

**An Exploration of the Communication Styles of Women in Managerial
Positions Based on the Feminine Communication Style in the Workplace**

Kayla Claassen-17382325

Honours in Psychology, IIE Varsity College

RESE8419: Research Final Report

Sam Pretorius

28 October ,2020

Word Count 10 427

I hereby declare that the research report submitted for the Honours in Psychology degree to The Independent Institute of Education (The IIE) is my work and has not previously been submitted to another University or Higher Education for degree purposes.

Abstract

The purpose of this study was to understand how women in managerial positions approach communication styles based on the perceived undermining of the feminine communication style in the workplace (Mohindra & Azhar, 2012). Women are evaluated more negatively in leadership roles in comparison to men, even if they display masculine leadership characteristics (Jackson, Alberti & Snipers, 2013). Based on these preconceived views women often take on a masculine approach to leadership, but studies have shown that it lowers competence and perceived effectiveness meaning that the use of the masculine communication approach sounds ideal, but when practice by women it is often less successful (Jackson et al., 2013).

The researcher that conducted the study drew five females from a sample who fitted the profile of the sample that was needed. A once off in-depth WhatsApp video call interview was conducted to collect the data the researcher required by asking open-ended questions to ensure that all the necessary information was obtained and that there was a good understanding of the participants. The research findings stated that females have more negative experiences than positive with using both the masculine and feminine communication approach to leadership positions due to the stereotyped characteristics that accompany their gender. For this reason, and despite the undermining of the feminine communication approach, females still felt like the qualities of the feminine communication approach helped them get more out of people and continued to use it. The research showed that the core issue is a lack of studies conducted on the success of the feminine communication style, misunderstanding and misinterpreting of genders linguistic styles and the meaning behind it, as opposed to females not having the desired communication approach or being fit for leadership positions.

Table of Contents

Introduction	5-8
Introduction	5
Contextualisation	5
Rationale.....	6
Problem statement.....	6-7
Purpose statement.....	7
Research question	7
Research objectives.....	7
Summary	8
 Literature Review	 9-17
Introduction	9
Theoretical foundation.....	9-10
Literature review	10-16
Conclusion	16
Key concepts	16-17
Summary.....	17
 Research Design and Methodology	 18-26
Introduction	18
Paradigm.....	18-19
Research design	19-20
Research plan.....	20-22
Data collection method and application thereof	22

Data analysis and application	23-26
Summary.....	26
Findings and Interpretation of Findings.....	27-32
Introduction	27
Findings and interpretation.....	27-31
Trustworthiness.....	31-32
Summary.....	32
Conclusion.....	33-35
Introduction	33
Conclusion	33
Contributions	34
Ethical implications.....	34-35
Limitations.....	35
Summary.....	35
References.....	36-38
Annexures.....	39-48
Annexure A: Consent form.....	39-42
Annexure B: Consent for audio and video.....	43
Annexure C: Questionnaire.....	44
Annexure D: Ethics clearance letter.....	45-46
Annexure F: Final report summary	47-48
List of Images	
Image 1: Themes and Subthemes	27

Introduction

Introduction

Gender discrimination is a contentious issue as it involves the unequal or disadvantageous treatment of an individual or a group of individuals based on their gender (Jackson et al., 2013). The issue comes in that these unequal or disadvantageous treatment is subjective and what is considered unequal and disadvantageous differs greatly between people. This chapter will look at the context in which the study was based, the rationale behind the study, the identified problem that inspired this study, the purpose of this study and what the research questions and objectives was.

Contextualisation

For decades women have faced various barriers to achieving occupational success. These barriers are largely based on external factors in the form of socialized stereotypes (Chapman, 2015). It focuses on trying to uncover whether there is discriminatory acts towards women based on the female communication style in middle to high managerial positions and if so if females convert to the male norm of communication in order to gain the same level of respect male managers get and the success of these conversions (Jackson et al., 2013). When used in leadership the female communication style is often viewed negatively and less successful in comparison to the male communication style and women often feel like they need to convert to the preferred male communication style (Jackson et al., 2013). Previous studies have shown that the masculine communication style is not as successful as it is believed to be as it lowers competence and theory effectiveness, meaning that the male communication style is believed to be more successful when looking at the qualities it entails but when put to the test, especially by females, it is not as successful (Jackson et al., 2013).

Rationale

People are unaware of how pressing gender discrimination is or believe it to be of little importance in the workplace in the 21st century due to the perceived low impact it has on efficiency of the corporate world (Macarie & Moldovan, 2012). There is a preconceived idea that the impact gender discrimination has on an international and societal level excludes local spheres from addressing the issue of gender discrimination (Macarie & Moldovan, 2012). This is clearly untrue as gender discrimination still affects employers and managers around the globe (Macarie & Moldovan, 2012). Equality is of universal importance and its perceived absence may have a negative impact on female employees and further bearing on organisational performance (Steyn & Jackson, 2015). Society is taught to believe that a successful leader should abide to the male norms as standards for communicating as studies conducted shows this to be successful (Merchant, 2012). This is, however, problematic as there are a lack of research done on the success of the feminine communication style (Merchant, 2012). There is little evidence on the success rate it has in the corporate world or the effectiveness of females converting to the male norm of communicating (Merchant, 2012). Therefore, this study will hopefully give insight to, generate new knowledge and try to contribute to the solving of problems associated with the feminine communication style in the workplace (Merchant, 2012).

Problem Statement

Managers play a crucial role in affecting employee job satisfaction and success (Jackson et al., 2013). Evaluation of female leaders are more negative, even if they display masculine leadership characteristics (Jackson et al., 2013). The leadership prototype includes male-oriented traits, such as being aggressive, objective, dominant, competitive and decisive (Jackson et al., 2013). Female leaders tend to emphasize teamwork, empathy, work-life balance and the nurturing of relationships (Jackson et al., 2013). The masculine leadership style is idealized as it seen as more successful due to being more rigid, productivity driven and focuses on the end results (Jackson et al., 2013). Based on these preconceived views women often take on a masculine approach to leadership, but studies have shown that it lowers competence and perceived effectiveness meaning that the use of the

masculine communication sounds ideal but when practice by women it is often less successful (Jackson et al., 2013). It is clear that there is a knowledge gap when it comes to studies done on the success of the feminine communication style and the effect of females taking on the male norm of communication in leadership positions (Jackson et al., 2013).

Purpose statement

The purpose of this study was to understand how women in managerial positions approach communication styles based on perceived undermining of the feminine communication style in the workplace (Mohindra & Azhar, 2012).

Research Question

How do women in managerial roles communicate considering the preconceived ideas of the female communication style?

Does the undermining of females based on the preconceived female communication-style impact the experiences of females in managerial positions?

Do women in managerial positions change their communication style to counteract gender discrimination?

Research Objectives

One of the research objectives of this study was to gain an understanding of the negative views associated with the preconceived female communication style in the workplace.

A further objective of the study was to obtain an understanding of whether these preconceived communication styles effected the communication approach women take in managerial positions.

Summary

This chapter served as an introduction to the research conducted, it gives context and rational for embarking upon this study by defining the problem and reviewing previous work done in this field of study. Academic literature was consulted and was used as a solid foundation for the chapter to come.

Literature Review

Introduction

The following chapter is set to explore the bodies of knowledge on many pieces of academic sources to provide insight into the issues that outlines gender discrimination and link it to a theoretical foundation best suited.

Theoretical Foundation

The theories considered for this study was the Communication Accommodation Theory, the Genderlect Theory, the Muted Group Theory and the Social Learning Theory (Giles & Ogay, 2007). The theory most applicable to this study was the Communication Accommodation Theory by Giles (1971), which states that people accommodate or adjust their communication styles to the communication styles of others that they are communicating with (Giles & Ogay, 2007). These changes in an individual's verbal and nonverbal styles are made through divergence and convergence (Giles & Ogay, 2007). Divergence is used to emphasise group identity through highlighting the differences of the group that they identify with (Giles & Ogay, 2007). Convergence is used more often by powerless individual for social approval and focuses on matching the communication style of the person whom they are communicating with (Giles & Ogay, 2007).

