



Exploring challenges faced by women in leadership positions in private Chemical organisations in the Gauteng province



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ABSTRACT

The study explores the challenges experienced by women in leadership positions in a chemical organisation in the Gauteng province of South Africa. To achieve this, a qualitative study was employed with the aid of an open-ended questionnaire. A purposive sample of eight (8) participants was used since the data collection reached saturation with those participants. The data were analysed using thematic analysis. The key themes that came out of the study include gender discrimination, gender stereotyping, lack of management support, lack of mentorship, lack of peer support, and the queen bee syndrome. These are some of the challenges experienced by female employees in a chemical organisation in the Gauteng province of South Africa. The study recommends that the organisation should consider women in management positions and effectively implement employment equity policies in the workplace.

Keywords: Women, Leadership, Gender, Discrimination, Stereotypes

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION AND ORIENTATION

1.1 INTRODUCTION

A prevalent problem is the underrepresentation of women in senior management (Carter and Silva 2010). According to Zhang & Yu (2020), women make up just 3 per cent of Fortune 500 CEOs and less than 15 per cent of business executives in the United States of America (USA). The number of women in senior management and on various organisations' boards was studied by the Deloitte Global Centre for Corporate Governance (Deloitte, 2021). According to the data by Deloitte (2021) women make up 11.2 per cent of directors in a sample of the 100 biggest domestic corporations in Australia.

In Canada, women make up 12.9 per cent of the board members of 131 public businesses, while in India, the percentage of female directors in a sample of the 100 largest domestic corporations is 4.7 per cent. China has the highest percentage of women in the workforce (74 per cent), yet just 8 per cent of them hold corporate board positions and 9% serve on executive committees (Subramanian, 2012).

This issue goes back to the time when it was expected of women to take care of the family at home while men went to work. Due to this stereotyped background, women have historically found the workplace to be unwelcoming, which has led to a hostile work atmosphere. However, as times have changed, women are now undertaking the same kinds of professions as men and collaborating with them to support families, society, and the economy as a whole (Deloitte, 2011; Subramanian, 2012).

One of the biggest changes in leadership in the twenty-first century is the increase of women in positions of leadership. Organisations have committed to fostering the advancement of women even more into leadership positions to increase diversity and foster future leaders. Unfortunately, it is undeniable how slowly the gap is narrowing. Even today, few women are serving in leadership positions as compared to their male counterparts (Statistica, 2020).

Various studies have focused on the challenges that women in leadership positions experience (Galsanjigmed & Sekiguchi, 2023; Qadir, 2019). However, this study focused on a private chemical organisation in Gauteng province and made further advancements on studies and findings already made by other researchers. Gauteng province is the capital and hub of the economy of South Africa, with the highest population of 15 454 million compared to other provinces (Statistica, 2020). According to Warren *et al.* (2018), women leaders still have to deal with toxic workplaces, sexual harassment, criticism of their technical proficiency in the workplace, and other gender-role stereotypes.

1.2 RATIONALE AND SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

Women continue to be marginalised in promotion to senior management positions within organisations in the South African context, despite their outnumbered male counterparts in terms of the population.

On the other hand, affirmative action and employment equity policies were crafted in South Africa to provide an equitable base as far as employment is concerned, but these policies seem not to be effectively implemented at the organisational level.

In light of the above observations, this study is worthwhile because it provided insight into the underrepresentation of women in senior management positions in the chemical industry in the Gauteng province of South Africa. This research will also provide recommendations on what organisations should do to effectively implement affirmative action policies and employment equity policies across organisations in South Africa.

Expectations for the overall findings are based on the presumption that more men than women hold executive senior management positions in the private sector, giving men the power to undermine the leadership capabilities of women, and that has created a significant leadership role gap. This is supported by a study by Saadin *et al.* (2016), which found that women's natural personality qualities, affecting their style of leadership and decision-making, led to the perception that they lack competence.

Enid Kiaye & Maniraj Singh (2013) suggested that women should be given a chance to lead because they can build positive relationships with employees and make employees feel valued within the organisation, which increases employee productivity and allows the organisation to perform at its best. Women also demonstrate the same ability and capabilities to lead as their male counterparts. Furthermore, this study encourages that organisations must create an environment that accommodates and supports women's leadership. Even though the study's findings cannot be generalised, the managerial implications and future recommendations may apply to all organisations in both the public and private sectors.

1.3 PROBLEM STATEMENT

The South African labour market is marred with inequality regarding the representation of women in senior management positions, even though women constitute a greater portion of the South African population. The Businesswomen Association of South Africa (BWASA, 2015) maintain that South African women are underrepresented in JSE-listed corporations. It further reports that only 9.2 per cent of women hold chairperson positions and 2.4 per cent of women are appointed as Chief Executive Officers (CEO).

Business Women's Association of South Africa (2015) research shows that South African men continue to outnumber women in senior positions by a ratio of 3:1. Considering the above statements, research of this nature deserves merit because it seeks to establish an equal ground for both men and women about career progression and promotion.

According to Statista (2020), the female population of South Africa in 2020 was 30,9 million (51.04 per cent of the total population). Despite this, women made up 43.4 per cent of the working class, with only 33.1 per cent of managers being women (Statista, 2020). With these figures, it is apparent that men have a better job market than women in South Africa. That is the core issue in the workplace, where the population's gender majority is a minority in the workplace.

These challenges are big enough that women in leadership positions do not perform their duties to their full potential. It is subsequently important to explore these challenges and the courses thereof. However, this study will focus on the challenges faced by women who are in leadership roles in a private organisation in Gauteng province.

According to Mgaguli (2017), statistics show that most female employees in organisations are stuck working as general staff, which supports the idea that education has a substantial impact on career advancement. Results show that just 3 per cent of the workforce are women in the position of heads of operations, 6 per cent in the position of operations managers, and 7 per cent in the position of senior managers. Structural barriers, institutional barriers, and individual mindsets seem to be the barriers to leadership and in particular, the advancement of women to leadership positions within organisations (Mgaguli, 2017).

This study explores the barriers to entering senior positions and the challenges that women encounter while they are in those senior leadership positions. The study will further suggest solutions on what can be done to support each other and what the organisation in question can do to increase women's representation.

1.4 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The study was guided by the following research questions:

- What are the barriers that prevent women from climbing the corporate ladder in private chemical organisations in the Gauteng province of South Africa?
- Are affirmative action policies and employment equity policies fully implemented in private chemical organisations in the Gauteng province of South Africa?
- How do females experience the challenges in leadership positions in private chemical organisations in Gauteng province of South Africa?

1.4.1 RESEARCH AIM

The study was guided by the following research aim:

- To explore the challenges faced by women in leadership positions in a private organisation in the Gauteng province of South Africa.

1.4.2 RESEARCH OBJECTIVES:

- To investigate the barriers that prevent females from climbing the corporate ladder in a private chemical organisation in the Gauteng province of South Africa.
- To determine if affirmative action policies and employment equity policies are fully implemented in a private chemical organisation in the Gauteng province of South Africa.
- To explore the challenges experienced by females in leadership positions in a private chemical organisation in Gauteng province of South Africa.

1.5 SCOPE OF THE STUDY

1.5.1 Field of Study

The field of study of this research study is organisational behaviour, a track of industrial psychology. Organisational behaviour is the study of how people behave in groups, as well as how structures work inside organisations (Colquitt *et al.*, 2018). It examines how individuals interact at work, how businesses run, and how these factors affect the results that individuals and businesses get out of things (Colquitt *et al.*, 2018). On the other hand, industrial psychology is the study of human behaviour in the workplace, using psychological concepts to enhance productivity, job satisfaction, employee performance, and overall organisational effectiveness (Spector, 2012).

The topic under investigation is leadership and management with a focus on women's leadership and development and barriers that hinder women from advancing and flourishing in their careers. The study was focused on exploring and understanding the perceptions of women who occupy leadership and management positions.

1.5.2 Sector/industry/business

In line with the study topic, the study focused on a private chemical organisation. A private company is a firm held under private ownership. Private companies may issue stock and have shareholders, but their shares do not trade on public exchanges and are not issued through an initial public offering (James, 2022).

1.5.3 Geographical demarcation

This study was conducted on a private chemical organisation in Gauteng province only. Within Gauteng province (Figure 1) is the city of Pretoria, which is the capital city of South Africa. Gauteng is the smallest province out of the nine provinces in South Africa; however, it has the highest population (Statistica 2020). Gauteng province is the hub of the economy of South Africa.



Figure 1: Gauteng Province Map.

1.6 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The current study was conducted using a qualitative research methodology. Qualitative research methods make use of techniques that let researchers offer in-depth explanations of phenomena without relying on numerical data to accomplish the objectives of the research study (Zikmund *et al.*, 2013). It is important to state that this research employed

a qualitative research approach to answer the research questions of this study and provide an in-depth understanding of women's experiences and perceptions in their workplace in terms of career advancement and occupancy to senior leadership positions.

1.6.1 Research Paradigm

A paradigm, according to Ponterotto (2005), is a collection of connected presumptions about the social realm that offers a conceptual and philosophical framework for researching the world. "Paradigms are all-encompassing systems of interrelated practice and thinking that define for researchers the nature of their enquiry along three dimensions: ontology, epistemology, and methodology," according to (Blanche *et al.*, 2006:6).

The researcher used interpretivism as a research paradigm in this study. According to Blanche *et al.* (2006), the purpose of an interpretive research approach is to elucidate the individualised motivations and interpretations behind the social activity.

