .

As provided by Enslin (2014) as cited by du-Plooy Cilliers (2014), a study that is qualitative in nature is exceptionally time consuming and is deemed to be tedious. In this instance, a

qualitative study was conducted and required extensive time to be dedicated towards the collection and analysis of the data. Thus, a larger population could not be accommodated due to time constraints resulting in limited information being obtained on the study.

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APPENDICES:

ANNEXURE A: INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

What do you believe are the most important characteristics for women leaders to display?

Which of those characteristics do you display?

Were you born with the ability to lead or do you believe that the ability to lead is developed?

What do you think determines a successful leader?

Which of the attributes affiliated with being a successful leader do you display?

When making important decisions, do you prefer making them on your own or do you encourage your team to participate in the decision making process?

ANNEXURE B: ETHICAL CLEARANCE PARTICIPANT INFORMATION SHEET

To whom it may concern,

My name is Kashvi Singh and I am a student at Varsity College, Durban North. I am currently conducting research about the characteristics that successful women leaders possess. I hope that by conducting this research, it will contribute to an increase in the number of women recognised as efficient leaders and will assist in promoting the number of women occupying leadership positions.

I will be clearly explaining to you exactly what participation in my research study will involve, which I have done below. I have listed these in the forms of questions that I will try to fully answer. If you have any questions that you feel are not addressed or explained fully in this information sheet, please do not hesitate to ask the researcher for more information. Once you have read and understood all the information contained in this sheet, please complete and sign the consent form below.

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

I would like you to participate in this research as you are currently a successful women leader and have made a significant contribution to women in leadership. If you decide to participate in the research study, I intend to conduct an in-depth interview pertaining to the concept of women in leadership and would specifically like to be informed of the characteristics you believe are deemed most essential to possess in order to be a successful women leader. The interview will be scheduled at a time that is convenient for both parties and at a place that is of convenience for you.

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

Your work is completely separate from this research. Irrespective of whether you choose to participate in the research study, your work will in no way be impacted. There are no direct risks or benefits that you will encounter by participating in this study. If you find that it is distressing to talk about your beliefs on the topic to which the study relates, you may seek help from the learning support staff at Varsity College, Durban North

████████████████████

Do I have to participate in the study?

Your inclusion in this study is purely 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 recognise you. I would like to ask your permission to record the interviews, but only I will have access to these recordings. Nobody else, including any persons at Varsity College, Durban North will have access to the interview. I would like to use quotes when I write a summary of the research but I will make sure that nobody will be able to recognise you.

What will happen to the information that participants provide?

Once I have finished all interviews, I will write summaries to be published in academic journals or books, or presented at academic conferences. You may ask me to send you a summary of the research.

What happens if I have more questions about the study?

Please do feel free to contact me should you have any questions 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. The contact details of the researcher are as follows:

Kind regards

Kashvi Singh



[REDACTED]

ANNEXURE C: PARTICIPANT CONSENT FORM

I, _____, agree to participate in the research study conducted by Kashvi Singh regarding the characteristics possessed by successful women leaders. This research has been explained to me and I understand what participation in this research will involve. I understand that:

I agree to be interviewed for this research.

My confidentiality will be ensured. My name and personal details will be kept private.

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.

I may choose not to answer any of the questions that are asked during the research interview.

I may be quoted directly when the research is published, but my identity will be protected/anonymity ensured.

Signature

Date

ANNEXURE D: NON-DISCLOSURE AGREEMENT

I, Kashvi Singh, hereby promise that I will not divulge any personal information regarding the women leader being engaged with for the purpose of this research study.

I will permit the relevant participant access to my research before it is submitted, to ensure that they are satisfied that I have not divulged any sensitive information pertaining to the participant.

Signature: _____

Date: _____

Kashvi Singh

ANNEXURE E: CONSENT FORM FOR AUDIO-RECORDING

I, _____, agree to allow Kashvi Singh to audio record my interview as part of the research pertaining to the characteristics possessed by women leaders.

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

My confidentiality will be ensured. My name and personal details will be kept private.

The recordings will be stored in a password protected file on the researcher's computer.

Only the researcher and the researcher's supervisor will have access to these recordings.