According to this theory it is predicted that males will use divergence to highlight and push the strengths associated with their genders communication style and females will use convergence to covert or match the desired masculine communication style in order to gain social approval (Giles & Ogay, 2007). This convergence happens consciously or subconsciously and can come across as fake or making a mockery, thus when females do this it can increase the view of them being incompetent or insecure in their management position (Giles & Ogay, 2007). Convergence is not always the case as people do not always want to identify or be identified with the people they are communicating with. The person choosing not to

converge wants to make it clear that they have their own identity (Giles & Ogay, 2007). This can be the reason why some females in middle and high managerial positions decide not to convert to the masculine communication style (Giles & Ogay, 2007). Divergence is also often used to maintain the gap between people, for example the gender gap. The group who holds the power highlight their own group identity by making the differences between the groups seem more pronounced than it is and thus maintaining the gap between them in society (Olasile, 2012). There are underlying thoughts processes and emotions involved in the use of convergence and divergence during conversations, such as those created by society in the form of prejudice and stereotypes (Olasile, 2012).

Literature Review

For decades women have been dependant on men and only recently were they able to find their independence and have moderate access to the same jobs as men (Chapman, 2015). Women of colour, homosexual, bisexual and women with disabilities face more barriers as they suffer double oppression and often get less support than other women (Chapman, 2015). These discriminatory practices women face are largely based on external factors, such as their linguistic styles, socialization and tokenism, which influence their inputs in an organization and thus effecting the output of the organization (Steyn & Jackson, 2015).

Gender Communication

Gender communication is a specialized section of the communication field that looks at on the way gendered beings communicate (Verniers & Vala, 2018). Gender biases to communication can incite problems on a societal level (Merchant, 2012). The gender myths women work under threaten children and family life and assists the relationship between sexism and oppression as they promote sexist and oppressive views adding to the female struggles (Verniers & Vala, 2018). The gap that exists between genders is caused by stereotypes, assumed gender roles and interpersonal differences that contributes to miscommunication between sexes (Merchant, 2012). Mohindra and Azhare (2012) agreed with Verniers and Vala

(2018) as they state that labour market has hindered the female career achievements as it limits them when it comes to managerial, strategic or decision-making positions (Merchant, 2012). It is important to remember that due to individual differences not all women fit into labelled categories. By keeping this in consideration, it helps to create a better understanding of the problem of gender discrimination in the workplace (Merchant, 2012).

Gender stereotypes are socially constructed and engrained in our minds at a young age. Early on in life there is a clear understanding of appropriate behaviours attributed to our gender and that we must strive to abide by these existing roles to fit into society (Merchant, 2012). There are various persuasive factors that influence individuals to conform to the stereotypes around their gender as they strive for consistency between their biological sex and what is expected of them (Merchant, 2012). These stereotypical gender roles act as guidelines for workplace conduct as they subconsciously dictate how a person is expected to communicate and act based on their gender (Merchant, 2012). These gender stereotypes portray women as lacking the very qualities that is commonly associate with effective leadership, thus creating a false perception that women do not measure up to men when it comes to middle and top level management positions and that they have to change their communication traits to be more masculine and in doing so increase their chances of occupational success (Merchant, 2012). However, Fritz and van Knippenberg (2017) disagreed with Merchant (2012) and argued that the organizational role and identity that the leader must take on overrides gender roles and motivates women to behave in a specific way that will benefit the organisation thus women are more concerned with managing effectively than about representing sex differentiated features of societal gender roles.

Stereotypes of the Female Communication Style

Women and men have different communication style approaches thus they differ in the way they influence others. These differences in communication styles can create great levels of misunderstanding (Merchant, 2012). These approaches are influenced by stereotypes and these stereotypes have negative effects on female

behaviour and the perception of females as employees, managers and leaders (Merchant, 2012). The experiences women have in the workplace are often shaped by various aspects associated with their identity and the understanding of these socialized identities (Merchant, 2012). When women display communication traits associated and socialized with the female gender, such as being warm and nurturing, they do not fulfil the requirement of what is expected of a leader (Merchant, 2012). If females change their communication style to the preferred norm of communication associated with the male communication style, such as being assertive and blunt, she is seen as angrier and more aggressive than men that act in the same manner (Merchant, 2012). Society defines a good leader as someone who has self-awareness, relational transparency, internalized moral perspective and balanced processing (Merchant, 2012). Examination of these leadership characteristics is genderless and thus it is impossible to determine a good leader based purely on their gender (Merchant, 2012).

Eklund, Barry, and Grunberg (2017) along with Fritz and van Knippenberg (2017) and Merchant (2012) agreed in that research have found that both men and women can be effective and ineffective leaders. With sex comes different roles, responsibilities, limitations and experiences that each suit different organisational situations. There is no difference between men and women in leadership roles but rather that leadership roles are extremely situational, thus neither men nor women are better leaders, but rather that leadership styles effectiveness is dependent on the situation, various features of group, the organisational environment and the leaders ability to conform to what is expected of them in the managerial role and ignore their gender's influence on the leadership style.

Differences in Language use

Women use language to create relationship bonds and social connections thus they are people orientated, whereas men use language to exert dominance and achieve tangible outcomes thus, they are task orientated (Merchant, 2012). Powel (1990) along with many other researchers however disagreed with Merchant (2012) as they state that male and female leaders exhibit similar amounts of task-oriented and people-oriented behaviour.

Women often make decisions by looking at all the options available and are open to suggestions from others while men tend to process internally until they come up with a solution (Merchant, 2012). Due to these differences women often view men as unresponsive to suggestions and men often assume that women are looking for approval when they are processing information aloud or that they do not know what they are doing. Some men even think that the way women process information is a sign of weakness (Merchant, 2012). Women are concerned with consensus where men tend to be more hierarchical and only include the people closest to their level in the decision-making process (Merchant, 2012).

Differences in Non-Verbal Communication

Nonverbal communication is the transmission of messages or signals without using words but rather body language, tone of voice and gesture (Merchant, 2012). Women often use non-verbal behaviour like nodding their head to show that they are listening, and men will leave the conversation thinking that the head nod meant they agreed (Merchant, 2012). Men stay neutral in their body language and women may interpret this as them being bored or not understanding. This can lead to women becoming very uncomfortable and repeating themselves leading them to come across as insecure (Merchant, 2012). This in turn makes men think that women are not assertive or confident enough to be leaders (Merchant, 2012). Eye contact is also used differently by genders as women use it as a sign of connection and a relationship while men see it as women challenging their power or position making them even more prejudiced (Merchant, 2012).

Effects of Discriminating in the Workplace

Strong gender stereotypes due to historical gender inequality make people less likely to believe that gender disparity in the workplace is due to discrimination (Merchant, 2012). Gender biases in the workplace lead to a lack of communication towards women in the workplace as information is withheld from them as they are viewed as incompetent. These behaviours are considered gaslighting as information is intentionally altered or kept from females to put them at a disadvantage and make

them seem less capable than men (Merchant, 2012). The withholding of information can be the reason why there is a difference in leadership success between men and women as there is a lack of inclusion placing females at a disadvantage (Merchant, 2012). Gender differences in communication styles and influence tactics have created stereotypical gender roles that have affected the behaviour of both men and women in the workplace (Merchant, 2012). Some of these stereotypes have even had negative effects on women's behaviours and perceptions of females as employees, managers, and leaders in the workplace (Merchant, 2012).

These stereotypes cause a subconscious attitude in women about what is expected of them in the workplace, their communication use and their leadership styles (Merchant, 2012). This brings in the theory applicable to this study which is the Communication Accommodation Theory by Giles (1971), which states that people accommodate or adjust their communication styles to the communication styles of others that they are communicating with by making use of divergence and convergence. Divergence is often used by the powerful group to highlight and promote their strengths and make the gap between the groups seems bigger than what it is, which in this case will be males in the workplace (Giles & Ogay, 2007). Convergence is often used by the less powerful group by converting to the norm communication approach in order to gain social approval, which in this case will be female leaders taking on the preferred male norm of communication as they are raised to believe that this is what is needed to be successful as a leader (Olasile, 2012).