Furthermore, according to Blanche *et al.* (2006), epistemology establishes the connection between the researcher, or “knower”, and what is knowable, whereas ontology explicitly defines what is to be investigated and what can be known. On the other hand, methodology establishes how scientists might go about investigating what they think is knowable. The main paradigms and beliefs in research are displayed in the following table.

Table 1: *Positivist, interpretive and constructivist paradigms*

	Ontology	Epistemology	Methodology
Positivist	• Steady exterior environment • Lawful	• Unbiased • Disconnected spectator	• Test-based • Quantitative • Testing of hypothesis
Interpretive	• Internal reality of the perceived encounter	• Sympathetic • Spectator subjectivity	• Communicative • Clarification • Qualitative

	Ontology	Epistemology	Methodology
Constructivist	• Society created reality • Discourse • Authority	• Cautionary • Political • Spectator constructing renditions	• Deconstruction • Analysis of texts • Analysis of discourse analysis

Source: Blanche *et al.* (2006:6)

Blumberg *et al.*, (2014) maintain that research is influenced by two main paradigms or worldviews, namely positivism and interpretivism. It adopts the natural sciences' perspective built on the principle that the social world exists outside, i.e., externally, and believes that social research must be pursued objectively; that means that the research belongs to the positivist realm. Antwi & Hamza (2015) suggests that positivism is a research paradigm that puts together a deductive method with a precise quantitative measure of data to allow the researcher to determine and confirm causal laws. On the other hand, interpretivism argues that social research requires a different approach because the social world cannot be understood by employing principles of research implemented in the natural sciences. The interpretive paradigm or worldview relies on the belief that human experience is naturally subjective and is defined by the context in which people live (Neuman, 2011:520). Notwithstanding the strong argument of the positivists, and the fact that this research study is interpretivism, being an inductive study allows the study to adopt the interpretivism paradigm. That is, this research study is underpinned by the interpretivism paradigm or worldview.

1.6.2 Research Approach

In research, there are two research approaches, namely the deductive and inductive research approaches. Smith (2019) explains that inductive research starts with certain facts or observations and works to explain those findings with more comprehensive ideas or generalisations.

The researcher employed an inductive research approach. Leed and Ormrod (2014) note that in making use of the inductive research approach, the researcher begins with specific observations and measures, and then moves to detecting themes and patterns in the data. This allows the researcher to form an early tentative hypothesis that can be explored.

1.6.3 Research Method

Quantitative and qualitative conceptualisation are the two most popular ways to compartmentalise research. Creswell (2013) states that in quantitative research, the theory is tested by the researcher by generating hypotheses, collecting numeric quantitative data, and then analyzing the quantitative data to accept or reject those hypotheses. On the other hand, Zikmund *et al.* (2012) explain that the qualitative research method seeks to address research objectives by employing techniques that allow the researcher to provide detailed interpretations of phenomena by using participants' perceptions.

In this study, a qualitative research method was employed. The primary goal of qualitative research is to learn about how people interpret and make sense of their own experiences, as opposed to the researcher's interpretation of the same events. Qualitative research is seen as an inductive process. In contrast to the numbers produced by other methods of research, qualitative research offers highly descriptive data in the form of images and words (Leed & Ormrod, 2014).

1.6.4 Research Design

Research design is the structure, plan, and framework developed to direct a research investigation (Kothari, 2004). It offers a roadmap for data collection, analysis, and interpretation, along with an overview of the overall strategy for answering research questions or hypotheses (Kothari, 2004).

For this study, the exploratory research design was chosen to establish an understanding of how best to proceed in studying the challenges faced by women in leadership positions in their workplace, namely the chosen organisation for this study.

1.6.5 Sampling Technique

A purposive sample of eight (8) participants will be used for qualitative data collection. The researcher might add other female participants in senior management positions until saturation is reached. The choice of women in top management positions is based on the fact that they are the ones who are currently experiencing challenges at the chemical organisation in the Gauteng province of South Africa.

Sample Inclusion criteria

The following will be the sample inclusion criteria:

- Only women in senior management positions in a chemical organisation in Gauteng province

Sample Exclusion criteria

- All men in senior management positions in a chemical organisation in Gauteng province

1.6.6 Data Collection Instrument

A data collection instrument is the equipment or techniques used to collect data from study subjects or sources (Smith & Bowers-Brown, 2010). Depending on the type of study, it may take many different forms, including questionnaires, surveys, interviews, observations, and measurements (Smith & Bowers-Brown, 2010). For this study, open-ended questionnaires will serve as a research instrument, and the open-ended questionnaires will be administered by the researcher. The questionnaire consists of three questions which are derived from the objective of this study.

1.6.7 Data Collection Method

The researcher generated and administered the open-ended questions, which were documented in a Word document. The participants then received the Word document from HR via email to answer the questions and then send them back to HR. The researcher

then received the answered questions from HR. HR served as the gatekeeper for the questionnaire. A non-disclosure agreement was signed by HR pledging not to discuss or distribute the participants' questionnaire responses.

1.7 STUDY POPULATION

According to Urdan (2011:133), the study population is the group of persons from whom the research study will be conducted and the findings obtained. This study will focus on women in leadership and management positions in a private chemical company in Gauteng province, as presented in Table 2 below.

Table 2:

Study Population	
Gender	
Male	Female
61%	39%
Ethnic group	
African	White
57%	43%
Job category	
Management	Non-Management
20%	80%
Job category by gender	
Management (Male)	Management (Female)
65%	35%

Source: Company website

1.7.1 Data Analysis

The obtained data will be analysed using thematic analysis. According to Caulfield (2019), thematic analysis is a method of analysing qualitative data. For this study, an inductive approach to thematic analysis will be used. This means that the researcher will allow the data to determine the themes. Furthermore, the researcher will take a semantic approach to analysing the data, which means that the researcher will analyse the explicit content of the data. This is an effective way to investigate the perceptions of women in senior management positions in a chemical organisation in the Gauteng province of South Africa.

Step 1: Familiarisation

The first step of the thematic analysis process is to get to know your data. Caulfield (2019) states that in analysing data, the researcher could make use of a recorder, note-taking, and reading of the interview notes.

Step 2: Coding

According to Caulfield (2019), the word “coding” is defined as a process where a researcher highlights sections of their text by paraphrasing sentences and devising codes to describe their content. The researcher will do this by going through the transcripts and notes of every interview and highlighting everything relevant or potentially of interest. Additionally, the researcher will highlight all the phrases and sentences that match their coding. The codes will be accumulated through the texts of the analysed data. By highlighting the phrases, the researcher will be able to gain concise points and definitions reappearing in the text.

Step 3: Generating themes

The third step according to Caulfield (2019) is to take the coded texts and identify patterns; thereby, one can start producing themes. Generally, a theme is a subject of talk.

Step 4: Reviewing themes

During this step, the researcher must make sure that the themes are useful and accurate representations of the data. During this step, the researcher must compare their themes against the data set and ask themselves whether they are missing anything.

Step 5: Defining and naming themes

According to Caulfield (2019), a theme is a formulation of the true meaning of the researcher’s subject of talk and states how it assists the process of understanding the

data. For a researcher to arrive at this, they must design simple and understandable names for each theme.

Step 6: Writing up

During this step, the researcher will present the analysis of the data. The results or findings section will address each theme in turn, wherein the researcher discusses how often themes come up and what they mean, including examples from the data as evidence.

1.8 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

The study is limited to one private chemical organisation in Gauteng province, therefore, the findings of the study cannot be generalised to other settings.

In addition, because the study will only focus on women in leadership roles in a chemical private organisation in the province of Gauteng, the research findings will not provide challenges that men are experiencing in climbing the corporate ladder.

Since the study used open-ended questionnaires, the responses provided did not allow the researcher to probe the respondents.

1.9 TRUSTWORTHINESS

Trustworthiness, according to Lincoln and Guba (1985), is how the qualitative research method is demonstrated to be logical, credible, and ethical. Ensuring validity and dependability of this qualitative research study will be tested as follows:

- **Credibility:** The study leader will evaluate the research proposal after it undergoes peer debriefing. Triangulation and member-checking techniques will be utilised to build credibility and ensure that the research's findings are plausible (Creswell & Creswell, 2017).
- **Reliability:** To establish agreement on the themes, consensus discussions will be undertaken with the study leader after data analysis. To determine whether the

research findings could be reproduced, consistency will be tested in the study (Creswell & Creswell, 2017).

- **Transferability:** The ability of this research study to adapt to different settings and be compared to other studies, the methodology of the study and a detailed explanation of the study will be presented (Creswell & Creswell, 2017).

1.10 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

According to (Neuman 2011) ethics is a set of guidelines and norms that direct the conduct of research involving humans, animals, or the environment. It entails making certain that research is carried out honourably, with consideration for the rights and dignity of participants, and in compliance with all applicable legal and professional requirements. Obtaining informed consent, reducing participant risks, protecting participant confidentiality, and making sure the research may have more advantages than drawbacks are all examples of ethical research methods.

The following ethical issues will be taken into consideration:

Before beginning the study, permission from the university administration will be requested. According to Leedy and Ormrod (2014), informed consent is necessary for research involving humans. The objective of the research must be communicated to the participants, who also need to provide written consent. According to Creswell & Creswell (2017), confidentiality in human research is necessary, and this will be properly upheld. Information gathered will be kept confidential. According to Leedy and Ormrod's (2014) argument, study results must be kept private and must not be made public. Consent is necessary for participation with humans, according to Creswell & Creswell (2017). Participants in this study will be doing so voluntarily, and they are free to withdraw their participation at any time.