Signature: _____

Date: _____

Name: _____

ANNEXURE F: ETHICAL CLEARANCE LETTER

ANNEXURE G: RESEARCH DOCUMENT SUMMARY TABLE

TITLE: Powerful Women in Leadership: An exploration of the characteristics of successful women leaders.

Research Purpose/ Objective	Primary Research Question	Research Rationale	Seminal Authors/ Sources	Literature Review – Conceptual Framework	Paradigm	Approach	Data Collection Method(s)	Ethics	Key Findings	Recommendations
The objective of the study was to explore the characteristics required by women to enhance their position as leaders and become more successful in this domain.	What are the characteristics possessed by women leaders?	The research study was worth conducting because it will hopefully enable women to identify these characteristics within themselves. It was relevant as the aim was to aid in the promotion of women leaders.	Rashem Mothila Ainura Kadyrkulova John Kotter James McGregor Burns	Theme 1: The Concept of Leadership, Whether It Is Inherent or Developed and the Determinants of a Successful Leader. Theme 2: Women in Leadership and the Characteristics of Women in Leadership	Interpretivism: Epistemology: Knowledge is deemed to be crucial. Ontology: Knowledge is seen as an internal factor.	Qualitative research approach. Population Successful women leaders in corporate.	Instrument: The researcher of the study. Data Collection Method: In-depth personal interviews.	Ethical clearance application Researcher had to obtain participants' consent to conduct study. Confidentiality.	The researcher found that women leaders possess distinct characteristics. Emotional intelligence, committing to being ethical and the nurturing approach was evident. Furthermore leadership abilities were said to be developed.	Future Practices: bodies should be established to empower women and enhance leadership abilities. Heuristic Value: Include greater population. Look at avenues besides corporate sector.
Research Problem	Secondary Questions/ Hypotheses/ Objectives	Key Concepts	Key Theories		Axiology: The research study values the promotion and understanding of women leaders and the characteristics that contribute to their success.	Sampling	Data Analysis Method(s)	Limitations	Key Contribution	
Women are deemed to lack the characteristics that are required to occupy leadership positions. This perception results in competent women not being appointed as leaders. The aim was to address this issue.	Are the leadership characteristics inherent or learnt? What determines a successful leader?	Women Leadership positions Characteristics Leaders	The Transformational leadership theory applied as it encapsulates the characteristics possessed by women leaders.	Theme 3: Transformational Leadership		Non-probability sampling Sampling method: Convenience sampling Size: Two women leaders	Unit of analysis: Women occupying leadership positions. Data Analysis Method: Qualitative content analysis was deployed and the selective coding system was utilised.	Time constraints Limited population engaged with Accessibility was an issue	The research study would hopefully assist women to identify the characteristics emphasised by the women interviewed in themselves so as to contribute to the number of successful women in leadership positions in the corporate world.	

ANNEXURE H: ORIGINALITY REPORT



by Blackboard

RESM5419_2018_1TBC3_VCDN1 - RESM5419_VCDN1

Activity 5.3.2: Submitting your final report

Kashvi Singh on Wed, Oct 24 2018, 10:55 AM

Submission ID: 9b063e6b-d329-49be-a502-edfb992d4b56e 2% highest match

Research Assignment 5 Final ...

Word Count: 14,874

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Citations (5/5)

- Another student's paper
- Another student's paper
- Another student's paper
- Another student's paper
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Abstract:

The objective of this study is to explore the characteristics exhibited by successful women leaders. A global concern has been identified regarding a severe underrepresentation of women occupying key leadership positions. This stems from a global perception that women lack the core competencies that are required to successfully execute the duties of a leader. Although there has been a slight improvement with regards to the number of women assuming the role of leaders, a stark disparity is still evident with limited focus being channelled towards empowering women by nurturing their skills and aiding them to realise their true potential from a leadership perspective. Research conducted on women in leadership with specific reference to their attributes is not extensive. Thus, a dire need to address this topic exists and by engaging with two prospering women leaders, an attempt was made to eradicate the concern by taking cognisance of key characteristics of women leaders among other crucial components pertaining to leadership. In-depth interviews were utilised to acquire data from participants as it facilitates