This sex role leaning leads women to convince themselves that they are subordinate to men causing the perception of women in the workplace to be that they are, in fact, second class to men and that men are superior to women in their status (Merchant, 2012). When gender becomes associated with a status characteristic, it creates a hierarchical structure of opportunities in the workplace that is biased towards men (Merchant, 2012). Men's higher social status means they have more access to power and resources than women do thus giving them more opportunities to succeed in leadership or managerial positions (Merchant, 2012). This once again puts women at a disadvantage because they are not exposed to these same opportunities due to gender stereotypes and thus will not achieve or reach the same success as men (Merchant, 2012).

Females are often held to different standards than men meaning female leaders have to work harder than male leaders to succeed in their position or take on masculine leadership characteristics to succeed or gain the same recognition males do (Merchant, 2012). It is often expected of female leaders to adapt to traditional male oriented models of leadership (Merchant, 2012). Leadership has traditionally been studied by making use of male norms as standards thus this paints men as being the more natural fit for top leadership positions without the necessary research done on the feminine communication style approach and the success of this approach (Merchant, 2012).

South African Context

The study will take place in a South African context thus it is important to look at what it entails. The South African government try and promote gender equality in the workplace as set out in the Bill of Rights. The government strives for gender equality in all levels of society including the workplace. The Equality Act aims to promote, protect and monitor gender equality (Jonkheid and Mango, 2008). Due to South Africa's history of discrimination and oppression during the apartheid era the government set a specific act in place called the Employment Equity Act 55 of 1998 (Jonkheid and Mango, 2008). This act is set out to achieve equity by promoting equal opportunity and fair treatment in employment by eliminating discrimination and applying affirmative action to compensate the disadvantages in employment by designated groups which includes black people, women and people with disabilities (Jonkheid and Mango, 2008). This helps promote equal distribution in the workplace according to demographics and giving previously disadvantaged groups the opportunities they were denied in the past (Jonkheid and Mango, 2008). A South African study on the gambling industry found that when females entered a male-dominated top management level there were still challenges (Jonkheid and Mango, 2008). Communication especially with older senior male colleagues was stressful and the initiatives to empower women was either limited or non-existing. Relationships with females in top management was often strained due to jealousy and competitiveness for higher level jobs such as management. (Jonkheid and Mango, 2008). This study shows the difficulties females face in society to reach the

same jobs and respect male managers get and how these difficulties are even more profound due to South Africa's history of oppression and discrimination and the extreme traditional views held by the older generation in society (Jonkheid and Mango, 2008).

Conclusion

Merchant (2012) explains that women are often undermined in all levels of society and organisations. They often feel forced to convert to masculine norms of communication in order to gain the same level of respect or get viewed as worthy of their leadership position as socialization of stereotypes have society believing that men are better leaders and have better approaches to leadership than females (Merchant, 2012). The masculine communication characteristics traits are seen as more successful than feminine communication traits. This conclusion is based mostly of the fact that stereotypes has society believing that women are lacking leadership qualities, but the real issue is the lack of studies done on the success of feminine communication style, misunderstanding and misinterpretation of genders linguistic styles and the meaning behind them. (Merchant, 2012). Men and women differ in their way of managing but that does not mean that the one is better than the other (Merchant, 2012). Women are expected to behave like men in their leadership, but also fit into their stereotypical feminine role. Female leaders need to learn how to adapt their leadership style based on the situation and which communication style is needed in that situation (Merchant, 2012). This balancing act is hard and the reason why men, overall, emerge as leaders more often than women as they are held to different standards and do not have to the balancing act as the masculine communication approach is naturally accepted by society (Merchant, 2012).

Key Concepts

In this study communication style can be defined as the way in which people interact and exchange information with other and refers to the different approach females and males take to communication (Durant, McCray & Safran, 2012)

In the context of this study masculine communication style in the context of this study is defined as ideal communication traits associated with the male sex which includes being assertive, blunt and task-orientated (Durant et al., 2012).

Feminine communication style in the context of this study is defined as less ideal communication traits associated with the female sex which includes being warm, nurturing and people-orientated which will be investigated by looking at the characteristics females do portray in the workplace (Durant et al., 2012).

Gender discrimination, in the context of this study, is defined as treating a specific gender worse than the other in the workplace purely based on their sex and stereotypes that accompany their sex (Kossek, Su & Wu, 2016). This will be investigated by looking at the reported experiences women have when they make use of a specific communication style (masculine or feminine) and how stereotypes affect their role in the organisation (Kossek et al., 2016).

Cacciattolo, (2015) define workplace as a formal institution where employees work under and adhere to a higher power, like a manager.

Summary

This chapter explored bodies of knowledge of academic sources and identified various aspects that aid the study conducted and these aspects include what gender discrimination is, stereotypes associated with the feminine communication approach, differences in language use between genders, differences in nonverbal communication use between genders, the effects of discrimination in the workplace and lastly looked at gender discrimination in the South African context.

Research Design and Methodology

Introduction

This chapter sets out the roadmap in which the research will be conducted to answer the research question asked. The starting point being identifying the most fitting paradigm. Thereafter the research design and research plan and the application thereof.

Paradigm

A paradigm can be defined as a set of assumptions or beliefs about important aspects of reality that gives rise to a particular world view. It controls what should be studied, how the research should be done and how the results should be understood. There are three research paradigms, namely positivism, interpretivism and critical realism (Davis,2014). An interpretivist study allows the researcher to view the world through the perceptions and experiences of the participants as the data collected is personal (Davis,2014). Interpretivism is influenced by hermeneutics which is concerned with the theory and method used to understand human actions, phenomenology which is the examination of the way in which individuals make sense of the world around them and symbolic interactionists which sees reality as being constructed and symbolic (Davis,2014).

This study made use of an interpretivist research paradigm as it is a qualitative study that seek to gain an in-depth and rich understanding of the relationship between the undermining of the female communication style and the communication style approach females decide to take (Nieuwenhuis, 2020).

The ontology is that reality is socially constructed as the way women are presented in the workplace is partly shaped by the interaction's women have with others, the position women take in society and their life experiences (Nieuwenhuis, 2020). Society is raised to believe that women are inferior to men thus our perception of reality is coloured by our beliefs and background of discrimination

towards women throughout the years (Nieuwenhuis, 2020). It is thus important to look at society as a whole in order to understand these discriminatory acts in the workplace and understand that there are multiple perspectives due to different interpretation of events. Thus, people might act to events in a different manner and this might be why some females choose not to change their communication style or why some people do not make females feel like they must change their communication style (Nieuwenhuis, 2020).

The axiology is that the uniqueness of the individual and their understanding of the matter of gender discrimination will be limited to their exposure to it, their unique experiences and the meaning they attached to discrimination (Nieuwenhuis, 2020). The epistemology includes that humanness and knowledge act as filters and one tries to understand through the eyes of others, but one describe events through the filters of one's own knowledge and experiences, making it personal to the individual, thus gender discrimination events is understood and viewed differently by individuals based on their experiences with it (Nieuwenhuis, 2020).

Research Design

A research design can be referred to as the overall strategy the researcher choose to integrate in order to address the problem, how the data will be collected and how this data will be analysed. The research design is based on the researchers ontological and epistemological perspectives. (Davis, 2014). The research design deal with whether the researcher will make use of qualitative or quantitative methods. Qualitative methods deal with important qualities of personal experiences and meaning associated with the subject being study where quantitative methods deal with statistics that can be used to convince others of your cause and is concerned with quantity (Davis, 2014). The research design used for this study is a qualitative study as it deals with gaining an understanding of the females experience with the feminine communication approach in the workplace in middle to higher hierarchal positions (Davis, 2014).

This research made use of a deductive reasoning approach as it started with a general statement such as that females in the workplace experience undermining due to their communication style. It examined the specifics such as the experiences

of females in the workplace to reach a specific and logic conclusion of whether this statement is true or not (Davis,2014). It started with a general theory such as the Communication Accommodation Theory and based on this theory we made predictions of the effects it will have on the topic researched and then conducted the research to reach the specifics found by the conducted research (Giles & Ogay, 2007).