1.11 OUTLINE OF THE DISSERTATION

The mini dissertation will be presented in article format. Chapter One presents the introduction and background of the study, problem statement, and methodology. Chapter

two presents the research article based on the empirical evidence. Lastly, chapter three presents the conclusion and recommendations of the study.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter seeks to determine the challenges experienced by women in leadership positions globally and within the South African context. The chapter will explore the theories that account for the reasons why women are lagging regarding career progression. The chapter further aims to outline the policies that are being advocated for in addressing the challenges that are faced by women in leadership positions. Furthermore, the chapter examines the different ways globally and locally that are used effectively to implement gender equality policies.

2.2 THEORIES OF BARRIERS FOR WOMEN CAREER PROGRESSION

The literature points out that there are various factors which have led to a lack of women's career progression, including limited networking and coaching opportunities, inflexible working conditions, gender stereotyping, gender discrimination, occupational segregation, and a lack of organisational support mechanisms (Auster & Prasad, 2016; Sabharwal & Varma, 2017; Khwela *et al.*, 2020). Several theories seek to account for why women are not progressing in their careers in the twenty-first century. The discussion below focuses on the theory of internal barriers, the theory of cultural and societal barriers, and the theory of organisational barriers respectively.

(i) Theory of internal barriers

This theory asserts that there are stereotypes that can be applied by fellow employees, employers, and women themselves. Moorthy *et al.* (2022) noted that gender stereotypes are shared beliefs about the psychological traits of women and men. Khwela *et al.* (2020) posit that gender stereotypes refer to those beliefs that are embedded in individuals' minds and tend to work against women's career progression to senior management positions.

Literature suggests that women are often associated with uncompensated household duties and child-caring responsibilities, while men work for paying jobs. In light of the above, Khwela, *et al.* (2019) stated that the dual nature of women's duties in the workplace

and home is likely to negatively influence their progression to top management positions in the organisation.

(ii) Theory of societal and cultural barriers

Ridgeway (2001) demonstrated the negative effect of the ideal worker belief regarding working mothers. The literature points out that the working mother must give less effort and priority to work demands. In light of this belief, women are likely to suffer hurdles in career progression. It is vital to note that in most cultures, girls are discouraged from advocating for their future and taking risks for their career progression (Sanddberg, 2013).

The literature further alluded to the fact that most societies have negative stereotypes against women, which discourage them from taking up senior positions (Cusack, 2013). The social-psychological phenomenon acts as a barrier to career progression because women are seen to be inferior to their male counterparts.

(iii) Theory of organisational barriers

Cusack (2013) suggested that the concept of organisational culture is vital to understanding the barriers women face. O'Connor (1996) further defined organisational culture as a system of beliefs, shared meanings, values, practices, and group norms that produce behavioural norms regarding working conditions. Junior (2021) posits that organisational culture is often cited as either the key facilitator or barrier to work-life policies. Several factors are related to the so-called “glass ceiling”, as suggested by Furst & Reeves (2008).

- The social structures in organisations focus on men’s preferences only.
- Segregation of tasks and jobs discriminate against women.
- Internal labour markets deliberately exclude women.
- Recruitment procedures do not address gender bias.
- Lacking female mentors who will support women in the lower ranks to proceed to higher levels.
- Training and development opportunities are mainly available to men.
- Women earn less than their male counterparts in similar positions.

The factors above are related to the glass ceiling effect often seen in organisations, which discourages women from taking senior positions.

2.3 WOMEN REPRESENTATION IN SOUTH AFRICA CONTEXT

There is still a scarcity of women with the necessary qualifications and abilities to work in a corporate setting (Oakley, 2000). Women who match this description have always taken an entrepreneurial direction and established their empires and businesses. As a result, they are missing out on prospects provided by large corporations, such as Johannesburg Stock Exchange-listed firms. This issue can be tackled and resolved by ensuring the best resources and platforms are in place to recognise and upskill young women who are in line to learn more about business (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, 2018).

Although the percentage of women in the public sector has increased since 2008, the government's goal of 50 per cent for senior management positions has not been met. In the business world, gender parity has not yet been attained. The percentage of female CEOs and senior managers among the most "engendered" corporations dropped from 58 in 2008 to 41 in 2010 (Meyiwa, 2014). According to the Department of Women, Children, and People with Disabilities (2013), just 4.5 per cent of CEOs and 19.3 per cent of senior management in businesses listed on the Johannesburg Stock Exchange (JSE) are women, and 73 companies have no women on their boards of directors. The EEC study from 2007-2009 found that women were more likely to hold management positions than strategic decision-making positions (Galsanjigmed & Sekiguchi, 2023). Women made up just 4.8 per cent of CEOs of JSE-listed firms in 2018 and just 5.3 per cent of those who chaired them. While data for 2015 is not yet available, it is clear that males still dominated JSE companies in October 2014 (Bosch, 2020).

South Africa is on average ranked 18 out of 142 countries as reported on the Global Gender Gap Index Report (Global Gender Gap Index Report, 2018). With this ranking, it shows that South Africa still has a lot to do to curb gender imbalances.

According to Jewkes & Morrell, (2019), the slight increase in South Africa's progress in trying to deal with gender issues has been attributed to as a result of the post-Apartheid era, after the late Nelson Mandela became the first black president in 1994. In such circumstances politics and governance can be regarded as key players in the struggle to end gender imbalances since once in power you became the architects of policy formulation and endorsement. This was greatly witnessed when the Commission was set up aiming to foster the cooperation of State arms with other various Institutions in the Country to deal with gender issues which the government claims was greatly affected during the Apartheid rule under colonisation (Unterhalter & North, 2018). The National Council on Gender Equality presided over by the Minister of Labour and Social Policy, was founded in 2004 to demonstrate an interest in and efforts in the fight against sexual discrimination. Its primary goal was to stimulate and assist the development of national and international programs that address issues of gender inequality (Unterhalter & North, 2018).

Besides the official, organised legal framework that was set up by the government, several women in other arms of governance and civic organisations took active roles in the campaigns for gender balance in various sectors of institutions and in society (Bangani, 2019). For instance, Poland became one of the few countries in Europe with female lawmakers actively promoting legislation promoting gender equality in the legislature (European Institute for Gender Equality, 2016). This served as a wake-up call for South African women lawmakers, who went on to establish their group in 1992 with the sole purpose of promoting and incorporating gender equality into all laws passed by the legislature (South African Parliamentary Monitoring Group, 2014).

There was a shift in large numbers of women and girls who started accessing education as compared to the apartheid era (Martineau, 1997). Literature shows that the end of the apartheid period and the coming of a new political order in South Africa paved the way for a serious radical transformation in education, as before, there was no access to learning, participation, and achievement (Karlsson, 2004). As a result, gender equality in other sectors of health, politics, and economic organisation can also be achieved once there is

a collective effort by everyone to try to deal with the issue of gender imbalances, as it was done in the education sector.

Protesting for gender equity in private organisations has been a crucial problem that affects women, organisational executives, and organisations, and it has gained global traction (Styodana, 2015). According to preliminary reports, women's elevation to decision-making positions in private companies is also slow (Styodana, 2015). As a result, the reasons for private companies' difficulties in successfully enforcing gender equity measures were investigated. The controversy about gender equality is fraught with sensitivity, including questions about moral ideals, societal traditions, leadership beliefs and behaviours, organisational cultures, and different countries' histories, social expectations, and human rights values (Thompson, 2008). However, businesses are not maximising their potential because of a lack of focus on gender equity within the company.

Businesses can aid the community in achieving more equitable outcomes by fostering good corporate governance practices, enthusiastic investor responses, lasting relationships between businesses and stakeholders, greater productivity from diverse ideas and innovation from gender-diverse perspectives, enhanced reputation, increased worker participation, and a more equitable society (Li *et al.*, 2022).

Interventions at work, such as establishing goals for the percentage of women in leadership roles and creating mentoring and training programs, were advantageous to women as well (Washington, 2010). However, a lot of these initiatives have fallen short, and some of them have even hindered prior growth (Lee-Gosseli *et al.*, 2013). In addition, gender discrimination is more pronounced at the top of organisations than at the bottom (Glass, & Cook, 2016). This indicates that the issue of economic discrimination among female top management causes the gender stall (Glass, & Cook, 2016). Gender equity has progressed slowly across the world, with just 7.4 per cent of the world's 200 leading corporations raising their number of female board members between 2004 and 2022. This is less than 1 percent annually (CWDI Report, 2022).

According to Lee-Gosseli *et al.* (2013), policy enforcement issues are largely due to a lack of:

- Understanding how to enforce these policies.
- Understanding how to assess the effect of gender equity policies.
- Leadership is responsible for ensuring that the implementation goes smoothly.
- Organisational structure preventing effective implementation of gender equity policies.
- Lacking detailed instructions for what is required of you.
- Gender equity not being a part of the organisation's culture.

2.4 IMPORTANCE OF GENDER DIVERSITY IN SENIOR POSITIONS AT THE WORKPLACE

While representations of different racial and religious backgrounds may be included in the conventional definition of workplace diversity, the modern definition includes all forms of diversity. Other factors taken into account include personality, age, cognitive style, skillset, education, background, and more (Goryunova & Madsen 2024).

Nowadays, workplace gender diversity is primarily concerned with fostering individuality within an organisation and recognising that everyone can contribute uniquely, particularly members of marginalised groups like women (Dibobo *et al.*, 2022).