The research was an exploratory study as it explored the research question and did not intend to offer a final and conclusive solution to the existing problem but rather to reach a better understanding (Davis, 2014).The research made use of the phenomenological approach to research as it deals with understanding the core of the experiences about a phenomenon (Nieuwenhuis, 2020). It is done through performing in-depth interviews with up to ten people. The data collected is used to develop a complex essence of experience for all the individuals (Nieuwenhuis, 2020). The methodology for phenomenology consists of documenting lived experiences and interpreting these texts by using a set of rules or methods to reduce the information collected and combine this reduced information into themes (Nieuwenhuis, 2020).

Research Plan

Population

A population can be defined as a large collection of individuals or articles that is the focus of the study and from whom the data is needed (Pascoe, 2014). The population for this study was woman, specifically women working in managerial positions (Pascoe, 2014). Population parameters refer to the unique characteristics, nature and size of the researcher's population. Only after these parameters have been established the population is defined appropriately and the researcher is able to distinguish between the target population, which is the total group of individuals from who the sample could of been drawn and accessible population, which are only those the researcher was able to reach when conducting the research and who the researcher chose to draw their sample from (Pascoe, 2014). The population parameters and target population of this study were females in South Africa between the ages of thirty and sixty, working in middle to higher hierarchical managerial

positions, of any race and fluent in the English language (Pascoe, 2014). The accessible population included females the researcher was acquainted with between the ages of thirty and sixty working in the middle to higher hierarchical levels of any race in the Southern Suburbs of Cape Town (Pascoe, 2014). The units of analysis are the entity that frames what was studied as it refers to whether the researcher's questions will be best answered by making use of people, groups, organisations or social artefacts (Pascoe, 2014). The unit of analysis in this study was people, in particular women, as the researcher was interested in gaining insight into individual discriminatory experiences in the workplace (Pascoe, 2014).

Sampling

A sample can be defined as a smaller, manageable version of the larger population which is intended to show what the whole population is like (Pascoe, 2014). In this study, non-probability sampling was used as it is often used when it is impossible to determine or gain access to the entire population (Pascoe, 2014). It made use of the non-probability method of purposive sampling as it included choosing the element that we wished to include in the sample, based on a set list of characteristics (Pascoe, 2014). In this study it was important to use this method as it was impossible to reach the whole population and it thus ensured that the element the researcher studied assisted in the research process (Pascoe, 2014). It allowed the researcher to choose five females that found themselves in middle to higher hierarchical levels of management and working directly with others in a workplace (Pascoe, 2014). Due to the qualitative nature of the study it was suitable to have a small sample as the researcher was looking at the individual experiences of women and not trying to prove a particular hypotheses or draw any conclusions on the entire population (Pascoe, 2014). It allowed the researcher to rely on her own judgement when choosing participants to participate and in doing so, ensured that participants selected had experience or interest in the study being conducted and thus fitting the profile needed for the study (Pascoe, 2014). The researcher was able to identify five females from the Southern Suburbs to partake in the study. These participants were all between the ages of thirty and fifty, in middle management and fluent in the English language (Pascoe, 2014).

Data Collection Method and Application Thereof

An in-depth interview is a qualitative data collection method, which offers the researcher the opportunity to question the participants in order to capture rich and descriptive data about how people think and behave and unfold complex phenomena. It helps to view the world through the eyes of the participant (Nieuwenhuis, 2020). The type of interview used in this study was a once off semi-structured interview that focused on asking a set of open-ended questions participants, allowing for detailed answers, which facilitated a greater understanding of the matter (Strydom & Bezuidenhout, 2014). An in-depth interview involves a direct one-on-one engagement with the individuals participating in the study. It can take the form of a face-to-face interview or in some cases, telephonic interviews. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic and the required social distancing this study was intended to be conducted via Zoom. This was to account for the aspect of non-verbal communication and to help make room for any possible factors not accounted for in the questionnaire set out in annexure C (Strydom & Bezuidenhout, 2014). The interviews were however not done through Zoom as it seemed to intimidate people and made the interview seem like a commitment making them hesitant to partake in the study (Strydom & Bezuidenhout, 2014). Instead, the interviews were done through WhatsApp video call as it is more accessible and more convenient for the participants and still made it possible for the researcher to account for nonverbal communication aspects related to the questions (Strydom & Bezuidenhout, 2014). The proposal stated that the interview needed to take place in a quiet environment and with no distractions, but with COVID-19 and a lot of people working from home and schools being closed there were brief interruptions and noises throughout some of the interviews. The interview was conducted with acquaintances of the researcher who fitted the profile of the sample (Strydom & Bezuidenhout, 2014). The questionnaire was emailed to the participants beforehand to ensure that they had enough time to think about the questions in the hopes of increasing the effectiveness of the interview process and the quality of data collected (Strydom & Bezuidenhout, 2014). The interviews were voice recorded and the researcher took notes on the participants facial expressions and body languages to refer to in process of analysing the data (Strydom & Bezuidenhout, 2014).

Data Analysis and Application

Zhang and Wildemuth (2017) suggest an eight-step method in the procedure of qualitative content analysis. The first step involves the preparing of the content you will analyse. This step includes arranging and converting the raw data collected in the interview into written format before it can be analysed, as not all data is relevant or useful in the research process, thus a criterion for inclusion needs to be developed (Bezuidnehou & Cronje, 2014). The more organised the text, the more valuable it will be during the analysing process. By writing down the data the researcher will gain a better overall understanding of the data composed. These notes can also be attached as evidence in the research proposal making the research more trustworthy as others have access to the original data collected (Bezuidnehou & Cronje, 2014).

In this study the raw data collected in the interviews in the form of recordings was converted into transcripts containing all relevant data related to the questionnaire's questions (see annexure C) and the purpose and objectives of the study (Bezuidnehou & Cronje, 2014). Initially each individual interview had their own transcript, but as the structure of the interview and the questions asked remained the same the interviewees answers was then all placed under the same heading question to make it more organised and easier to analyse and compare answers given by the different interviewees on the questions asked (Bezuidnehou & Cronje, 2014).

The second step is a crucial step and includes defining the coding unit and categories of analysis. This includes the basic concept that the researcher aims to analyse (Bezuidnehou & Cronje, 2014). The researcher needs to indicate whether they are going to make use of words and phrases, the features of people who formed or appear in the texts, the occurrence and placing of images, or the treatment of themes and concepts (Bezuidnehou & Cronje, 2014). This is done by arranging the data into chunks that are more manageable. These chunks are then compared and clustered based on their differences and similarities. These different chunks will then be coded accordingly and then further analysed (Bezuidnehou & Cronje, 2014). This was done by reading through the data and identifying the coding unit, which

was categories, namely level of organisation, gender discrimination, experience with using the feminine communication approach, experience with using the masculine communication approach and stereotypes (Bezuidenhout & Cronje, 2014). The researcher chose to make use of line-by-line coding and identifying phrases that related to the categories and that will ultimately contribute to themes being identified. The different categories were colour coded and labelled with a letter or letters, for example gender discrimination was colour coded purpled and labelled 'G', level of organisation was colour coded red and labelled 'L', experience related to the female communication approach was colour coded yellow and labelled 'FA', stereotypes was colour coded green and labelled 'S' and experience related to the masculine communication approach was colour coded blue and labelled 'MA'. This was done to arrange data into chunks making it more manageable and easier to identify, compare and cluster together based on similarities and differences (Bezuidenhout & Cronje, 2014).

The third step is the emerging of categories and a coding scheme or conceptual framework (Assarroudi, Nabavi, Armat, Ebadi & Vairmoradi, 2018). It includes grouping related concepts together to form categories of codes. In order to assist the coding of data a conceptual framework is developed. A conceptual framework or coding scheme can be developed from raw data know as inductively. Conceptual framework or coding scheme can also be developed on previously conducted studies or theories known as deductively (Assarroud et al.,2018). A combination of inductively and deductively coding schemes is also sometimes used (Assarroudi et al., 2018). Naming or labelling often helps the researcher to identify categories of codes. Every code, theme and category need to be defined clearly and systematically as it permits the researcher to apply it to the test as consistently as possible (Assarroudi et al.,2018). Codes, themes and categories should be wide-ranging which means that there should be enough categories to house all the data. The codes, themes and categories should also be mutually exclusive which means that each theme or category should be different with no overlapping. It should lastly be precise which means that their relevance should be clear and visible (Assarroudi et al.,2018). The conceptual framework was developed from raw data thus inductive coding was followed and done through colour coding and labelling all relevant data

with the relevant colour and codes to their specific categories to see if all data is covered by the categories identified (Assarroudi et al.,2018).

The fourth step includes testing the coding scheme the researcher has created on a sample text. This will help to test the exactness and consistency of your category definition on a sample of the data the researcher has collected. Low consistency calls for the researcher to redefine their coding (Bezuidnehout & Cronje, 2014). This step often brings about uncertainties and difficulties relating to the researchers coding categories that needs to be resolved before the data can be analysed further (Bezuidnehout & Cronje, 2014). This was done through testing the coding scheme's on the text and seeing if it covers all data in a consistent manner and it was suitable and nothing needed to be resolved (Bezuidnehout & Cronje, 2014).

The fifth step involves coding all text. This step includes the causation inspection of data and taking notes of all relevant sections and items (Bezuidnehout & Cronje, 2014). Highlighting relevant sections can help the researcher organise information into relevant sections that the researcher can refer to when analysing the data (Bezuidnehout & Cronje, 2014). This was done by applying the colour coding and labelling developed throughout the raw data to select and categorise the relevant sections. The researcher then organised all coded data into relevant sections by making a table of the categories and listed all relevant data to each category and colour coded the data in terms of similarities and differences (Bezuidnehout & Cronje, 2014). The sixth step is assessing the coding consistency of the researchers. This is only done after all coding is completed and aims to check the consistency in which the coding is conducted (Bezuidnehout & Cronje, 2014).

The seventh step includes using coded data to draw final conclusions. This is done through interpretations of themes and categories identified by the researcher (Bezuidnehout & Cronje , 2014). The understanding of analysis is linked to the consideration of theoretical constructs and the meaning the researcher attaches to the text and his or her understanding and perhaps exposure of the broader context of the study (Bezuidnehout & Cronje , 2014). This was done by linking the coded data to the themes identified and the knowledge gained on the matter through exposure

by doing research for the literature review to draw final conclusions on the matter and find answers to the research questions asked.

The eighth and final step involves the researcher reporting on the methods used and on the findings of the data collected. This requires of the researcher to report on the process applied in their coding, analysis and interpretation as completely and honestly as possible (Bezuidenhout & Cronje, 2014). This reporting of the process applied in coding and analysis was done in the previous steps of the content analysis and the interpretation of the results will follow in the next chapter.

Summary

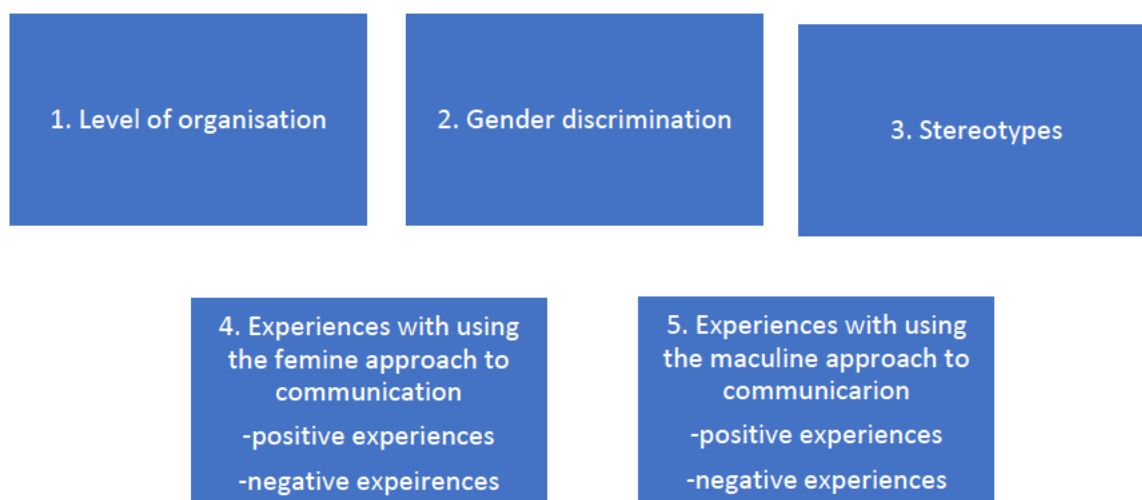
This study lend itself to the interpretivist research paradigm as it is a qualitative study that seeks to gain an in-depth and rich understanding of the matter. The research design used was in depth interviews with the sample from an open-ended questionnaire. The research plan involves sampling five females from the South African population that are between the ages of thirty and sixty working in middle to higher level of organisation in the Southern Suburbs of Cape Town by using the data collection method of in-depth interviews and the data analysis method set out by Zhang and Wildemuth (2017) called the eight step method in the procedure of qualitative content analysis. The next chapter will discuss the findings and interpretation of the findings based on the data collected through the research design and methodology mentioned in this chapter.

Findings and Interpretation of Findings

Introduction

The focus of this chapter is on the destination that is, the study's results. It will draw from the fundamentals of the research questions, the review of relevant literature and the chapter that outlined the roadmap for collecting data relevant to the research. It will draw inferences from the data collected in order to answer the research question which is, how women in managerial roles communicate considering the preconceived ideas of the female communication style. The following diagram (Image 1: Themes and Sub-themes) portrays the themes and sub themes identified in the analysing of the data collected in the previous chapter.

Image 1: Themes and sub-themes



Findings and Interpretation

The first theme identified is the theme of 'level of organisation' and the data relating to this theme is that all the females in the study found themselves in middle level management. This is an important aspect to mention as the level of

organisation the females find themselves in will affect their experiences and insights on the matter under questioning.

The following data links to the theme of 'experiences with using the masculine approach to communication' as the data shows that the participants in the mostly reported suffering negative experiences with using the masculine communication style. A sub-theme identified is 'negative experiences with using the masculine approach to communication' and these negative experiences include being seen as difficult and rude. This links to another subtheme of 'negative experiences with using the feminine communication approach' as the females also stated that most of them have had negative experiences with using the feminine communication approach too, such as being seen as too soft, emotional and thus being taken advantage of, not assertive or precise enough and being flirtatious and incompetent. These findings relate and support the research problem that was under investigation that states that female leaders are evaluated more negatively than men due characteristics associated with their gender even if they take on the prototype of leadership that is associated with masculine approach to leadership. Regardless of which communication style females take to leadership they are still viewed more negatively than men and have negative experiences with using it (Jackson et al., 2013).

The purpose of the study was to understand how women in managerial positions approach their communication style based on the perceived undermining of the feminine communication style in the workplace (Mohindra & Azhar, 2012). The research findings links to the sub-theme of 'positive experiences with using the feminine communication style' and show that despite the undermining of the feminine communication style and the negative experiences associated with it, women participating in the study tended to stick to their gender specific communication style as they felt like the qualities of the feminine communication style helps them "get more out of people" and helps to create and maintain relationships creating a better overall workplace experience for everyone despite all the negative associations with their communication style.

The theoretical foundation that this study was based on is the Communication Accommodation Theory by Giles (1971) which states that people accommodate or

adjust their communication styles to the communication styles of others that they are communicating with. (Giles & Ogay, 2007). According to this theory it was predicted that males will use divergence to highlight and push the strengths associated with their genders communication style and females will use convergence to covert or match the desired masculine communication style in order to gain social approval (Giles & Ogay, 2007). This theory was partly supported as males uses divergence to highlight and push the strengths associated with their gender as they and society portray it to be the desired prototype for leadership and make women feel like they have to take on a masculine approach to communication to be effective leaders as their feminine communication approach is lacking the qualities needed to be a good leader. Men do this by making women feel like they have to change their communication style to a more masculine approach to be effective leaders. However this theory was also challenged as although women found it challenging to communicate with others using the feminine communication approach they tended to keep using it regardless thus they did not use convergence as they felt that the feminine communication style benefitted them slightly more than the masculine communication approach. This bring in the theme of gender discrimination as the male gender is seen as superior in leadership purely based on their stance in society.