Therefore, an organisation that values diversity in the workplace seeks to leverage a pool of people with distinctive traits, viewing this mix of differences as a chance for development rather than a source of contention (Green *et al.*, 2002). This commitment includes the goal of fostering and advancing each person's potential (Steinmann *et al.*, 2018). What, then, is it about diversity that might provide an advantage to organisations? According to Green *et al.* (2002), having a diverse workforce has the following benefits.

(a) Various opinions and perspectives

When addressing a topic or issue, employees with diverse backgrounds and experiences will bring together several perspectives, suggesting alternate answers and methods (Green *et al.*, 2002). Every person has strengths and insights that, when properly

managed, may be used to increase productivity and produce superior outcomes (Green *et al.*, 2002).

The combination of these diverse individuals also fosters creativity, since it allows for the testing of many concepts and the potential emergence of new ones (Hundscheil *et al.*, 2022). When employees are exposed to a diversity of cultures, viewpoints, and ideas, they have the potential to grow more as individuals (Robbins *et al.*, 2009).

(b) Growth of employees

In an atmosphere where they are exposed to a diversity of cultures, perspectives, and ideas, employees stand to benefit more personally (Green *et al.*, 2002). Companies will need to get better at adjusting to various circumstances in a diverse workplace. They must overcome their disparate backgrounds, cultures, and personalities. As individuals learn to collaborate with people from many backgrounds and styles, underlying ethnocentric notions may eventually come to light and be challenged.

(c) Unity of diverse strengths

Diversity offers the chance to bring together particular capabilities for the benefit of the organisation, according to (Robbins *et al.*, 2009). Although each person is unique, so are their capacities and strengths, and these can be combined for enhanced output and performance. It is possible to combine a person's technical strengths with another person's management strengths and yet another person's sales strengths (Kozlowski, 2018).

Similarly, the organisation can profit from the different individuals' cultural expertise. Diversity in the workforce can maximise an organisation's capacity to satisfy the demands of each market, particularly for global organisations (Patrick, 2012). Clients from similar backgrounds can be partnered with representatives of particular demographics to assist them in feeling more at ease and developing a sense of affinity with the employee and, consequently, the organisation (Shah, 2014).

(d) The company looks attractive

A company's appeal as an employer increases when it fosters an inclusive work environment and workplace diversity, according to the market (Arenas, 2017). Employees of Generation Y who are daring and open-minded find particular attraction in an environment that is willing to experiment with new concepts and fashions. An organisation is more likely to draw in a broad pool of applicants if it communicates that it values the contributions that individuals can make rather than focusing on factors such as a candidate's ethnicity, socioeconomic status, or other characteristics (Mannix & Neale, 2005).

(e)The schedule advantage

There is also a practical advantage to having a diverse workforce. A diverse group makes it possible to complete work responsibilities throughout the year, as each person has different time commitments.

2.5 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The study was guided by the following research questions:

- What are the barriers that prevent women from climbing the corporate ladder in private chemical organisations in the Gauteng province of South Africa?
- Are affirmative action policies and employment equity policies fully implemented in private chemical organisations in the Gauteng province of South Africa?
- How do females experience the challenges in leadership positions in private chemical organisations in Gauteng province of South Africa?

2.6 RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

The research objectives are divided into general and specific objectives.

2.6.1 General objective

- To explore the challenges faced by women in leadership positions in a private organisation in Gauteng province of South Africa.

2.6.2 Specific Objectives

The study will be guided by the following specific objectives:

- To investigate the barriers that prevent females from climbing the corporate ladder in a private chemical organisation in the Gauteng province of South Africa.
- To determine if affirmative action policies and employment equity policies are fully implemented in a private chemical organisation in the Gauteng province of South Africa.
- To explore the challenges experienced by females in leadership positions in a private chemical organisation in Gauteng province of South Africa.

CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH METHOD

3.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter includes a thorough overview of the technique and research design used in this study. The chapter commenced with a discussion of the research paradigm that guides the study, namely the interpretative paradigm. The chapter further addressed the research methodology and the rationale for adopting a qualitative approach, as well as the research design. The target population, sample size, and sampling strategy were also examined in this chapter. The chapter went on to discuss data collection methods and analysis strategies in more detail. The chapter concluded with a clarification of the trustworthiness issues relevant to the study.

3.2 RESEARCH PARADIGM

In this study, the researcher adopted interpretivism as a research paradigm. Ponterotto (2005) defined a paradigm as a set of interrelated assumptions about the social world that provide a philosophical and conceptual framework to study the world. Blanche *et al.* (2006:6) stated that “paradigms are all-encompassing systems of interrelated practice and thinking that define for researchers the nature of their enquiry along three dimensions: ontology, epistemology and methodology”. Blanche *et al.* (2006) posit that the goal of an interpretive research approach is to explain the subjective reasons and meanings that lie behind social action.

3.3 RESEARCH METHODS

In this study, a qualitative research method was employed. The primary goal of qualitative research is to learn about how people interpret and make sense of their own experiences as opposed to the researcher’s interpretation of the same events. Qualitative research is seen as an inductive process (Leed & Omrod, 2014). In contrast to the numbers produced by other methods of research, qualitative research offers highly descriptive data in the form of images and words (Leed & Omrod, 2014).

3.4 RESEARCH DESIGN

In this study, an exploratory research design was used. An exploratory research design involves many qualitative data collection techniques such as in-depth interviews and focus groups (Leed & Ormrod, 2014).

3.5 RESEARCH PROCEDURE

3.5.1 Population

The population of the study consisted of women who are in leadership and management positions in a private chemical company in Gauteng province.

3.5.2 Sample

A purposive sample of eight (8) participants was used for qualitative data collection until data saturation was reached. The choice of women in top management positions is based on the fact that they are the ones who are currently experiencing challenges at the chemical organisation in the Gauteng province of South Africa. Qualitative data were gathered with the aid of an open-ended questionnaire.

Table 3: Demographic details of participants

Variable		Frequency	Percentage
Gender	Female	8	100%
Age	31-40 years	1	12.5%
	41-50 years	3	37.5%
	51 years and above	4	50%
Race	Black African	1	12.5%
	Indian	1	12.5%
	White	6	75%
Marital status	Single	2	25%
	Married	6	75%

Variable		Frequency	Percentage
Position	Senior Management	8	100%
Years of experience	11-15 years	1	12.5%
	16 years and above	7	87.5%
Qualification	Masters	7	87.5%
	Doctoral Degree	1	12.5%

Table 3 provides additional information on the sample of the study about biographical information. The presentation below demonstrates the biographical details of the participants.

Gender

The data obtained in this study shows that all the participants in the study were women (100%). The full participation of women in the study is worthwhile since the study was aimed at exploring the challenges faced by women in leadership positions in a private chemical organisation in Gauteng province of South Africa.

Age

The study consisted of participants between the ages of 30 years ranging to above 50 years. Half of the participants (50 per cent) in the study were 51 years and above, followed by participants (37.5 per cent) who were in the age range of 41-50 years. The minority (12.5 per cent) of the participants were in the range of 31-40 years.

Race

In terms of race, the majority of the participants (75 per cent) who participated in the study were white. The minority of the participants (12.5 per cent) were Indian and Black African, respectively.

Marital status

In terms of marital status, the majority of the participants (75 per cent) who participated in the study were married, followed by the minority of the participants (25 per cent) who were single.

Position

In terms of position in the organisation, most of the participants (75 per cent) were in senior management positions, followed by 25 per cent who were in middle management positions within the organisation.

Years of experience

With regards to the years of experience in the organisation, the majority of the participants (87.5 per cent) had 16 years and above, followed by the minority of the participants (12.5 per cent) having a range of 11-15 years of experience.

Qualification

With regards to the highest qualifications possessed by the participants, the majority (87.5 per cent) of the participants in the study possessed a master's degree, and the minority of the participants (12.5 per cent) had a doctoral degree.

After the presentation of the biographical information above, the following presentation will present the key themes of the study. Since the study was guided by three (3) objectives, the results of the study will be presented in that format:

To achieve the first objective, the participants were asked a question in relation to the barriers that prevent females from climbing the corporate ladder. The following presentation points out the key themes that come out as the key factors that prevent women from climbing the corporate ladder in the organisation under investigation.

3.6 DATA COLLECTION METHOD

3.6.1 Open-ended questionnaires

The study sought to explore the challenges faced by women in leadership positions in a private chemical organisation in the Gauteng province of South Africa. In light of the above, an open-ended questionnaire was used. The following questions guided the open-ended questionnaire.

1. In your view, what are the barriers that prevent females from climbing the corporate ladder in your organisation?
2. Explain if affirmative action policies and employment equity policies are fully implemented in your organisation.
3. What do females experience the challenges in leadership positions in your organisation?

3.6.2 Data analysis

The obtained data was analysed using thematic analysis. According to Caulfield (2019), thematic analysis is a method of analysing qualitative data. For this study, an inductive approach to thematic analysis was used. The following steps were employed in data analysis:

Step 1: Familiarisation

The first step of the thematic analysis process is to get to know your data. Caulfield (2019) states that in analysing data, the researcher will make use of a recorder, note taking, and reading of the interview notes.

Step 2: Coding

According to Caulfield (2019) the word “coding” is defined as a process where a researcher highlights sections of their text by paraphrasing sentences and devising codes to describe their content. The researcher accomplished this by reading through all of the questionnaires and transcripts and highlighting anything that is pertinent or would be of interest. The researcher also underlined every word and sentence that matched their classification.

The codes were accumulated through the texts of the analysed data. By highlighting the phrases, the researcher was able to gain concise points and definitions reappearing in the text.

Step 3: Generating themes

The third step according to Caufield (2019) is to take the coded texts and identify patterns. Therefore, one can start producing themes. Generally, a theme is a subject of talk.