The literature review stated that there is a gap that exists between genders and that this gap is caused by stereotypes, assumed gender roles and interpersonal differences that contributes to miscommunication between sexes as they act as guidelines for workplace conduct as they subconsciously dictate how a person is expected to communicate and act in the workplace (Merchant, 2012). This section relates to the theme of 'stereotypes' as the participants stated that common stereotypes, they experience was being too soft and thus not taken seriously when giving instructions. They are believed to gossip too much or being too emotional thus information is withheld from them. Females are seen as being the weaker sex thus not taken seriously in management positions. Women are not given opportunities due to how they are viewed in society and their believed societal role of "having to juggle too many balls" as they have a family to look after and thus less committed and able to give less to the organisation, where men can be fully committed to the organisation and thus the preferred choice for managerial positions.

The literature review revealed that women and men have different communication style approaches thus they differ in the way they influence others. These differences in communication styles can create great levels of misunderstanding (Merchant, 2012). These approaches are influenced by stereotypes and these stereotypes have negative effects on female behaviour and the perception of females as employees, managers and leaders (Merchant, 2012). The experiences women have in the workplace are often shaped by various aspects associated with their identity and the understanding of these socialized identities (Merchant, 2012). Relating to the sub-theme of 'negative experiences with using the feminine communication style' is that when women display communication traits associated and socialized with the female gender, such as being warm and nurturing, they do not fulfil the requirement of what is expected of a leader (Merchant, 2012). Relating to the sub-theme of 'negative experiences with using the masculine communication approach' is that if females change their communication style to the preferred norm of communication associated with the male communication style, such as being assertive and blunt, she is seen as angrier and more aggressive than men that act in the same manner (Merchant, 2012). The research findings supports this as when women act in a feminine manner others treat them better because they are seen as understanding, but they are still not taken seriously in management positions and take advantage of and when they change to a masculine style in order to gain respect and authority they are seen as rude and bossy as it goes against what is expected of women in society.

The literature review revealed that females often feel forced to convert to masculine norms of communication in order to gain the same level of respect or get viewed as worthy of their leadership position as socialization of stereotypes have society believing that men are better leaders and have better approaches to leadership than females (Jackson et al., 2013). This is however not supported by my findings as the findings shows that despite this women still feel like the feminine communication approach works for them and they continue to use it. This answers the research question of "How do women in managerial roles communicate considering the preconceived ideas of the female communication style?" and the sub question of "Do women in managerial positions change their communication style to counteract gender discrimination?" It is thus true as stated in the literature review

that the core issue is the lack of studies conducted on the success of feminine communication style, misunderstanding and misinterpretation of genders linguistic styles and the meaning behind them (Merchant, 2012). It is clear that the issue lies far deeper than just characteristics associated with a good leadership and is more a societal issue relating to engrained stereotypes and societal roles leading to gender discrimination in organisation that is not based on theoretical facts.

Trustworthiness

Trustworthiness or credibility in qualitative studies follow different guidelines as the goal of the studies is to help others get a better understanding of a particular phenomenon within a specific setting and not to generalise the results to a larger population like in the case of quantitative studies (Koonin, 2014). Reliability and validity in qualitative studies is hard to measure as repeating a qualitative study will never deliver the same results as the answers to questions asked are subject dependant and unique to each and every individuals experience. For this reason, qualitative studies use the term trustworthiness instead of validity and reliability. The term trustworthiness can be further divided into credibility, transferability, dependability and conformability (Koonin, 2014). Credibility refers to the accuracy with which the researcher understands the data provided by the participants. Credibility can be improved by dedicating more time to the participants in the study as this will help the researcher understand the participants better and gain better insight into their lives. Credibility can also be improved by making use of more than one method in collecting data as this will make it possible for the researcher to compare data and thus this will indicate the degree of credibility (Koonin, 2014). Transferability refers to the ability of the results from your research to be applied to a similar situation and bring similar results. High transferability allows for generalisation within an approach that does not lend itself to generalised findings (Koonin, 2014). Dependability argues the value of the process of integration that takes place between the data collection method, data analysis and the theory generated from the data in other words how consistent the research findings are over time (Koonin, 2014). Conformability refers to how well the data collected supports the findings and

interpretation of the research. It shows how well the finding is linked to the data (Koonin, 2014).

In this research study the researcher can enhance credibility by selecting participants who work in a formal institution in middle to higher management levels having been exposed to discrimination based on the feminine communication style approach. The interviews were conducted in a relaxed and quiet atmosphere and the name of the participants and their answers was kept confidential in the research as it could have affected the participant reputation, or the participants answers to the questions. Transferability was increase by having the interviews via WhatsApp video call to ensure that there was no misunderstanding in terms of the questions asked and the answers given. These interviews also allowed the researcher to observe the participants body language to ensure that the most accurate data was collected, and any misunderstanding or confusions were cleared up and that the researcher could get an indication for when further investigation into the answers was needed. The research process was reviewed in terms of the data collection method, data analysis and theory generated from the data to ensure that the findings are consistent and can be repeated by another researcher. Conformability was established through the researcher process being transparent. This included all data collected in the research process (detailed notes of questionnaire, e-mails, recordings, etc.) that has led to the findings of the research conducted being available to others to check for validation of interpretation to support that the findings correctly represent the data collected.

Summary

This chapter drew on the fundamental of all the previous chapters in presenting the analysed data. The results were analysed according to the thematic analysis framework, dictated by the research question. The following chapter will include a conclusion and evaluation of the study by looking at possible ethical implications and limitations of the study.

Conclusion

Introduction

This chapter arrives at meaningful conclusions by drawing upon the elements introduced in the first chapter of this study. The chapter then focuses on anticipating contributions of this study, ethical implications and limitations of this study.

Conclusion

The research question of “An Exploration of the Communication Styles of Women in Managerial Positions Based on the Feminine Communication Style in the Workplace” was answered in that women in managerial positions stated to continue to use the feminine communication approach to communication regardless of the negative connotations that goes with it. This is as they stated that they were also viewed negatively when using the masculine communication approach and that they felt the feminine communication approach helped them get more out of people as it is more relationship orientated. This links to the research problem that states that that females are evaluated more negative, even if they display masculine leadership characteristics and that women often take on a masculine approach to leadership, but studies have shown that it lowers competence and perceived effectiveness meaning that the use of the masculine communication sounds ideal but when practice by women it is often less successful (Jackson et al., 2013) Thus the research problem was solved as we found out that despite the negative viewing of the feminine communication style to leadership it still works for women and they still continue to use it and this helps the research goal being reached as the research objectives of this study is to gain an understanding of the negative views associated with the preconceived female communication style in the workplace and obtain an understanding of whether these preconceived communication styles effect the communication approach women take in managerial positions.

Contributions

The anticipated contribution of this study is to contribute to existing literature on undermining of the feminine communication style in middle to higher managerial positions and the success of the feminine communication approach. This study will try and contribute to the current understanding of undermining of the feminine communication approach in the workplace. It will try and help eliminate stigmas around the role women are supposed to play the workplace and the approach they should take to communication. It aims to make society aware of the fact that gender discrimination and stereotypes still exists in the workplace and hopefully creating a better work environment and treatment of women in the workplace. It will also aim in bettering the positions women find themselves in, in the workplace and making others realize that women are just as able as men in leadership positions. The overall heuristic value of this study is to encourage further thinking and research on the success of the feminine communication approach.

Ethical Implications

Before the study could take place, it needed to be approved by the IIE's ethical committee. The ethical clearance letter can be found in annexure D. After the study was approved all participants was informed of the purpose of the study and the methods that is going to be used. The participants was informed by an informed consent form that the participation in the study is completely voluntary and that participants are able to withdraw from the study at any point in time without any consequences as set out in annexure A. Due to the nature of the study and the potential consequences it could have on the participant involved in the study the participants was reassured that their responses will be kept confidential and participants will remain anonymous throughout the reporting of the research findings as direct quotes will be disguised so it cannot be linked backed to the individual . It is important to inform participants about what their responses will be used for, who will have access to the data gathered in the study and how this data will be stored, which in this study was on a recording device on the person conducting the interviews phone and the interviews was deleted once the data has been analysed and the

analysed data was only accessible to the person conducting the interview and their supervisor (Louw,2014). Participants was informed that face to face interviews were going to be conducted but due to Covid-19 it was not possible, which brings about limitations such as lack of seeing facial expressions and an increase chance of a misunderstanding (Louw,2014). After these aspects were explained to the participant it was important that the participant gave written consent in annexure A saying that they understand these aspects of the study and that they are willing to participate in the study. The participant also had to give the researcher permission to record the WhatsApp video call interview as set out in annexure B (Louw,2014).

Limitations

Limitations can be described as any constrains or limits encountered by the researcher in the research process. These limits or constrains includes time, financial resources and access to information. The limitations of the study are usually unexpected challenges that arose during the study and leads to difficulty in interpretation of the findings collected and affects the trustworthiness of the research (Enslin, 2014). The limitations of this study are the COVID- 19 pandemic that does not allow for face-to face interviews and thus increased the risk for miscommunication and participants were also largely working from home so thus they are out of touch with what happens in the workplace as they have not experienced that setting in a while. The other constraints are time and thus also sample size. Due to limited time the sample size needed to be small leading to the results not being applicable to the broader population. Accessibility is also a limitation as not everyone agreed to partake in this study due to the nature of the study and the researcher not having access to everyone that has been exposed to discrimination in the workplace based on their communication approach.

Summary

This chapter commenced in drawing conclusions from all the elements presented in the first chapter of the research report.

References

- Assarroudi, A., Nabavi, F., Armat, M., Ebadi, A., & Vairmoradi, M. (2018). Directed qualitative content analysis: the description and elaboration of its underpinning methods and data analysis process. *Journal of Research in Nursing*, 23 (1), 42-55.
- Bezuidenhout, R., & Cronje, F. (2014). Qualitative data analysis. In F. du Plooy-Cilliers, C. Davis & R. Bezuidenhout (Eds.), *Research Matters*. (1st ed., pp. 235-243). Cape Town, South Africa: Juta & Company Ltd.
- Cacciattolo, K. (2015). Defining workplace learning. *European Scientific Journal*, 1 (special), 243-250.
- Chapman, C. (2015). *Women's workplace oppression in 1970's South Africa*. Retrieved from <https://www.sahistory.org.za/article/womens-workplace-oppression-1970s-south-africa-cait-chapman>
- Davis, C. (2014). Research paradigms and traditions. In F. du Plooy-Cilliers, C. Davis & R. Bezuidenhout (Eds.) *Research Matters*. (1st ed., pp18-35). Cape Town, South Africa: Juta & Company Ltd.
- Durant, K. T., McCray, A.T., & Safran, C. (2012). Identifying gender-preferred communication styles within online cancer communities: A retrospective longitudinal analysis. *PLOS ONE*, 7(11), 1-11. doi:10.1371/journal.pone.0049169
- Eklund, K.E., Barry, E.S., & Grunberg, N.E., (2017). *Gender Differences in Different Contexts*. Retrieved from <https://www.intechopen.com/books/gender-differences-in-different-contexts/gender-and-leadership>
- Enslin, C. (2014). Limitations, delimitations and recommendations. In F. du Plooy-Cilliers, C. Davis & R. Bezuidenhout (Eds.), *Research Matters*. (1st ed., pp.274-281). Cape Town, South Africa: Juta & Company Ltd.
- Fritz, C., & van Knippenberg, D., (2017). Gender and leadership aspirations: the impact of organizational identification. *Leadership & Organization Development Journal*, 38(8), 1018-1036. doi:10.1108/LODJ-05-2016-0120

- Giles, H., & Ogay, T. (2007). Communication Accommodation Theory. In B.B. Whasley & W. Samter (Eds.) *Explaining communication: Contemporary theories and exemplars*. (pp.293-310). Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum.
- Jackson, A., Alberti, J., & Snipes R. (2013). An examination of the impact of gender on leadership style and employee job satisfaction in the modern workplace. *Proceedings of Academy of Organizational Culture, Communications and Conflict*, 18(2), 1-6.
- Jonkheid, E., & Mango, T. (2008). *Perceptions of female managers in the South African gambling industry with special reference to gender equity*. Retrieved from <https://www.ngb.org.za/SiteResources/documents/FINALREPORTGENDEREQUITYWEBSITEPDF29APR08.pdf>
- Koonin, M. (2014). Validity and reliability. In F. du Plooy-Cilliers, C. Davis & R. Bezuidenhout (Eds.), *Research Matters*. (1st ed., pp.258-260). Cape Town, South Africa: Juta & Company Ltd.
- Kossek, E.E., Su, R., & Wu, L. (2016). "Opting out" or "pushed out"? Integrating perspectives on women's career equality for gender inclusion and interventions. *Journal of Management*, 43(1), 228-254. doi:10.1177/0149206316671582
- Louw, L (2014). Ethics in research. In F. du Plooy-Cilliers, C. Davis & R. Bezuidenhout (Eds.), *Research Matters*. (1st ed., pp.262-273). Cape Town, South Africa: Juta & Company Ltd.
- Macarie, F., & Moldovan, O. (2012). Gender discrimination in management. Theoretical and empirical perspectives. *Transylvanian Review of Administrative Sciences*. 35 (1), 153-172.
- Merchant, K. (2012). *How men and women differ: Gender differences in communication styles, influence tactics, and leadership styles* (Senior thesis, Claremont McKenna College, California, US).
- Mohindra, V., & Azhar, S. (2012). Gender communication: A comparative analysis of communicational approaches of men and women at workplaces. *Journal of Humanities and Social Science*. 2 (1), 18-27.

- Nieuwenhuis, J. (2020). Introducing qualitative research. In K. Maree (Eds.), *First steps in research* (2nd ed., pp.66-68). Pretoria, South Africa: Van Schaik Publishers.
- Nieuwenhuis, J. (2020). Qualitative research designs and data-gathering techniques. In K. Maree (Eds.), *First steps in research* (2nd ed., pp.80-113). Pretoria, South Africa: Van Schaik Publishers.
- Olasile, E.M. (2012). *Communication theories*. Retrieved from <https://www.communicationstudies.com/communication-theories>
- Pascoe, G. (2014). Sampling. In F. du Plooy-Cilliers, C. Davis & R. Bezuidenhout (Eds.), *Research Matters*. (1st ed., pp.131-146). Cape Town, South Africa: Juta & Company Ltd.
- Powell, G. N. (1990). One more time: Do female and male manager differ. *Academy of Management Perspectives*, 4(3), 68-75. doi:10.5465/ame.1990.4274684
- Steyn, R., & Jackson, L. (2015). Gender-based discrimination in South Africa: A quantitative analysis of fairness of remuneration. *South African Journal of Economic and Management Sciences*. 18 (2), 1-20.
- Strydom, A., & Bezuidenhout, R. (2014). Qualitative data collection. In F. du Plooy-Cilliers, C. Davis & R. Bezuidenhout (Eds.), *Research Matters*. (1st ed., pp.188-190). Cape Town, South Africa: Juta & Company Ltd.
- Verniers, C., & Vala, J. (2018). Justifying gender discrimination in the workplace: The mediating role of motherhood myths. *PLOS ONE*, 13(1), 1-23. doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0190657

Annexures

Annexure A



CONSENT FORM

Explanatory information sheet and consent form for participants
--

To whom it may concern,

My name is Kayla Claassen and I am a student at the IIE's Varsity College. I am currently conducting research under the supervision of Sam Pretorius (registered counselling psychologist) about how women in managerial positions approach communication styles based on perceived undermining of the feminine communication style. I hope that this research will enhance our understanding of gender discrimination toward women in the workplace and counter some stigma's around women in the workplace.