Step 4: Reviewing themes

During this step, the researcher must make sure that the themes are useful and accurate representations of the data. During this step, the researcher must compare their themes against the data set and ask themselves whether they are missing anything.

Step 5: Defining and naming themes

According to Caufield (2019), a theme is a formulation of the true meaning of the researcher's subject of talk and a statement of how it assists the process of understanding the data. For a researcher to arrive at this, the researcher must design simple and understandable names for each theme.

Step 6: Writing up

During this step, the researcher presented the analysis of the data. The results or findings section addressed each theme in turn, wherein the researcher discusses how often themes come up and what they mean, including examples from the data as evidence.

3.7 TRUSTWORTHINESS

The reliability of this qualitative study was enhanced by using the following strategies:

- **Credibility:** The research proposal is subject to peer debriefing. An experienced study leader evaluated the study proposal. To establish credibility, the researcher

used triangulation and member-checks methods to confirm that the results of the research were credible or believable (Creswell & Creswell, 2017)

- **Reliability:** The researcher analysed data and held consensus discussions with the study leader to reach harmony about themes. The research measured consistency and evaluated if the research outcomes could be repeated (Creswell & Creswell, 2017)

- **Transferability:** The ability of the research to be transferred to a different context and be comparable to another research. The researcher will give a detailed description of the study and the method used (Creswell & Creswell, 2017).

CHAPTER 4: RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

4.1 RESULTS

This section analysed and interpreted qualitative data collected through an open-ended questionnaire from eight participants. Each participant was assigned a code as P1, P2, P3, and so on. The section commenced with a description of data analysis and interpretation and ended with literature integration.

Theme 1: Barriers

Table 4 below shows the major codes that came out of the theme of barriers that prevent women from climbing the corporate ladder in the organisation under investigation.

Table 4: Barriers

Theme	Codes	Frequency
Barriers	Gender Discrimination	30.5%
	Gender stereotyping	27.5%
	Lack of mentorship	25.0%
	The queen bee syndrome	17.0%

From Table 4 above, the majority of the participants stated that gender discrimination 30.5 per cent, gender stereotyping 27.5 per cent, lack of mentorship 25.0 per cent, and the queen bee syndrome 17.0 per cent of the major factors affecting women in climbing the corporate ladder in the organisation under investigation. The presentation below shows how participants responded to the question asked about the major reasons that prevent women from climbing the corporate ladder in the organisation under investigation.

(a) Gender discrimination

Gender inequality has been pointed out as the key factor that stands as a major barrier to women's career progression within the company under study as one of the participants stated that "*as women we are being discriminated against in relation to promotion*" (P2).

“Women are discriminated [against] based on their gender” (P1).

“Women are not equally considered to be the same as compared to their male counterparts” (P3).

“Women are always discriminated about career progression” (P8).

In support of the above view, one of the participants stated that *“women are not given an equal opportunity for career progression as compared to their male counterparts” (P7).*

(b) Gender stereotyping

Gender stereotyping has also been raised as a key feature that stands as a barrier prohibiting women from climbing the corporate ladder. Literature shows that men normally possess a superiority complex where they take women for granted at work. In light of the above, one of the participants stated that *“women are normally taken for granted at work and are often associated with household chores” (P1).*

“Gender stereotyping plays a role in career progression at work” (P4).

In support of the above statement, one participant (P3) had this to say: *“Women are expected to be submissive culturally, hence there is no exception at the workplace. Men consider themselves as above everything”.*

(c) Lack of mentorship

One of the participants had this to say: *“Within the organisation that we work for, there is generally a lack of support and mentorship, therefore depriving women of promotion and career progression” (P8).*

“This organisation lacks mentorship for aspiring employees” (P1).

In support of the above statement, one of the participants declared that *“the organisation lacks support with regards to mentorship for women if there are opportunities for career growth” (P6).*

(d) The queen bee syndrome

Literature shows that women in general are not supportive of each other when they are in positions of power within the organisational context (Khwela *et al.*, 2020). The excerpts below are a clear testimony of the fact that women do not support each other for promotion and career progression:

“As women, we are not supportive of each other” (P4).

“Women have a tendency not to each other” (P2).

“My boss is a woman, and she does not support other women at all” (P1).

“If a woman is in power, she doesn’t want to see another woman closer to her in the organisational structure” (P5).

“When women are in positions of power, they always want to dominate and are not supportive of each other” (P7).

In this study, most of the women complained that they lack support for each other for promotion and career progression.

Since objective one (1) was achieved, the researcher strived to fulfil objective two (2) by asking a relevant question related to that objective. To achieve objective two (2), the researcher asked the participants about policies that promote equity in their workplace. The employment equity policy emerged as the key theme for promoting equity in the workplace, but it is not implemented.

Theme 2: Policies

Table 5 below shows the major theme of poor implementation of policies that prevent women from climbing the corporate ladder in the organisation under investigation.

Table 5: Policies

Theme	code	Frequency
Policies	Poor implementation	100%

From Table 5 above, all the participants (100 per cent) support the notion that there is poor implementation of workplace policies. The following excerpts are a clear testimony to the notion raised above.

“The employment equity policy is in place but the organisation seems to favour men with regards to promotion and career progression” (P8).

“The employment equity policy is just on paper and it is not implemented at all” (P3).

“The policies are just on paper” (P4).

“The organisation is very good at putting information on paper but it is not implemented practically” (P2).

“Management does not properly implement the policies here” (P6).

“There is poor implementation of policies at this workplace” (P7).

“Poor implementation of policies is a common feature at this workplace” (P5).

“Policies are in place but there is poor implementation” (P1).

The excerpts above demonstrate that the employment policies at the workplace are not properly implemented.

The researcher had to ask a question that was related to the challenges experienced by females in leadership positions in the organisation under study. In light of objective three stated above, the major themes that dominated the discussion were a lack of senior management support and support from peers.

Theme 3: Challenges Experienced by Women

Table 6 below shows the theme related to the challenges experienced by females in leadership positions in the organisation under study.

Table 6: Challenges Experienced by Women

Theme	codes	Frequency
Challenges experienced by Women	Lack of senior management support	71%
	Lack of support from peers	29%

From Table 6 above, the majority of participants (71 per cent) stated that lacking senior management support is the major challenge women face in the workplace. The minority of the participants (29 per cent) stated that lack of support from peers is one of the challenges that women face in the workplace. The presentation shows excerpts that support the above notion.

(a) Lack of senior management support

The excerpts below show the challenges experienced by females in leadership positions in the organisation under study:

“There is a lack of management support when a female employee is appointed for a senior position” (P7).

“Top management has no buy-in if a female employee joins them in management position” (P2).

“Senior management does not support females if they are joined” (P4).

“Senior management does not seem to support the upcoming young women” (P1).

In support of the above notion, one of the participants stated that *“Senior management lacks support if women are appointed in senior management” (P5).*

Evidence from the data obtained in this organisation shows that senior management lacks support for the appointment of female employees in senior management positions.

(b) Lack of support from peers

In the study, most of the women complained that they lacked support from peers for promotion and career progression. When asked about the challenges experienced by females in leadership positions in the organisation under study, one of the participants had this to say: *“Here you will be promoted but it sounds as if your peers will be jealous of you, hence, your peers will not support you”* (P3).

In support of the above statement, one of the participants stated that *“the organisation does not provide an opportunity where your peers will support you when you are promoted”* (P6).

4.2 DISCUSSION

The main aim of the study was to explore the challenges faced by women in leadership positions in a private chemical organisation in Gauteng province in South Africa. The study was guided by three (3) objectives that are all achieved and discussed in the following paragraphs.

The first objective of the study was to investigate the barriers that prevent females from climbing the corporate ladder in the private chemical organisations in the Gauteng province of South Africa. About that objective, participants were asked a question about the barriers that prevent females from climbing the corporate ladder in their organisation. The presentation points out the key themes that come out as the key factors that prevent women from climbing the corporate ladder in the organisation under investigation.

Gender inequality has been pointed out as the key factor that stands as a major barrier to women’s career progression within the company under study. Gender stereotyping has also been raised as a key feature that stands as a barrier prohibiting women from climbing the corporate ladder. Studies have shown that individuals who are stereotyped based on their gender, race, ethnicity, or other characteristics are more likely to experience discrimination in the workplace (Kalev *et al.*, 2006). Stereotyping can have a range of negative effects in the workplace. One of the most common effects is the creation of a hostile work environment for the individuals being typecast. This can lead to decreased morale, lack of job satisfaction, and poor performance (Cuddy *et al.*, 2008).

The other themes that dominated the discussion were a lack of mentorship and the queen bee syndrome. Khwela *et al.* (2020) stated that women in general are not supportive of each other when they are in positions of power within the organisational context. Literature shows that the findings above concur with existent results (Brijban, 2015; Johnson & Mathur-Helm, 2011; Warning & Buchanan, 2009).

Despite the significant strides made in achieving gender equality and implementing anti-discrimination laws and policies, women still face a variety of barriers to advancement and equal treatment in the workplace based on their gender. A study conducted by Stamarski & Son Hing (2015) and (OECD (2018) examined the experiences of women in the workplace and found that gender discrimination is still prevalent, with women facing unequal treatment, barriers to advancement, and a lack of access to resources and opportunities. The study highlighted the need for organisational policies and interventions to address these issues.

The second objective of this study was to determine if affirmative action policies and employment equity policies were fully implemented in the private chemical organisation in the Gauteng province of South Africa. To achieve this objective, the researcher asked the participants about policies that promote equity in their workplace. The employment equity policy emerged as the key theme for promoting equity in the workplace, but it is not commonly implemented.

Literature conducted by Khwela *et al.* (2020) has revealed that contrary to common assumptions, men are not women's biggest enemies; rather, because of a lack of support, women are each other's worst adversaries. Generally, women lack support for each other, whether in leadership positions or lower-level positions Khwela *et al.* (2020). They demonstrate the "Queen Bee" notion. According to Johnson & Mathur-Helm (2011), Queen Bee behaviour is a term used to describe women executives who, after ascending to top roles, alienate other women and obstruct the advancement of less senior women.

This notion is supported by Akpinar-Sposito (2013:491), who states that barriers to women are self-imposed as women typically display low self-esteem and a condescending attitude, which has a detrimental effect on their confidence. Because of this, the employer starts to have second thoughts about elevating women to leadership roles. Women also

tend to be self-limiting when it comes to career advancement by a sense of self-victimisation, self-limiting, personal convictions, and maintaining rather than challenging the status quo.

Self-esteem and confidence are two important psychological constructs that have been widely studied in the context of workplace discrimination against women. Women who face discrimination at work often experience a negative impact on their self-esteem and confidence levels, which can further contribute to their marginalisation in the workplace. Literature has shown that women who experience workplace discrimination have lower self-esteem and confidence levels compared to those who do not experience discrimination (Nolen-Hoeksema & Rusting, 1999; Rosette *et al.*, 2008). Discrimination can lead to feelings of inferiority, self-doubt, and insecurity, which can, in turn, impact women's confidence and self-esteem (Crocker *et al.*, 2003).

Organisations fail to recognise or disregard the potential for women to lead even when they acknowledge that women have leadership capabilities and skills. The literature further shows that women feel discouraged from showcasing their potential and give more of themselves to the organisation than just performing assigned tasks (Howe-Walsh & Turnbull, 2016; Furst & Reeves, 2008).

More women are having trouble occupying leadership roles because of the perceived employer's image of hiring women in executive positions. There also appear to be imbalances in employment between men and women in the labour force in fields that are male-dominated, like the chemical sector. Some women may be discouraged from furthering their careers and opt to remain content in lower-level employment because of this form of discrimination. Therefore, it is the organisation's responsibility to ensure that the recruitment policy and culture are fair to everyone regardless of their gender (Ndweni & Ozumba, 2021:6).

The third objective of the study was to explore the challenges experienced by females in leadership positions in private chemical organisations in the Gauteng province of South Africa. To achieve this objective, the researcher had to ask a question that was related to the challenges experienced by females in leadership positions in the organisation under

study. In light of this objective, the major themes that dominated the discussion were the lack of senior management support and support from peers.

Statistica (2020) shows that there are very few women in senior management positions in South Africa, hence there is a need to align gender-related policies to empower women to be represented well in these positions. Sandberg (2013) stated that, in most cultures, girls are discouraged from advocating for their future and taking risks for their career progression.

Most societies have negative stereotypes against women which discourage them from taking up senior positions. The social-psychological phenomenon acts as a barrier to career progression because women are seen to be inferior to their men counterparts. Several factors are related to the glass ceiling as suggested by (Furst & Reeves, 2008).

The above factors are related to the glass ceiling effect often seen in organisations which discourages women from taking senior positions. The gender gap and women's hurdles in management are increasingly obvious when the organisational structure and level are broad (Neale & Özkanlı, 2010).

Kirai and Mukulu (2012) posit that professional advancement for women in management roles across a range of professions is still hampered by several internal barriers. Some studies have identified organisational structural and cultural impediments that have contributed to the underrepresentation of women at the senior level. Women have had less rapid job advancement due to institutional discrimination, anti-feminist organisational culture, and limited networking and professional development possibilities (Kirai & Mukulu, 2012; Howe-Walsh & Turnbull, 2016).

These barriers start from a lack of gender equality in the recruitment process, with organisations not being accountable and transparent in this process. Both male and female assessors believe that female candidates are less qualified than male candidates, which lowers their likelihood of being hired (Howe-Walsh & Turnbull, 2016). The literature further suggests that workplace leadership positions in many economic sectors are marginalising, discriminating against, and disregarding women (Stainback *et al.*, 2016). Therefore, organisational impediments to management growth for women continue to be

challenging and warrant more study. According to Rakestraw *et al.* (2022), there is a disparity between the number of women entering leadership positions and the number of women being promoted into those positions.

Gender is viewed as more of a barrier to work success than a benefit, and discrimination and sexual harassment are reported as occurring more frequently (Funk & Parker, 2018). Another challenge faced by women in senior positions is a lack of female representation in leadership roles. According to a report by Al-Sadik-Lowinski (2020), women make up just 38 per cent of managerial positions globally. This lack of representation can make it difficult for women to find mentors, sponsors, and advocates who can help them advance their careers (Funk & Parker, 2018).

Women in senior positions also face a range of cultural factors. Women may also be seen as less competent or less committed to their careers if they have children or take time off to care for their families (Eagly *et al.*, 2020). This can make it difficult for women to be taken seriously as leaders and may result in them being passed over for promotions or other opportunities. Overall, women in senior positions face a range of challenges that are not commonly experienced by their male counterparts (Budworth, 2010).

Cultural factors in the workplace refer to the values, beliefs, attitudes, behaviours, and practices that influence the way people interact with each other and with the organisation. Women have faced a myriad of challenges in the workplace, from wage disparities to under-representation in leadership roles. In the study by Eagly and Karau (2002), it was found that women in leadership roles were perceived as being more transformational, empathetic, and participative than men. This study suggests that gender-specific roles exist in the workplace, with women being expected to display more emotional intelligence in leadership roles than men.

Women have been traditionally expected to occupy supportive roles in the workplace, such as administrative and clerical positions. This trend is changing, and women are now breaking the glass ceiling and taking on leadership roles in various industries (Bailey & Davidson, 2020). However, there are still gender-specific roles that women are expected to play in the workplace, which can impact their career growth and development.

One of the gender-specific roles for women in the workplace is the caregiver role or relational role. Women are often expected to be nurturing and empathetic, which can limit their opportunities for leadership roles. This is because leadership is often associated with masculine traits such as assertiveness and dominance (Eagly & Karau, 2002).

Additionally, a study by Heilman (2001) found that women who violated gender-based norms by displaying assertiveness or aggression were evaluated negatively. This study suggests that gender-specific roles exist not only in the behaviours that are expected of women in the workplace but also in the consequences that result from violating those norms.

4.3 RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings of the study, the researcher recommends that the organisation should put strategies in place that ensure that the promotion of gender equality is viewed as not just window decoration, absolving the organisation of any responsibility to achieve equality, and boosting employee morale rather than broadening the diversity of any kind (Kalev, Dobblin & Kelly, 2015).

The researcher further recommends the organisation should educate its employees on policies regarding gender equality in the workplace. The researcher recommends that the employer should implement all forms of non-discrimination policies against women in the workplace. Unfair discrimination based on ethnicity, colour, racial or social background, sex, gender, or language should not be exempted from the statutory guarantee of equality.

Women can greatly benefit from the inclusion of security measures or affirmative action. To facilitate the achievement of equality, statutory and other steps intended to shield or advance individuals or groups of persons affected by unfair discrimination can be taken. A legislative provision for affirmative action has become apparent as an essential tool for combating racial inequality holistically while still protecting affirmative action policies from women's discrimination against women (Unterhalter & North, 2018; Rosette *et al*, 2008; Nolen-Hoeksema & Rusting, 1999).

The other recommendation that is provided in this particular study is the implementation of the Promotion of Equality and Prevention of Unfair Discrimination Act 4 of 2000 which seeks to achieve the following goals (Kok, 2008):

- Prevent and prohibit unfair discrimination and harassment.
- Promote equality and eliminate unfair discrimination.

The organisation under study is further encouraged to promote and effectively implement the Employment Equity Act. The organisation under study should prohibit unlawful discrimination and enforce affirmative action measures to redress the employment disadvantages experienced by designated groups, as the Employment Equity Act, No. 55 of 1998, aims to ensure fair representation of all groups in all fields of employment.

In future research, the organisation under study should survey their current policies to encourage women to advance to senior leadership positions.

4.4 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

Although a lot of effort has been made to eliminate some potential limitations, this study is not immune to them. The following were the limitations found in the study:

- It is also imperative to note that the study was only confined to one province of the Republic of South Africa, hence generalisability of the study to other provinces of the country is difficult.
- Another limitation of the study lies in the fact that the participants of the study were only females, meaning to say the study was not gender balanced.
- It could have been better if the study also included male participants.

4.5 CONCLUSIONS

The chapter explored the challenges experienced by women in leadership positions globally and in the South African context. The chapter further explored the theories that account for the reasons why women are lagging concerning their career progression. This

chapter also outlines the policies that are being advocated for in addressing the challenges that are faced by women in leadership positions.

CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter provides the concluding remarks based on the research findings presented and discussed in Chapter 2. The conclusions and recommendations are mainly based on the research objectives stated as follows:

- To investigate the barriers that prevent females from climbing the corporate ladder in a private chemical organisation in the Gauteng province of South Africa.
- To determine if affirmative action policies and employment equity policies are fully implemented in the private chemical organisation in the Gauteng province of South Africa.
- To explore the challenges experienced by females in leadership positions in a private chemical organisation in Gauteng province of South Africa.

5.2 DISCUSSION

The main aim of the study was to explore the challenges faced by women in leadership positions in a private chemical organisation in Gauteng province in South Africa. The study was guided by three (3) objectives that are all achieved and discussed in the following paragraphs.