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

--

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

I would like to invite you to participate in this research because you meet the criteria of my target population and will thus help me to answer the research question set out. If you decide to participate in this research, I would like to inform you of what it will involve. I will have a once off interview with you asking open-ended questions in the hopes of gaining an understanding of your experiences in the workplace as a female managers especially focusing on tour communication approach.

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

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

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

Do I have to participate in the study?

- Your inclusion in this study is completely voluntary;
- If you do not wish to participate in this study, you have every right not to do so;
- Even if you agree to participate in this study, you may withdraw at any time without having to provide an explanation for your decision.

Will my identity be protected?

I promise to protect your identity. I will not use your name in any research summaries to come out of this research and I will also make sure that any other details are disguised so that nobody will be able to identify you. I would like to ask your permission to record the interviews, but only my supervisor and I will have access to these recordings. Nobody else, including anybody at the IIE Varsity College will have access to your interview information. I would like to use quotes

when I discuss the findings of the research, but I will not use any recognisable information in these quotes that can be linked to you.

What will happen to the information that participants provide?

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

What happens if I have more questions about the study?

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

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

My contact details are as follows:

Kayla Claassen

The contact details of my supervisor are as follows:

Sam Pretorius

Consent form for participants	
I, _____, agree to participate in the research conducted by Kayla Claassen about how women in managerial positions approach communication styles based on perceived undermining of the feminine communication style. 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.	
Signature	Date

Annexure B



CONSENT FORM FOR AUDIO OR VIDEO RECORDING

Consent form for participants	
I, _____, agree to allow Kayla Claassen to audio record my interviews as part of the research about how women in managerial positions approach communication styles based on perceived undermining of the feminine communication style. This research 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, the researcher's supervisor and possibly a transcriber (who will sign a confidentiality agreement) will have access to these recordings.	
Signature	Date

Annexure C

Questionnaire Template

1. In what level of the organisation do you find yourself in? (middle or higher)
2. What does gender discrimination mean to you?
3. Explain the discrimination you have experienced based on your communication approach?
4. What is your success experienced in using the feminine communication approach? (being warm, nurturing and people-orientated)
5. What is your experience with using the masculine communication approach? (being assertive, blunt and task-orientated)
6. Have you ever felt pressured to change your communication style in the workplace due to others making you feel like it is necessary?
7. What are some of the common gender related misconceptions you experience in the workplace in connection with your communication approach?
8. What are your experiences like in managerial positions as a female?
9. What are your views on the representation of women in higher management?
10. How open do you think communication towards females is in the workplace?
11. How does pressure to communicate in a certain way due to stereotypical gender roles and not wanting to go against the norm affect the communication approach you take?

Annexure D

Ethics clearance letter



30 June 2020

Student name: Kayla Claassen
Student number: 17392325
Campus: Varsity College Cape Town

Re: Approval of Honours in Psychology Proposal and Ethics Clearance

HONOURS ETHICAL CLEARANCE LETTER

Your research proposal and the ethical implications of your proposed research topic were reviewed by your supervisor and the campus research panel, a subcommittee of The Independent Institute of Education's Research and Postgraduate Studies Committee.

Your research proposal posed no significant ethical concerns and your supporting documents and instruments are in order to proceed. We hereby provide you with permission to proceed with your research.

In the event of you deciding to change your research methodology in any way, kindly consult your supervisor to ensure all ethical considerations are adhered to and pose no risk to any participant or party involved. A revised ethical clearance letter will be issued.

We wish you all the best with your research!

GENERAL CONDITIONS TO BE FULFILLED IN RELATION TO RESEARCH

Permission is granted to proceed with the above study subject to the conditions listed below being met and may be withdrawn should any of these conditions be flouted.

Please note: The panel has not considered the merits, accuracy or ethical soundness of the research. The only merits examined are the use of The IE as a sample.

Permission is granted subject to the following conditions:

1. The researcher(s) will need to obtain informed consent in writing from all of the participants in his/ her sample if the study is not anonymous.
2. The researcher(s) may only use the data collected for research purposes and in no other way.
3. Photographs of human subjects may only be taken if relevant to the research, informed consent was obtained, and even with informed consent, the photographs may not be published on any online platforms.
4. The researcher is responsible for supplying and utilising his/her own research resources, such as stationery, photocopies, transport, faxes and telephones and should not depend on the goodwill of the institutions and/or the offices visited for supplying such resources.
5. No names or identifying information of participants may be used within the research and the research must be voluntary.
6. Please make it clear that the information will not be used punitively in any way and participants may in no way be counselled/advised based on this.

Annexure F: Final Research Report Summary

Title: An Exploration of the Communication Styles of Women in Managerial Positions Based on the Feminine Communication Style in the Workplace

Research Purpose	Primary Research Question	Research Rationale	Seminal Authors	Literature Review- Conceptual Framework	Paradigm	Approach	Data Collection Method	Ethics	Findings	References
To understand how women in managerial positions approach communication styles based on perceived undermining of the feminine communication style in the workplace	How do women in managerial roles communicate considering preconceived ideas about their communication style? Does the undermining of females effect the experiences of females in managerial positions?	Gender discrimination in the workplace is believed to be of little importance in the 21 st century due to the perceived low impact it has on efficiency of the corporate world.	Jackson, A. Alberti, J. & Snipes, R. Giles, H. & Ogay, T. Merchant, K. Mohindra, V. & Azhar, S. Macarie, F. & Moldovan, O. Chapman, C. Verniers, C. & Vala, J. Jonkheid, E. & Mango, T.	Theme 1: Background of gender discrimination. Theme 2: The stereotypes associated with females and their communication style. Theme 3: Different use of language by males and females. Theme 5: Differences in non-verbal communication between males and females. Theme 6: Effects of discrimination against females in the workplace. Theme 7: Gender discrimination in the South African context.	Paradigm Interpretivism Epistemology A better understanding of the undermining women experience based on the perceived feminine communication style. Ontology Reality is a social construct. Axiology The uniqueness of individuals is valued.	Qualitative	In-depth WhatsApp video call interviews with semi-structured, open-ended questions	-Ethical clearance -Informed consent on purpose and methods of study -Voluntary -Use of data -Access to data -Privacy and confidentiality -Written consent	Women are undermined regardless of the communication approach they take thus they tend to stick with the feminine communication approach as the people orientated nature helps them get more out of people	Assaroudi, Nabavi, Amat, Ebadi & Vairmoradi, 2018. Bezuidenhout & Cronje, 2014. Cacciattolo, 2015. Cacciattolo, 2015. Chapman, 2015. Davis, 2014. Durant, McCray & Safron, 2012. Eklund, Barry Grunberg, 2017.
						Population				
						Population Parameters Females between the ages on 30-60 years working in managerial positions in the southern suburbs of Cape Town				
Research Problem	Secondary Research Question	Key Concepts	Key Theories			Sampling	Data Analysis Method	Limitations	Contribution	
Female leaders in the workplace are viewed negatively even if they adapt the preferred masculine communication style in leadership.	Do women in managerial positions change their communication style to counteract gender discrimination when it comes to leadership approach?	- Gender discrimination - Masculine communication style - Feminine communication style - Workplace - Communication style	Communication Accommodation Theory by Giles (1971)			Non-probability Sampling Method Purposive sampling Size 5 females	Unit of Analysis People-In particular women Data Analysis Method Qualitative Content Analysis by Zhang and Wildermuth.	The small sample size leads to the findings not being applicable to the broader society.	To contribute to existing literature on gender discrimination in the workplace and a better understanding of gender.	Enslin, 2014. Fritz & van Knippenberg, 2017. Giles & Ogay, 2007. Jackson, Alberti & Snipes, 2013. Jonkheid & Mango, 2008. Koonin, 2014.

										Kossek, Su, Wu, 2016. Louw, 2014. Macarie & Moldovan,2012. Merchant, 2012. Mohindra & Azhar,2012. Nieuwenhuis, 2020. Nieuwenhuis, 2020. Olasile, 2012. Pascoe, 2014. Powell, 1990. Steyn & Jackson,2015. Strydom & Bezuidenhout,2014. Verniers & Vala, 2018.
--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	---