The first objective of the study was to investigate the barriers that prevent females from climbing the corporate ladder in private chemical organisations in the Gauteng province of South Africa. In relation to that objective, participants were asked a question in relation to the barriers that prevent females from climbing the corporate ladder in their organisation. The presentation points out the key themes that come out as the key factors that prevent women from climbing the corporate ladder in the organisation under investigation.

Gender inequality has been pointed out as the key factor that stands as a major barrier to women's career progression within the company under study. Gender stereotyping has also been raised as a key feature that stands as a barrier prohibiting women from climbing

the corporate ladder. Studies have shown that individuals who are stereotyped based on their gender, race, ethnicity, or other characteristics are more likely to experience discrimination in the workplace (Kalev *et al.*, 2006). Stereotyping can have a range of negative effects in the workplace. One of the most common effects is the creation of a hostile work environment for the individuals being typecast. This can lead to decreased morale, lack of job satisfaction, and poor performance (Cuddy *et al.*, 2008).

The other themes that dominated the discussion were a lack of mentorship and the queen bee syndrome. Khwela *et al.* (2020) stated that women in general are not supportive of each other when they are in positions of power within the organisational context. Literature shows that the findings above concur with existent results (Brijban, 2015; Johnson & Mathur-Helm, 2011; Warning & Buchanan, 2009).

Despite the significant strides made in achieving gender equality and implementing anti-discrimination laws and policies, women still face a variety of barriers to advancement and equal treatment in the workplace based on their gender. A study conducted by Stamarski and Son Hing (2015) and (OECD (2018) examined the experiences of women in the workplace and found that gender discrimination is still prevalent, with women facing unequal treatment, barriers to advancement, and a lack of access to resources and opportunities. The study highlighted the need for organisational policies and interventions to address these issues.

The second objective of this study was to determine if affirmative action policies and employment equity policies were fully implemented in the private chemical organisation in the Gauteng province of South Africa. To achieve this objective, the researcher asked the participants about policies that promote equity in their workplace. The employment equity policy emerged as the key theme for promoting equity in the workplace, but it is not commonly implemented.

Literature conducted by Khwela *et al.* (2020) has revealed that contrary to common assumptions, men are not women's biggest enemies; rather, because of a lack of support, women are each other's worst adversaries. Generally, women lack support for each other, whether in leadership positions or lower-level positions Khwela *et al.*, (2020). They demonstrate the "Queen Bee" notion. According to Johnson & Mathur-Helm (2011),

Queen Bee behaviour is a term used to describe women executives who, after ascending to top roles, alienate other women and obstruct the advancement of less senior women.

This notion is supported by Akpinar-Sposito (2013:491), who states that barriers to women are self-imposed as women typically display low self-esteem and a condescending attitude, which has a detrimental effect on their confidence. Because of this, the employer starts to have second thoughts about elevating women to leadership roles. Women also tend to be self-limiting when it comes to career advancement by a sense of self-victimisation, self-limiting, personal convictions, and maintaining rather than challenging the status quo.

Self-esteem and confidence are two important psychological constructs that have been widely studied in the context of workplace discrimination against women. Women who face discrimination at work often experience a negative impact on their self-esteem and confidence levels, which can further contribute to their marginalisation in the workplace. Literature has shown that women who experience workplace discrimination have lower self-esteem and confidence levels compared to those who do not experience discrimination (Nolen-Hoeksema & Rusting, 1999; Rosette *et al.*, 2008). Discrimination can lead to feelings of inferiority, self-doubt, and insecurity, which can, in turn, impact women's confidence and self-esteem (Crocker *et al.*, 2003).

Organisations fail to recognise or disregard the potential for women to lead even when they acknowledge that women have leadership capabilities and skills. The literature further shows that women feel discouraged from showcasing their potential and give more of themselves to the organisation than just performing assigned tasks (Howe-Walsh & Turnbull, 2016; Furst & Reeves, 2008).

More women are having trouble occupying leadership roles because of the perceived employer's image of hiring women in executive positions. There also appear to be imbalances in employment between men and women in the labour force in fields that are male-dominated, like the chemical sector. Some women may be discouraged from furthering their careers and opt to remain content in lower-level employment because of this form of discrimination. Therefore, it is the organisation's responsibility to ensure that

the recruitment policy and culture are fair to everyone regardless of their gender (Ndweni & Ozumba, 2021:6).

The third objective of the study was to explore the challenges experienced by females in leadership positions in private chemical organisations in the Gauteng province of South Africa. To achieve this objective, the researcher had to ask a question that was related to the challenges experienced by females in leadership positions in the organisation under study. In light of this objective, the major themes that dominated the discussion were the lack of senior management support and support from peers.

Statistica (2020) shows that there are very few women in senior management positions in South Africa, hence there is a need to align gender-related policies to empower women to be represented well in these positions. Sandberg (2013) stated that, in most cultures, girls are discouraged from advocating for their future and taking risks for their career progression.

Most societies have negative stereotypes against women which discourage them from taking up senior positions. The social-psychological phenomenon acts as a barrier to career progression because women are seen to be inferior to their men counterparts. Several factors are related to the glass ceiling as suggested by (Furst & Reeves, 2008).

The above factors are related to the glass ceiling effect often seen in organisations which discourages women from taking senior positions. The gender gap and women's hurdles in management are increasingly obvious when the organisational structure and level are broad. Neale and Özkanlı (2010) state that the pervasive culture of "think manager, think male" contributes to women's deficient managerial abilities. Consequently, it is crucial to concentrate on "male advantage" rather than just "women's disadvantage".

Kirai & Mukulu (2012) posit that professional advancement for women in management roles across a range of professions is still hampered by several internal barriers. Some studies have identified organisational structural and cultural impediments that have contributed to the underrepresentation of women at the senior level. Women have had less rapid job advancement due to institutional discrimination, anti-feminist organisational

culture, and limited networking and professional development possibilities (Kirai & Mukulu (2012); Howe-Walsh & Turnbull, 2016).

These barriers start from a lack of gender equality in the recruitment process, with organisations not being accountable and transparent in this process. Both male and female assessors believe that female candidates are less qualified than male candidates, which lowers their likelihood of being hired (Howe-Walsh & Turnbull, 2016). The literature further suggests that workplace leadership positions in many economic sectors are marginalising, discriminating against, and disregarding women (Stainback *et al.*, 2016). Therefore, organisational impediments to management growth for women continue to be challenging and warrant more study. According to Rakestraw *et al.* (2022), there is a disparity between the number of women entering leadership positions and the number of women being promoted into those positions.

Gender is viewed as more of a barrier to work success than a benefit, and discrimination and sexual harassment are reported as occurring more frequently (Funk & Parker, 2018). Another challenge faced by women in senior positions is a lack of female representation in leadership roles. According to a report by Al-Sadik-Lowinski (2020), women make up just 38 per cent of managerial positions globally. This lack of representation can make it difficult for women to find mentors, sponsors, and advocates who can help them advance their careers (Funk & Parker, 2018).

Women in senior positions also face a range of cultural factors. Women may also be seen as less competent or less committed to their careers if they have children or take time off to care for their families (Eagly *et al.*, 2020). This can make it difficult for women to be taken seriously as leaders and may result in them being passed over for promotions or other opportunities. Overall, women in senior positions face a range of challenges that are not commonly experienced by their male counterparts (Budworth, 2010).

Cultural factors in the workplace refer to the values, beliefs, attitudes, behaviours, and practices that influence the way people interact with each other and with the organisation. Women have faced a myriad of challenges in the workplace, from wage disparities to under-representation in leadership roles. In the study by Eagly and Karau (2002), it was found that women in leadership roles were perceived as being more transformational,

empathetic, and participative than men. This study suggests that gender-specific roles exist in the workplace, with women being expected to display more emotional intelligence in leadership roles than men.

Women have been traditionally expected to occupy supportive roles in the workplace, such as administrative and clerical positions. This trend is changing, and women are now breaking the glass ceiling and taking on leadership roles in various industries (Bailey & Davidson, 2020). However, there are still gender-specific roles that women are expected to play in the workplace, which can impact their career growth and development.

One of the gender-specific roles for women in the workplace is the caregiver role or relational role. Women are often expected to be nurturing and empathetic, which can limit their opportunities for leadership roles. This is because leadership is often associated with masculine traits such as assertiveness and dominance (Eagly & Karau, 2002).

Additionally, a study by Heilman (2001) found that women who violated gender-based norms by displaying assertiveness or aggression were evaluated negatively. This study suggests that gender-specific roles exist not only in the behaviours that are expected of women in the workplace but also in the consequences that result from violating those norms.

5.3 RECOMMENDATIONS TO MANAGEMENT OF SOUTH AFRICAN COMPANIES

The researcher recommends that South African companies should implement all forms of non-discrimination policies against women in the workplace. Furthermore, South African companies are encouraged to eliminate all forms of unfair discrimination based on ethnicity, colour, racial or social background, sex, gender, or language as part of the statutory guarantee of equality.

The management of South African companies should put policies in place for affirmative action and effectively implement them to combat racial inequality holistically while still protecting affirmative action policies from women's discrimination against women (Akala, 2018). The other recommendation that is provided in this particular study is the

implementation of the Promotion of Equality and Prevention of Unfair Discrimination Act 4 of 2000 prohibits unfair discrimination and harassment.

Lastly, South African companies are recommended to promote and effectively implement the Employment Equity Act. Management of South African Companies should prohibit unlawful discrimination and enforce affirmative action measures to redress the employment disadvantages experienced by designated groups, as stipulated by the Employment Equity Act, No. 55 of 1998, aiming to ensure fair representation of all groups in all fields of employment.

5.4 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

The greatest limitation of the study is the sample size ($n=8$). The sample size is too small to make the research findings generalisable. It is also important to note that the study was only confined to one province of the Republic of South Africa, hence generalisability of the study to other provinces of the country is difficult. Since the study utilised an open-ended questionnaire, the researcher found it difficult to probe the respondents. Lastly, the fact that the participants of the study were only females means the study was not gender balanced. It could have been more nuanced if the study also included male participants.

5.5 CONCLUSIONS

The main aim of the study was to explore the challenges that are experienced by female employees in management positions in a chemical organisation in the Gauteng province of South Africa. To get an understanding of the said challenges, an open-ended questionnaire was used to elicit responses from female employees in management positions of the organisation under study. The study found that women in management positions are not fully represented, and the following has been advised: the inclusion of female employees in management positions; an application of affirmative action policies in the workplace; and elimination of all forms of discrimination in the workplace.

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(DWCPD) commissioned Health and Development Africa (HDA) to conduct this study in 2013. HDA further sub-contracted the services of the Medical Research Council, due to its extensive work within the area of sexual and intimate partner violence in South Africa. *HDA further sub-contracted the services of the Medical Research Council, due to its extensive work within the area of sexual and intimate partner violence in South Africa.*

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ANNEXURE A: INFORMED CONSENT

DEAR PARTICIPANT

INFORMED CONSENT TO COMPLETE SURVEY QUESTIONNAIRES

You have been invited to participate in a research project as part of a Master of Business Administration (MBA) degree program at Nort West University (NWU) Business School. Please read the information offered here, which will clarify the specifics of this study. Please ask the researcher or the person explaining the research any questions you have about any aspect of this study that you do not fully understand. You must be completely confident in your understanding of the nature of this research and the potential ways in which you might participate. Additionally, your involvement is fully optional, and you are free to decline. Saying no won't have any negative effects on you in the slightest. Even if you decide to participate in the study right away, you are free to stop at any time.

This study has been approved by the NWU Economic and Management Sciences Research Ethics Committee (EMS-REC) and will be conducted according to the ethical guidelines and principles of the North-West University and other international ethical guidelines applicable to this study.

Title of the project: Exploring challenges experienced by women in Leadership positions in a private chemical organisation in Gauteng province.

Institution: NWU Business School

Ethics Reference Number: 40440699

Names and contact details of project staff:

	Supervisor	Researcher
Title, Surname	Prof Jackson	Ms Manyuha
Full Names	Leon	Pfarelo

Telephone	082 840 1135	082 491 9824
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What is required of you?

You will be required to:

- Finish the survey, which should take you around 15 minutes.
- Give honest and open answers to the questions.

Please be aware that no personally identifiable information will be gathered from your entirely anonymous responses.

DECLARATION

Declaration by participant

By selecting the option below, I agree to take part in the research study titled: **Exploring challenges experienced by women in leadership positions in a private chemical organisation in Gauteng province**

I confirm that I had the chance to read through the informed consent and think about taking part in this study.

I am aware that since I participated in the study anonymously, no information I have provided can be changed because it cannot be used to identify me.

I am aware that University employees may review anonymous research data gathered throughout the study to make sure it was carried out properly.

I accept that members of the research study team mentioned above may access my anonymous information.

Compliance

This research study will be compliant with the Protection of Personal Information Act (POPIA or the Act), No. 4 of 2013 (<https://popia.co.za/>).

I accept to participate in the aforementioned study.

Yes	No

ANNEXURE B: PERMISSION TO CONDUCT THE STUDY



REQUEST FOR PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH

Attention: HR Department
From: Pfarelo Manyuha - Employee
Date: 30 August 2023

My name is Pfarelo Manyuha , and I am an MBA student at North West University. As part of my studies, I need to conduct research on the topic of my choice. The study title that I wish to conduct research for my Master's dissertation involves "Challenges experienced by females in leadership position in corporate organisations".

This project will be conducted under the supervision of my Supervisor Prof Leon Jackson at (North West University),

I am hereby seeking your consent to conduct my research within the organisation by getting access to Females in Senior Leadership positions within Sasol organisation. Data will be collected by conducting Interviews and by sending questionnaires with open ended questions.

The study seeks to address the four Research questions outlined below:

- What are the barriers that affect females from climbing the corporate ladder?
- What are the factors that hinder female employees from promotion and career progression in private chemical organisations?
- To determine if affirmative action policies and employment equity policies are fully implemented in private chemical organisations?
- Overall challenges experienced by females in leadership positions in private chemical organisations?

Requestor: Pfarelo Manyuha

P Manyuha

Approver: HR Department (HR Business Partner)
Annah Makhetha

A. Makhetha

ANNEXURE C: ETHICAL CLEARANCE CERTIFICATE



Private Bag X1290, Potchefstroom
South Africa 2520

Tel: 018 299-1111/2222
Fax: 018 299-4910
Web: <http://www.nwu.ac.za>

Senate Committee for Research Ethics
Tel: 018 299-484
Fekhwe.Mseleni@nwu.ac.za

25 October 2023

ETHICS APPROVAL LETTER OF STUDY

Based on approval by the Economic and Management Sciences Research Ethics Committee (EMS-REC) on 29/09/2023 the Economic and Management Sciences Research Ethics Committee hereby approves your study as indicated below. This implies that the North-West University Senate Committee for Research Ethics (NWU-REC) grants its permission that, provided the special conditions specified below are met and pending any other authorisation that may be necessary, the study may be initiated, using the ethics number below.

Study title: Exploring challenges faced by women in leadership positions in a private Chemical organisation in Gauteng province

Study Leader/Supervisor (Principal Investigator)/Researcher: Prof LTB Jackson

Student: P Manyuha (40440699)

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Institution Study Number Year Status
Status: S = Submission; R = Re-Submission; P = Provisional Authorisation; A = Authorisation

Application Type:
Commencement date: 25/10/2023
Expiry date: 25/10/2024

Risk: Minimal

Approval of the study is initially provided for a year, after which continuation of the study is dependent on receipt and review of the annual (or as otherwise stipulated) monitoring report and the concomitant issuing of a letter of continuation.

Special in process conditions of the research for approval (if applicable):

•

General conditions:

While this ethics approval is subject to all declarations, undertakings and agreements incorporated and signed in the application form, the following general terms and conditions will apply:

- The study leader/supervisor (principle investigator)/researcher must report in the prescribed format to the EMS-REC:
 - annually (or as otherwise requested) on the monitoring of the study, whereby a letter of continuation will be provided, and upon completion of the study; and
 - without any delay in case of any adverse event or incident (or any matter that interrupts sound ethical principles) during the course of the study.
 - The approval applies strictly to the proposal as stipulated in the application form. Should any amendments to the proposal be deemed necessary during the course of the study, the study leader/researcher must apply for approval of these amendments at the EMS-REC, prior to implementation. Should there be any deviations from the study proposal without the necessary approval of such amendments, the ethics approval is immediately and automatically forfeited.
 - Annually a number of studies may be randomly selected for an external audit.
 - The date of approval indicates the first date that the study may be started.
- In the interest of ethical responsibility, the NWU-SCRE and EMS-REC reserves the right to:

- request access to any information or data at any time during the course or after completion of the study;
- to ask further questions, seek additional information, require further modification or monitor the conduct of your research or the informed consent process;
- withdraw or postpone approval if:
 - any unethical principles or practices of the study are revealed or suspected;
 - it becomes apparent that any relevant information was withheld from the EMS-REC or that information has been false or misrepresented;
 - submission of the annual (or otherwise stipulated) monitoring report, the required amendments, or reporting of adverse events or incidents was not done in a timely manner and accurately; and / or
 - new institutional rules, national legislation or international conventions deem it necessary.

The EMS-REC would like to remain at your service as scientist and researcher, and wishes you well with your study. Please do not hesitate to contact the EMS-REC or the NWU-SCRE for any further enquiries or requests for assistance.

Yours sincerely,

Prof Diana Viljoen Bezuidenhout
Chairperson: NWU Economic and Management Sciences Research Ethics Committee

ANNEXURE D: LANGUAGE EDITING CERTIFICATE

RUAN FOURIE

CERTIFICATE OF EDITING

**Exploring challenges faced by
women in leadership positions in
a private chemical organisation in
Gauteng province**

by Pfarelo Manyuha

This document certifies that
the above-mentioned mini-
dissertation has been edited for
proper English language usage.



ruanfourie23@gmail.com

082 068 6077

ANNEXURE E: OPEN-ENDED QUESTIONNAIRE

		SECTION A: DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION				
		<i>Please mark the appropriate answer with an X</i>				
Gender	Male			Female		
Age Category	30 years and below	31 to 40 years		41 to 50 years	51 to 60 years and above	
Race	Black African	White		Indian	Coloured	Asian
Marital Status	Single	Married		Divorced	Widowed	Remarried
Position within the Organisation	Low Management			Middle Management	Senior Management	
Job Experience in the current Organisation	Less than 2 years	2 to 5 years	6 to 10 years	11 to 15 years	16 years and above	
Educational Qualification	Certificate or Matric	Diploma	Bachelor's Degree	Honours	Master's Degree	PhD

Questions

In your view what are the barriers that prevent females from climbing the corporate ladder in your organisation?

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Explain if affirmative action policies and employment equity policies are fully implemented in your organisation.

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What are the challenges experienced by females in leadership positions in your organisation?

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